

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN
ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

**A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN
ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING**

Kelsey Church Brunton

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partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Eric K. Kaufman, Chair
Curtis R. Friedel
Donna M. Westfall-Rudd

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A Mixed Methods Study Evaluating Strategies used in Organizational Visioning

Kelsey Church Brunton

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study is to evaluate two methods of strategic planning within organizational visioning: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis and Appreciative inquiry (Ai). SWOT analysis is a method of strategic planning that is popular within companies and organizations due to its simple, yet thorough, approach. Ai has recently emerged as an approach to strategic visioning and planning within organizational development. However, little research has been conducted to evaluate either approach to organizational visioning, and there is a growing need to compare the two techniques. In this case study, participants within one organization were divided, with half of the staff participating in Ai and the other half participating in SWOT. Data for this mixed methods study was gathered through observation, focus group interviews, and pre-test, post-test, and delayed post assessments tests. Through the explanatory sequential design, quantitative data evaluated the change in organizational commitment and vision clarity as a result of the interventions; while, qualitative data further explored participants' perception of the intervention process and resulting effects. The study found a statistically significant interaction between intervention treatments and the pre-test and post-test scores within the organizational commitment construct. Seven themes emerged from the qualitative data; however, only two themes were specifically associated with an intervention treatment. Participants in the SWOT intervention described the visioning process to be frustrating and negative; while, Ai participants found that the visioning process confirmed many of their beliefs and values about the

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department. Recommendations for future practice suggest the use of Strengths, Opportunities, Aspiration, Results (SOAR) as an approach that combines and maximizes Ai and SWOT. Suggestions for future research are to explore SWOT as a precursor to divisoning within the Visioning Process Model.

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DEDICATION

“I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.” – Albert Einstein

This work dedicated to curious people.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A widely accepted definition of leadership is yet to be adopted as researchers continue to dissect the relationship between leaders, follower, and context (Winston & Patterson, 2006). Despite the many existing definitions of leadership, most scholars will agree on the basic assumption that leaders must share a vision that resonates with others further inspiring them to jointly take action (e.g. Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). This being said, a close relationship exists between leaders and visions (Schein, 2010a). However, only a small body of research has investigated the understanding and practice of visioning (Kantabutra, 2008). Amongst the shared characteristics of vision attributes, a vision should have the ability to inspire (Kantabutra). Many leadership theories, one of them being transformational leadership, focus on building a relationship with followers (Berson, Shamir, Avolio, & Popper, 2001).

Practitioners and consultants of organizational development use a variety of techniques to facilitate strategic planning, visioning, and management (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Rothwell, Sullivan, & McLean, 2005). This thesis is an evaluation of two organizational visioning strategies. This case study compares how Appreciative inquiry (Ai) and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis contribute to participants' perceptions of vision clarity and organizational commitment, as well as the change in these variables as a result of the interventions.

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This case study aims to contribute to the body of literature and the prevailing questions surrounding organizational vision and strategic visioning techniques.

The first chapter presents the background and describes the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding this case study, the problem statement, purpose and research questions, and significance of the study. Lastly, the chapter concludes with an overview of the methodology, limitations of the study, and a definition of terms.

Background

The study of leadership has expanded exponentially in the past three decades (Northouse, 2012). Companies are putting more and more employees through leadership development workshops (Day, 2000), while colleges and universities are offering leadership studies as an academic focus and providing co-curricular programs for leadership development (Dugan & Komives, 2007). *Business Week* estimated in 1993 that companies spent one-fourth of their total annual budget, 16.5 billion dollars, on executive education and leadership development each year (Fulmer & Goldsmith, 2001). The time and money spent on leadership development could be in response to the “leadership crisis” that exists with the expectation that many top executives will be leaving within the next ten years (Caudron, 1999; Hammond, Muffs, & Sciascia, 2001). Uriel Rosenthal, Arjen Boin, and Comfort (2001) suggest the crisis is reoccurring in modern society, affecting all sectors of people. The investment could also be a result of “wicked problems;” problems that are complex with inter-related dilemmas at multiple levels of society that require leadership (Horn & Weber, 2007). The perceived need for leadership training could

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also be a response to advances in technology and the global market (Hickman, 2010).

A distinction between managers and leaders must be made, as they have different roles and skill sets. Leaders “develop visions and drive changes” while managers “monitor progress and solve problems” (Jackson & Parry, 2011, p. 19). Furthermore, leadership scholars agree that the leader’s ability to develop a shared vision is an integral component in the definition of leadership (eg. Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Northouse, 2012). Vision is an image of an attractive, realistic, and believable future (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Leaders must find a common purpose and enlist others to be successful in reaching their vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Vision and the visioning process are essential to leadership (Schein, 2010b). Visioning is the process by which leaders and additional members of the organization craft a clear direction for the future. As determined by Kakabadse, Kakabadse, and Lee-Davies (2005) through a synthesis of literature on visioning, visioning can be broken down into six guidelines:

1. Frame your organization’s mission around intrinsically appealing goals;
2. Incorporate positive values with stories;
3. Highlight key belief categories;
4. Employ more analogies, metaphors etc. when speaking;
5. When communicating try various rhetorical techniques; and
6. Allow emotions to surface (Kakabadse et al., p. 238).

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Important themes related to visioning emerge from the guidelines: repetition of core values, level of personal commitment to the vision, and communication of the vision (Kakabadse et al.). Kakabadse, Kakabadse, and Lee-Davies also noted the moral responsibility of the leader to include individuals' personal values in the visioning journey, "vision without morality is nothing less than self-interest" (Kakabadse et al., p. 238).

SWOT and Ai are two techniques used within organizational development for visioning. SWOT analysis is a popular method of strategic planning within companies and organizations due to its simple, yet thorough, approach. The approach is used by many different sectors for community visioning (Singh & Kosi-Katarmal, 2009), corporate visioning (O'Brien & Meadows, 2000), and to design and redesign the vision (Barker, 2006). Ai has recently emerged as "a positive revolution" within organizational development, and many practitioners are using this approach for strategic visioning and planning (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2007). The approach has also been used to facilitate whole system change in public and non-profit sectors (Finegold, Holland, & Lingham, 2002). Cooperrider (1997) expresses the use of Ai for corporate visioning, advocacy, and "building connection and commitment for the future directions" (p. 2).

While organizational development professionals are experts in the conversation of organizational visioning, it should be noted that leaders, at all levels of an organization, are often the ones facilitating the visioning process. Generally speaking, leaders have the autonomy to decide how they want to facilitate conversations of change and visioning. SWOT analysis and Ai are investigated as

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two ways in which leaders could facilitate this dialogue. The purpose of this study is to determine if either of the organizational visioning techniques has an effect on organizational commitment and vision clarity, both of which are considered to be vital components of leadership.

Theoretical Framework

Vision, a key component of leadership, is investigated through the conceptual framework proposed by Kouzes and Posner (2007). The authors define a vision as “an ideal and unique image of the future” (Kouzes & Posner, p 22). Further they define leadership as “the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations” (Kouzes & Posner, p 20). These commonly accepted definitions and concepts are used as a framework in developing this case study.

This case study is influenced by the research from Kouzes and Posner, which is shared in their book, *The Leadership Challenge*. Based on survey questionnaires and case analysis collected for over 25 years, the authors identified five practices of exemplary leadership: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). This case study is based on their leadership behavior model with the assumption that one of the roles of a leader is to “inspire a shared vision”. In order to inspire a shared vision, the leader must enlist others, find a common purpose, reflect, and listen deeply to others (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). While there are many ways to inspire a shared vision (eg. Kakabadse et al., 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2007), visioning and articulating the vision are challenging. Ai and SWOT are two organizational visioning techniques that can help leaders facilitate this process.

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With the understanding that leaders are responsible for inspiring a shared vision and facilitating change, a Visioning Process Model is used to showcase the effects and importance of visioning. As such, the techniques by which vision can be created are examined based on changes in organizational commitment and vision clarity. These variables are examined as a result of their relationship to leadership and visioning as suggested by Kouzes and Posner.

The leaders' ability to inspire a shared vision can be assessed by using the Visioning Process Model (Figure 1-1) composed by Kakabadse et al. (2005). Within the model, decisions made by the leader determine the visioning outcome. Further, the leader's actions determine whether the di-visioning process (ie. failure to achieve goals) or the visioning process will take place. The leader's actions can be dependent upon the organizational culture. In order for the visioning process to take place, the leaders must have a personal conviction for the cause, commitment from the senior team, fast feedback, involvement from the workforce, and they must be able to establish a visioning culture (Kakabadse et al., 2005). The authors suggest that the pathway towards visioning adopts a self-perpetuating adhesiveness to the vision, which likely increases organizational commitment. Team buy-in is enhanced through a visioning culture, and a bond is made if the correct visioning course is taken. The model further illustrates the importance and significance of visioning. The visioning pathway chosen by the leader is proven to have negative or positive effects on the organization. Moreover, much of the organization's success depends on the leader's ability to engage in a culture of visioning, which could be

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facilitated by various strategic planning and visioning techniques (Kakabadse et al., 2005).

Conversely, the pathway towards di-visioning results in a survivalist attitude and in negative organizational performance and attitudes. Di-visioning is the leader’s inability to enact the four components of the visioning process and results in organizational division, conflicts with empowerment ranks, internal wars between employees, and a short-term orientation that weakens the company (Kakabadse et al., 2005).

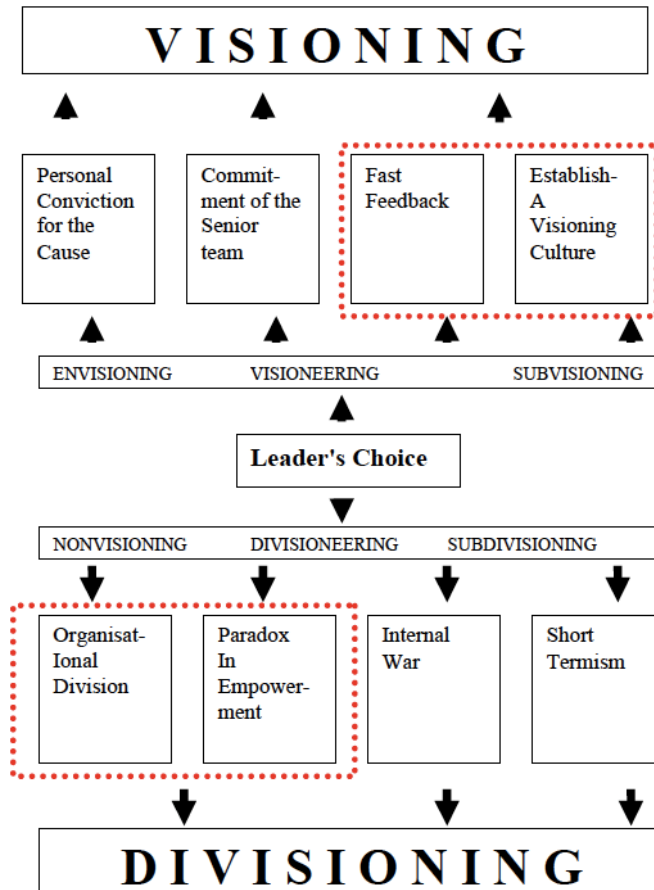


Figure 1-1. The visioning process model (or visioning pathway). From “Visioning the Pathway: A Leadership Process Model,” by Kakabadse, N., Kakabadse, A., & Lee-Davies, L. (2005). *European Management Journal*, 23(2), p. 244. Copyright 2005 by Elsevier. Reprint with permission.

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While it is understood that vision is integral to leadership, little is understood about attributes of an effective vision. Kantabutra (2008) summarizes the literature to highlight commonly shared attributes of vision statements, which include brevity, clarity, future orientation, stability, challenge, abstractness, and desirability, or ability to inspire. The leaders' ability to inspire and share the vision can be studied using a number of variables. Vision content, communication, and attributes have been found to contribute to venture growth (Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998). Baum et al. (1998) found it to be imperative that the leader communicate the vision to the company and cultivate a vision, by which the content relates to the interests of the company's employees. Dvir, Kass, and Shamir (2004) noted that an emotional bond from organizational commitment should be formed during the visioning process. This process aligns employee's values with those of the company and, in turn, employee's organizational commitment is positively affected.

The widely recognized organizational commitment model composed by Allen and Meyer (1996) is based on three components: affective, cognitive, and normative commitment. Particularly, affective commitment relates to an individual's involvement and emotional attachment to the organization (Allen & Meyer). Further, the literature notes that leaders are expected to generate high levels of organizational commitment (Dvir et al., 2004). Even more so, transformational leaders are expected to generate high levels of organizational commitment through their visions, inspiring a committed relationship to the company that is moral and personal (Dvir et al.).

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In summary, the conceptual model proposed by Kouzes and Posner (2007) explains that inspiring a shared vision is a critical element of leadership. As mentioned by Kakabadse et al. (2005) in the Visioning Process Model, organizational success is dependent upon the visioning or di-visioning actions taken by the leader. The visioning process must be communicated and facilitated in such a way that employee values align with values of the organization (Kakabadse et al., 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Further, leaders are expected to generate high levels of organizational commitment through their vision (Dvir et al., 2004).

Problem Statement

Vision is considered to be an integral part of leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Conger & Kanungo, 1987). A vision statement details an “image of an attractive, realistic, and believable future” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 89) that provides a sense of direction for organizational members to follow (eg. Kotter, 1997; Levin, 2000; Porras & Collins, 1994; Senge, 1990). Vision has also been reported to be a vital part of business strategy and planning (eg. Porras & Collins, 1994; Schoemaker, 1992; Vandermerwe, 1995). With this understanding of vision and the Visioning Process Model provided by Kakabadse et al. (2005), it is easy to see how essential it is for a leader to be able to cultivate such a statement. However, Kouzes and Posner (2007) found that many leaders struggle with creating and articulating a vision. This is detrimental considering the impact that leaders have in determining the success of visioning and, in turn, the success of the organization. We must be able to understand and effectively facilitate visioning within our organizations in order to successfully move into the future.

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Despite the common use of organizational development techniques by leaders, practitioners, and consultants to facilitate visioning, there is still a need to analyze the techniques themselves (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Leigh, 2010).

Considering how many companies are investing in executive education and leadership development, the effectiveness of the techniques being used ought to be an important issue. The approaches to organizational visioning and planning need further analysis to determine their outcomes, clarity, and return on investment (Helms & Nixon, 2010). Moreover, there is a growing need to compare the two strategies, SWOT and Ai, in order to help companies and organizations determine which technique is most appropriate for them.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) case study is to understand techniques used in organizational visioning by converging quantitative numerical data and qualitative thematic data. As defined by Finlay (1994, p. 64) organizational visioning involves “activities which can effectively push a group of leaders of an organization to an inspiring, rich, and beyond-the-present paradigm view of a positive future for their organization.” Multiple sources of data are used to develop and inform research methods, in addition to elaborating and clarifying results with the intent to increase meaningfulness and validity of constructs and inquiry results (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). In this study, an organizational commitment questionnaire (short form) (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) and a vision clarity questionnaire, adapted from Cole, Harris, and Bernerth (2006), were used to measure organizational

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commitment and vision clarity and their relationship to intervention treatments, Appreciative inquiry (Ai) and Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Following the SWOT and Ai interventions, quantitative data was collected and analyzed. Organizational visioning was explored using intervention observations and focus group interviews with department staff. Quantitative data analysis informed the qualitative selection and protocol; while, mixing of the qualitative and quantitative data occurred during data collection and interpretation. Mixing data provided a better explanation of organizational visioning and responded to the call for mixed methods research by Stentz, Plano Clark, and Matkin (2012).

The thesis aims to answer the following questions:

1. What were the levels of organizational commitment and vision clarity before and after the interventions?
2. What were the differences in organizational commitment and vision clarity within and between treatment groups?
3. What were the process and products of each intervention?
4. How did participants' perceive the visioning process and resulting effects?
5. What similarities and differences are there between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group?
6. Are there significant differences in pre-test and post-test results between intervention groups based on their visioning process?

Significance of Study

Despite the popularity of SWOT analysis and the attention gained by Ai in organizational development, the current literature possesses little research on the techniques themselves (Egan & Lancaster, 2005; Helms & Nixon, 2010; Wirtenberg, Abrams, & Ott, 2004). Previous studies highlight the need for research on SWOT analysis (Leigh, 2010; Piercy & Giles, 1989; Wirtenberg et al., 2004) and Ai (Grant & Humphries, 2006; van der Haar & Hosking, 2004). Many questions have been raised about the outcomes, clarity, return on investment, and execution of both these methodologies. Moreover, there is a growing need to compare the two techniques. By comparing strategies for organizational visioning, companies and organizations can better determine which technique is most appropriate for them (Rothwell et al., 2005).

Many organizations have an annual retreat to recount the previous year and plan for upcoming years. How do organizational leaders facilitate conversations about the future? How do leaders find common purpose amongst members? How do leaders communicate the vision? Does the vision statement portray values that align with the values held by the employees? Do employees understand their purpose within an organization? The field of organizational visioning and leadership will benefit from this case study as it further investigates approaches to crafting a shared vision. This case study examines in a “real-life” setting the execution of the strategic visioning techniques: SWOT and Ai. While these techniques have been widely accepted, there is little research evaluating the

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methods. Heretofore, this case study intends to make a contribution to the existing body of literature on Ai, SWOT, and organizational visioning techniques.

Overview of Methodology

In this case study, participants are divided, half of the staff participating in Ai and half participating in SWOT analysis. An organizational development consultant facilitated both SWOT and Ai intervention treatments according to established protocols by Leigh (2010) and Cooperrider, Whitney, Stavros, and Fry (2008), respectively. Data was gathered from researcher observation, focus group interviews, and pre-test, post-test, and delayed post intervention tests. Tests were derived from a organizational commitment questionnaire (short form) (Mowday et al., 1979) and a vision clarity questionnaire adopted from Cole et al. (2006).

Data was examined using an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). Through the design, qualitative data is used to explain and enhance the quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A repeated measures ANOVA, with random subject effects, investigated change within and between intervention treatment groups. This analysis informed the qualitative selection and protocol. Qualitative data focused on perceptions of the visioning process and resulting effects. Qualitative data was analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). Mixing of both data strands occurred during data collection and interpretation. The methods for this case study were chosen to fully describe the visioning process and capture multiple sources of evidence related to the phenomena of organizational

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visioning. The methodology is fully discussed in chapter three of the thesis; please reference this section for further details on the case study's mixed method research.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges the limitations of the thesis being that of a case study. The study is limited in its focus on one department and, therefore, the results are not generalizable. Due to limitations in time and resources, the research only investigates the participants' perceptions of the interventions, change in vision clarity, and change in organizational commitment. The interventions were limited due to the time and resources of the participants. During Ai and SWOT, only the first two phases of Ai were completed, discovery and dream, and only one SWOT was fully developed within each four hour session. This case study does not attempt to research the long-term effects of the strategic planning or visioning techniques nor the rate of vision implementation as a result of SWOT and Ai, because it would take approximately three to five years to study the goal achievements from strategic planning.

Definition of Terms

Throughout the literature in organizational development the terms strategic planning, strategic visioning, change management, and even strategic management are all used to describe similar actions. A very close relationship exists between planning and visioning within an organization. This is well explained by Stavros, Cooperrider, and Kelley (2003, p. 2), "change requires action. Action requires a plan. A plan requires strategy. A strategy requires goals and enabling objectives. Goals and objectives require a mission. A mission is defined by a vision. A vision is

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set by one's values." Additionally, organizational visioning adopts the definition for strategic visioning and, for purposes of this paper, the term organizational visioning refers to the process that takes place within an organization to plan and cultivate a desirable future.

Listed below are key terms of the thesis.

- *Affective Commitment*: The affective component of organizational commitment refers to "employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 1).
- *Appreciative inquiry (Ai)*: A practitioner-oriented definition, "is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives 'life' to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. Ai involves the art and science of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential" (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 3).
- *Intervention*: "Any action on the part of a change agent. Intervention carries the implication that the action is planned and deliberate and presumably functional. Many suggest that an organizational development intervention requires valid information, free choice, and a high degree of ownership by the client system of the course of action" (Cummings & Worley, 2009, p. 750).
- *Leadership*: "(1) A relationship based on influence, (2) leaders and followers develop that relationship, (3) they intend real changes, and (4) they have mutual purposes" (Rost, 1993, p. 127).

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- *Organizational Commitment*: “The relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 226).
- *Organizational Development (OD)*: “First, for research and practice activity to be considered organizational development, it must involve change in an organization, one or more of its systems, or its members as a whole.... Second, research and practice can be called organizational development if it is intended to transfer a change capability to the client system...Third, research and practice can be called organizational development if the activities involve a deliberate and conscious effort to improve the performance or effectiveness of the client system” (Cummings & Worley, 2009, pp. 111-112).
- *Organizational Visioning/ Strategic Visioning*: “Activities which can effectively push a group of leaders of an organization to an inspiring, rich, and beyond-the-present paradigm view of a positive future for their organization” (Finlay, 1994, p. 64).
- *Practitioner*: “A generic term for people practicing organizational development. These individuals may include managers responsible for developing their organizations or departments, people specializing in organization development as a profession, and people specializing in a field currently being integrated with organizational development who have gained some familiarity with and competence in organizational development” (Cummings & Worley, 2009, p. 752).

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- *Strategic Planning*: “A disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is what it does, and why it does it” (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002, p. 6).
- *Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats Analysis (SWOT)*: “An approach to considering the inhibitors and enhancers to performance that an organization encounters in both its internal and external environments” (Boyd, Moore, Williams, & Elbert, 2011, p. 1089).
- *Vision*: “An image of an attractive, realistic, and believable future” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 89). The “most desirable or ideal state which we would like our organization to achieve at some time in the future” (Finlay, 1994, p. 64).
- *Vision Clarity*: The ability to “translate the vision from words to pictures with a vivid description of what it will be like to achieve your goal” (Collins & Porras, 1996, p. 74).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature is reviewed to evaluate research that contributes to arguments made in the study. The relational paradigm of leadership is considered because of its focus on the meaning-making process and the connection it has to various techniques of organizational visioning. The role of the leader to develop vision and create change is reviewed as an integral part of leadership. The components and techniques of strategic visioning and planning within organizational development are analyzed as a result of their distinct relationship within strategic visioning. SWOT analysis, a popular planning technique, is examined to further understand the background, characteristics, criticisms, and applications. A recent approach in the literature to strategic planning and visioning, Ai, is evaluated, and the same factors are investigated. Lastly, vision clarity and organizational commitment are described as a desired outcome because of their ties to leadership, their impact on the organization, and their relevance in the visioning process.

Leadership: A Relational Understanding

Rost (1993) suggests a paradigm shift in the study of leadership from an industrial to a post-industrial understanding centered on the belief that leadership is relational. Leadership is now understood to be transformative, learned, change, and process oriented (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Some scholars have further defined leadership as a social construction. To expand, leadership is a meaning making process of which our understanding of leadership is socially constructed through

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our own experiences (Drath & Palus, 1994). Individuals carry their own mental model of leadership that has been developed based on interactions with one another (Gardner, 1995).

Within the post-industrial paradigm, leadership is considered to be "(1) a relationship based on influence, (2) leaders and followers develop that relationship, (3) they intend real changes, and (4) they have mutual purposes" (Rost, 1993, p. 127). Rost also highlights the leader's responsibility to facilitate change. The definition is powerful because of the emphasis he puts on intended change.

Rost (1993) reviews the many perspectives on leadership, all of which emphasize the importance of a leader's ability to be visionary. These beliefs have been echoed by Northouse (2012) in his widely read leadership textbooks. Vision is considered to be an attractive image of the future that is believable and realistic (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Many describe vision as the leader's ability to envision the future and forecast strategies for the long term. Morden (1997) defines vision, "as an organized perception or phenomenon. It is an imagined or perceived pattern of communal possibilities to which others can be drawn, given the necessary enthusiasm and momentum on the part of the leader who is promulgating that vision" (p. 668). Within Morden's definition of vision, the relational elements of the paradigm shift are present as well as the idea that leadership is a social construction. Morden notes the leader's responsibility to inspire and enlist others in the visioning process, as well as the leader's responsibility to put the vision into action. These components are identified as themes of importance in the visioning

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process. Many scholars detail the necessity for the leader to cultivate a shared vision.

The integral role visioning plays in various leadership styles, specifically transformational and charismatic leadership, has drawn the attention of many scholars. Transformational leadership describes the leader's ability to create a vision and motivate others for a common purpose. Further, vision is an essential component to transformational leadership (Rost, 1993). Leaders of this style make their followers feel like stakeholders of the vision and highlight the contributions of each individual, which ultimately leads to higher performance levels (Bass, 1985). This varies greatly from the industrial definition of a transactional leader, who focuses on the needs of the followers in exchange for results (Bass). Berson et al. (2001) examined the inspirational content of "strong" visions and suggest that "inspirationally 'strong' vision statements [generated by transformational leaders] will contain the type of content [optimism and confidence] that would foster motivational processes" (p. 56). However, Kouzes and Posner (2007) have found that creating a vision and articulating the vision continues to be a challenge for many leaders.

The Leader: Vision and Change

Kouzes and Posner (2007) discovered, through 25 years of surveys and case analysis, five best practices of leadership. The practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart, were concluded based on shared personal-best leadership experiences (Kouzes & Posner). The authors adopted these five practices as components to their

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leadership behavior model. One of these practices, inspiring a shared vision, can be achieved by imagining the possibilities, finding a common purpose, and reflecting and acting on the envisioned future (Kouzes & Posner). In support of this, many leadership scholars have found that exemplary leaders are described by their followers as visionary and inspirational (eg. Bass, 1985; Baum et al., 1998; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Berson et al., 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Northouse, 2012; Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Kouzes and Posner (2007) argue for the importance of reflection in the visioning process, as they share that the more time a leader spends reflecting, the greater their future time orientation. Further, reflection allows for a deeper focus on rich experiences that contribute to our construction of the future (Kouzes & Posner). The need for leaders to listen deeply to their employees was explained as an imperative tactic to understanding the formulation of the common purpose. Additionally, common purpose must be something that everyone in the organization believes in and can relate too; it must reflect the core values of the organization and its members. Vision attributes, content, and communication are extremely important for leaders to be effective and for an organization to be successful (Baum et al., 1998).

Kouzes and Posner (2007) draw attention to the fact that visioning is the responsibility of the leader, and participation from members in this process is strongly encouraged. Throughout the strategic management literature, the role of strategic visioning and planning varies greatly, and some disagreement exists as to whether it should be a top-down or bottom-up exercise (Poister, Pitts, & Hamilton,

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2010). Many studies support the participation of the workforce in creating a vision and being a part of the planning process which has resulted in greater perceived impacts for the organization (e.g. Ludema & Barrett, 2009; Poister & Streib, 2005). Dvir, Kass, and Shamir (2004) also found that a high level of shared-ness in vision assimilation processes made for an affective organization.

Vision has been discussed widely as a necessary component to leadership and a successful organization. Without a clear and specific vision, many companies fail to achieve their goals (Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 1999). Kakabadse et al. (2005, p. 239) explained that, "visioning combines many aspects of the strategic leadership process with organizational focus at all levels." The authors developed a Visioning Process Model as a framework that details a positive and negative trajectory of organizational success. The principles underlying the positive visioning steps agree with the best practices of a leader from the perspectives of Kouzes and Posner (2007). The leader's conviction and need for commitment by the team correlates with the need for leaders to inspire and enlist others in the vision. The latter two steps, getting feedback and creating a vision culture, correspond with reflection, dialogue, and deep listening within the organization.

As Rost (1993) stated, leadership results in real intended change. Kouzes and Posner (2007) also suggest that change requires leadership. The authors noted the work of Rosabeth Kanter: "leadership is inextricably connected with the process of innovation" (Kouzes & Posner, p. 165). Leaders help to bring about new ideas and solutions in which they advocate for implementation through strategic

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decisions (Kanter, 1983). There are various tools and techniques to aid leaders in the analysis and facilitation of change within an organization.

The phenomenon of change within organizations has been studied and developed within the field of organizational development. Organizational change is extremely complex (Burke, 2002; Svyantek & Brown, 2000), and new models were created in an attempt to conceptualize the phenomenon. Some models that conceptualize change include: Lewin's Change Model, the Action Research Model, and the Positive Model. Kurt Lewin was the first to conceptualize organizational change through a three-step change model that emphasized freezing, movement, and unfreezing (Cummings & Worley, 2009). The model has been used widely but, in the last 20 years, it has received greater criticism from scholars. Burnes (2004) is critical of the model's top-down and management driven approach to change, the limited focus on small business and project changes, and the model's exclusion of the role power and politics play in organizational change.

The Action Research Model represents a shift in conceptualizing organizational change from a linear, industrial, and positivist approach to a non-linear complex-systems approach (Susman & Evered, 1978). The shift from “normal” science to complex-systems understanding of organizational change was in response to the work of Svyantek and Brown (2000). The model is based upon four steps: plan, act, observe, reflect (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Since the inception of the model in the 1940s, many divergent forms have emerged to meet the contemporary complex issues facing organizations (Elden & Chisholm, 1993).

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The Positive Model represents another shift in organizational change models and organizational development. The previous models are deficit based; meaning that, the models focus on fixing organizational problems. SWOT analysis is another example of a technique that exists in the problem-solving paradigm of organizational development; whereas, the Positive Model is focused on what the organization is doing right (Cummings & Worley, 2009). The model reflects the movement in the social sciences towards positive organizational scholarship and positive psychology; moreover, these studies focus on positive dynamics within organizations that give rise to extraordinary outcomes (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). The Positive Model depicted in Cummings and Worley (2009) consists of five phases which are largely based on Appreciative inquiry (Ai). Ai was developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) as a departure from traditional ways of thinking about organizational development. The literature on SWOT and Ai is further developed in the latter portion of the literature review.

Strategic Planning and Visioning within Organizational Development

Organizational development is defined by Cummings and Worley (2009, p. 1) as a “professional field of social action and an area of scientific inquiry.” While many definitions of organizational development exist, the field is broadly understood in this way. Cummings and Worley suggest that there are three components to organizational development that must be met in order for the process to be termed as such. First, the organizational development process must result in a change to some aspect of the organizational system. Second, there must be a transfer of knowledge or learned skill to the client system. Lastly, there must be evidence of

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improvement or an intention to improve effectiveness within an organization (Cummings & Worley). Within the field of organizational development, practitioners and consultants work to improve organizational effectiveness through a variety of skills, tools, techniques, and analyses.

The field of organizational development has researched strategic planning, strategic visioning, and strategic management. Nag, Hambrick, and Chen (2007) synthesized the many fragmented definitions of strategic management as dealing “with the major intended and emergent initiatives taken by general managers on behalf of owners, involving utilization of resources, to enhance the performance of firms in their external environments” (p. 944). Conceptually, strategic management focuses on organizational resources and performance, whereas strategic planning is related to the “big picture” in formulating strategy to address the fundamental issues facing an organization (Poister et al., 2010). Like strategic management, strategic planning is an attempt to sustain organizational success and effectiveness, which is promoted through an organizational development technique that matches the company’s culture and environment (Poister & Streib, 2005).

As vision interventions with large groups became popular in the 1980s and 1990s (Bass & Stogdill, 1990), a greater emphasis was placed on the visioning process, and strategic visioning became a commonly used phrase in the field of organizational development. Levin (2000) defines strategic vision as clear guidance that sets the context for development based upon a clear vision of the future. Finlay (2004, p. 46) contends that the strategic visioning process is “a series of activities which can effectively push a group of leaders of an organization to an inspiring, rich,

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and beyond-the-present paradigm view of a positive future for their organization.”

A strategic vision that is supported by and created with help of the organization’s stakeholders provides a shared responsibility for its implementation (Levin, 2000).

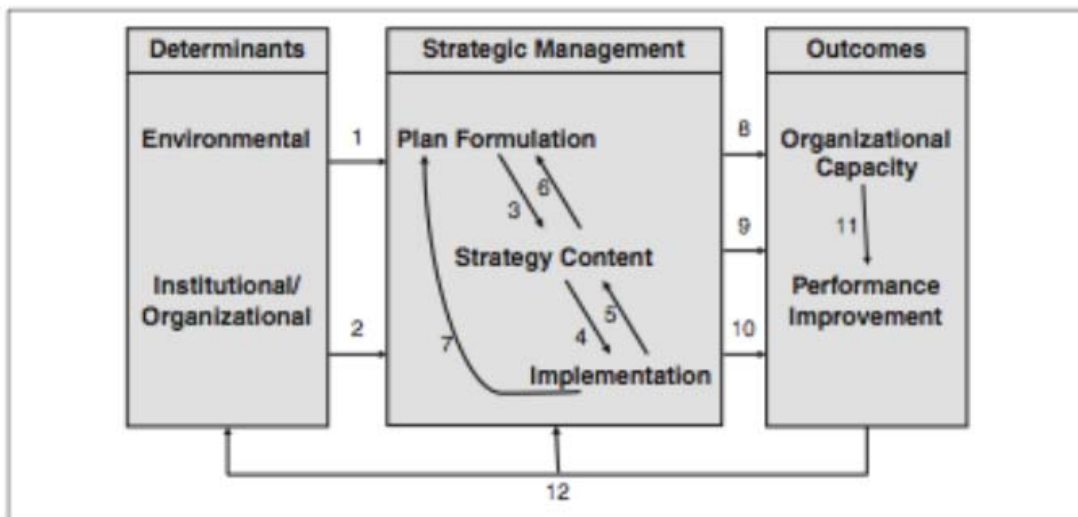
Creation and execution of a strategic vision can be facilitated through the techniques practiced in organizational development and can be a beneficial process to strengthen company performance. Kantabutra (2008) explained the need for future research to examine the connections between visions and desirable performance outcomes.

Furthermore, strategic planning plays an integral role in organizational visioning. Within the life cycle of an organization, vision is articulated at three salient times: “at founding, when facing periods of disruption, and when purposefully planning for the future” (O’Connell, Hickerson, & Pillutla, 2011, p. 106). Hill and Jones (2009) asserted that development of a clear vision by top leaders is essential to strategic planning. Planning occurs when leaders need to reexamine organizational culture and operations or when organizational transformation is required. As described by Langley (1988, p. 44), “the planning process serves an important role in generating information for strategic visions.” Strategic planning is centered on the mission, vision, and values of an organization while, at the same time, visioning is nothing more than an idea until it is put into action. Planning and visioning must be built off one another in order for an organization to be successful.

In review of the literature on strategic management and planning in the public sector, Poister et al. (2010) synthesized findings from 34 research articles and composed a model diagramming the results (Figure 2-1). The framework first

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links the operating environment of an organization as a determinate to approaches for strategic planning. Link two represents the major impact of institutional context on strategic planning and management. The organization's culture, leadership, value system, size, competitors, and mandates are some of the determinates of institutional context cited in the literature (Poister et al.).



*Figure 2-1. Strategic planning and management conceptual framework. From "Strategic management research in the public sector: A review, synthesis, and future directions," by Poister, T. H., Pitts, D. W., & Hamilton Edwards, L. (2010). *The American Review of Public Administration*, 40(5), p. 522. Copyright 2010 by Sage Publications. Reprinted with permission.*

Within this conceptual framework, an organization develops their strategic plan, which is then influenced by its strategy content and approach to implementation. These influences are represented by links three and four on the diagram, while links five and six represent the iterative process of strategic management. Link seven represents the thought that, with the generation of a new solution, a new problem is created, and therefore another plan is needed.

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In their review of the literature, Poister, Pitts, and Edwards (2010) draw attention to the lack of research on linkages between the processes of strategic planning and organizational outcomes. Links eight, nine, and ten represent the intentions of strategic management to bring about desired outcomes. The links relate to enhanced organizational capacity such as stronger partnership, improved organizational viability, and a more positive public image, as well as, long term changes in performance. There is an indirect relationship, represented by link eleven, between organizational capacity and performance improvement, as strengthening of an organization's capacity can result in improved performance. Lastly, link twelve features the feedback loop from outcomes that inform the strategic management process. The framework is helpful in synthesizing the current literature of strategic planning and management to further understand the field and develop future research.

SWOT Analysis: A Traditional Approach to Planning and Visioning

Background

Among the strategic planning techniques in organizational development, SWOT analysis is an extremely popular technique that is simple, yet thorough. The commonly used term "SWOT", also referred to as TOWS in some management textbooks, is an acronym for organizational analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Balamuralikrishna & Dugger, 1995). SWOT is "an approach to considering the inhibitors and enhancers to performance that an organization encounters in both internal and external environments" (Leigh, 2010,

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p. 1089). Strengths are viewed as enhancers and weaknesses as inhibitors to desired company performance. Strengths and weaknesses are considered to be factors within control of the company, while opportunities and threats are factors outside the control of the company. Further, opportunities are also viewed as enhancers and threats as inhibitors to desired company performance (Leigh). SWOT analysis is intended for identification of aspects of company performance that can serve as a basis for strategic planning (Ghazinoory, Abdi, & Azadegan-Mehr, 2011).

The actual originator of the term SWOT is unknown, and many scholars have attempted to identify an author of the proposed analysis (Helms & Nixon, 2010). Despite this fact, the term SWOT has been used and documented in the literature for half a century. Kurt Lewin's work in 1951 is attributed for setting up the groundwork for SWOT analysis (Leigh, 2010). He believed that organizational results were influenced by various driving forces and limiting forces, which are now termed as enhancers and inhibitors (Leigh). Helms and Nixon (2010) have also identified sources who credit a Stanford professor, Albert Humphrey, for being the originator of SWOT. Two Harvard professors, George Albert Smith Jr. and Ronald Christensen, were also interested in a similar concept in the 1950s. They investigated the extent to which a company matched their strategy to their competitive environment (Leigh, 2010). Later, Harvard hosted a conference introducing SWOT analysis to businessmen and the academic community.

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Characteristics

SWOT analysis is typically completed within a focus group in four sequential steps: “identifying stakeholders, generating SWOTs, categorizing SWOTs within a 2x2 matrix, and deliberating how best to address those SWOTs” (Leigh, 2010, p. 1093). Individuals are invited to the focus group based on the context of organizational decisions. If the decisions made will affect various groups of people, then it is advised that the group be represented in the process. It is also important to consider who has power over the findings and interest in the issue. Focus groups are a useful way of gaining perspective from members within an organization.

	External	Internal
Enhancer	Opportunities	Strengths
Inhibitor	Threats	Weaknesses

Figure 2-2. SWOT analysis matrix. From “SWOT analysis,” by Leigh, D. (2010). *Handbook of Improving Performance in the Workplace: Volumes 1-3*, 115-140. Copyright 2010 by the International Society for Performance Improvement. Reprinted with permission.

After the SWOT process has been explained, members of the group are asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of a given strategy as well as opportunities and threats for external factors. SWOTs are then categorized, using a SWOT matrix, by the perceived influence each factor has on organizational performance (Leigh,

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2010). The last step, deliberation, involves discussion of appropriate actions based on the SWOT factors. The deliberation could happen in the analysis session, follow up focus groups, or by work-groups tasked with formal inquiry of SWOT factors (Leigh). Chermack and Kasshanna (2007) suggested that, “strategic dialogue may be the part of the SWOT analysis with the most potential for creating change in participant viewpoints” (p. 390).

Hill and Westbrook (1997) detailed the opinion of many proponents of SWOT who support its use as a rigorous analytical tool. The technique has the ability to analyze whole systems as well as critically evaluate specific strategies. SWOT analysis is classified as a problem solving technique that provides a framework for the investigation of organizational strategies and performance. Strategies are examined with the intent to fix and address issues internal or external to the organization. Furthermore the analysis of weaknesses and threats within an organization showcases the models existence in the deficit paradigm of organizational development as opposed to the solutions based paradigm. The contemporary applications of SWOT analysis in market research contexts use “hard” data to “provide an objective and impartial view of the organization’s internal and external environment” (Leigh, 2010, p. 118). However, in business strategy development contexts “soft” data is derived from the opinions of employees and staff based on the holistic evaluation of internal and external influences of the organization (Leigh).

Many scholars (eg. Balamuralikrishna & Dugger, 1995; Glaister & Falshaw, 1999; Pickton & Wright, 1998; Piercy & Giles, 1989) have noted SWOT analysis to be

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one of the most commonly used tools and techniques for strategic planning and visioning. SWOT was a core component to many of the strategic planning processes of the 1970s and 1980s. This approach was also used to help companies create holistic plans and improvements instead of focusing on individual departments. The strategic planning process found in many modern books on business still includes a discussion of SWOT analysis. This is supported by Allio (2006) as he notes that there are few concepts anchored to strategic thinking in the business world SWOT analysis is one of them. While some improvements have been made to strategic planning over the years, SWOT analysis remains at the core of this process.

The simplicity and practicality of the analysis is a major strength and serves as a contributor to its popularity in the workplace (Pickton & Wright, 1998). The greatest advantage, especially for small to medium sized enterprises, is that it allows management to survey various areas, gain insight into significant issues and take action accordingly (Houben, Lenie, & Vanhoof, 1999). SWOT analysis has been identified by many as an important technique of strategic planning for leaders, change agents, and consultants to have in their toolkit (Singh & Kosi-Katarmal, 2009). The technique is perceived to be especially useful in business in responding to market forces and planning a competitive strategy based on the external environment (Helms & Nixon, 2010). Mintzberg (1994) believes that SWOT analysis is an underlying component of all attempts to formalize the strategy making process. Many scholars (eg. Ghazinoory et al., 2011; Helms & Nixon, 2010; Pickton & Wright, 1998; Piercy & Giles, 1989) note that SWOT analysis is highly recommended with additional approaches.

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Leigh (2010) recommends a six-step SWOT analysis in which additional synthesis and action are integrated into the experience. He details the steps as 1) recruiting stakeholders, 2) convening the focus group, 3) identifying and categorizing SWOTs, 4) analyzing SWOTs, 5) synthesizing SWOTs, and 6) interpreting findings and deliberating action. In latter steps, the data is reduced through analysis; while, patterns and relationships are exposed between internal and external factors in synthesis. Lastly, strategies and action plans are created in response to the patterns that emerged from the SWOT analysis session. His recommendations are in response to the critiques of SWOT and strategic planning.

Critiques

Despite SWOT's many proponents and popularity within organizations, the critics of SWOT are many. SWOT has suffered from its popularity in that the technique is normally poorly executed with little effect (Piercy & Giles, 1989). Criticisms concerning SWOT's value, intent, effect, and return on investment are common; further, little analysis on the tool itself has been conducted (Helms & Nixon, 2010). One of the concerns is that there is an inability to prioritize SWOTs in relation to one another which results in insufficient data to aid in decision making (Leigh, 2010). Leigh noted that weighting factors within the SWOT could enhance its use as an analytic tool. Some practitioners in the field of organizational development argue that as a technique SWOT lacked perceived value of the analysis (Wirtenberg et al., 2004).

SWOT analysis has also been discredited for the lack of theory backing the technique and because of this many scholars have suggested alternatives or

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improvements to the traditional analysis. Some scholars have suggested theory building to strengthen the strategic planning technique (Helms & Nixon, 2010). Valentin (2001) proposes a resource-based approach to SWOT analysis that is derived from a contemporary strategic management theory. Ghazinoory et al. (2011) suggest that integrative strategies be developed in addition to singular strategies related to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results model (SOAR) is proposed as an integrative framework for strategic planning (Stavros et al., 2003). Stavros and Hinrichs (2007) suggest SOAR as a framework that “builds on the best of the classic SWOT analysis by integrating Appreciative inquiry with a strategic planning framework and creating a transformational process” (p. 4). In response to the evolution of SWOT, the use of this tool by practitioners, and the trends seen in publications, Ghazinoory et al. propose that a research agenda be created to strengthen the analysis.

A study by Hill and Westbrook (1997) looked at how companies and consultants used SWOT analysis as a technique for corporate strategy review. The most alarming conclusion was that none of the companies in their study used the SWOT outputs in the later stages of the strategy process. Areas of concern included the lack of factor analysis or verification, the vague description of factors, and the consultants made very different lists from the SWOTs generated in the focus group (Hill & Westbrook). The researchers found SWOT to be an ineffective means of analysis or strategy review. SWOT analysis lead to poor results and was considered

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a “bad practice,” potentially inhibiting companies from using better approaches to strategic planning (Hill & Westbrook).

In response to many of these critiques, Chang and Huang (2006) created a quantified SWOT analytical method to assess container port performance in East Asia. This method adopts the concept of Multiple-Attribute Decision Making (MADM) and uses the Grand Strategy Matrix. The addition of these concepts strengthens the SWOT model and addresses some issues previously experienced when combining models. The decision-making is comprised of four factors, alternatives, criteria, performance, and weight, while the quantified analytical method consist of following seven detailed steps (Chang & Huang). With this enhanced version of SWOT analysis, an assessment of port strength can be determined in addition to suggesting alternative strategies for competing ports (Chang & Huang).

Applications

SWOT analysis has been commonly used as a technique for strategic planning in the private sector. The technique has been documented for its use in small and medium sized enterprises (Houben et al., 1999). The research conducted by Glaister and Falshaw (1999) found that SWOT was the highest ranked technique for analysis amongst the companies surveyed in the United Kingdom. Piercy and Giles (1989) stated that SWOT is the most commonly used and recognized tool for strategic marketing audits. SWOT originated as a strategy used in the private sector and has since been applied to the public sector (Bryson & Roering, 1987).

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In both public and private sectors, the technique has been applied to organizational visioning. O'Brien and Meadows (2000) described SWOT as a corporate visioning tool. SWOT has been documented as "a useful tool for community visioning" to help structure conversations and focus their efforts in urban planning and community development (Singh & Kosi-Katarmal, 2009, p. 25). Additionally, Keane Kearns (1992, p. 6) argues for the nonprofit application of SWOT in that it

“requires decision makers to envision their organization interacting with factors in the dynamic external environment that can facilitate or impede progress toward the mission of the enterprise.”

A SWOT analysis is a useful strategy in determining the current state of affairs, which, in turn, is an essential step in the visioning process.

Zhang (2006) noted that SWOT was used in higher education institutions to aid administration in making decisions for the school and initiating new programs (Balamuralikrishna & Dugger, 1995). Managers of health care organizations are also using SWOT analysis as a strategy for market competition (van Wijngaarden, Scholten, & van Wijk, 2010). While many in the public sector have used SWOT analysis, it is noted that special consideration must be made for the "unique cycles of leadership changes, complex internal and external dynamics, and the variety of stakeholders who have diverse definitions of success and failure" (Rose & Cray, 2010, p. 453). In response to the public sector environment, (van Wijngaarden, Scholten, & van Wijk) developed an alternative model to SWOT analysis that reflected the issues faced by organizations in the public sector. The revised model

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integrates some of the design principles of SWOT but is founded primarily on stakeholder expectations, resources, and contextual developments (van Wijngaarden et al., 2010).

Leigh (2010) expanded on applications of the analytical technique to strategic planning, needs assessments, and evaluation of change initiatives. The relationship between SWOT and strategic planning has been discussed earlier in the chapter. A SWOT analysis is a common approach to evaluation and can be seen in many contexts. For example, an evaluation of private sector banks in India was conducted using the CAMEL model and a SWOT analysis to assess specific qualities of banks (Singh & Kohli, 2006). In another case, a SWOT analysis was conducted to evaluate the delivery of extension services within the public sector in Asian and West-African countries (Oladele & Sakagami, 2004).

Appreciative Inquiry: A New Approach to Planning and Visioning

Both SWOT and Ai provide an approach to strategic planning and visioning. However, the two techniques are quite different in their style and approach. SWOT analysis is representative of problem-based models of organizational development. The positive model, in which Ai is situated, represents a recent shift to solution-based models of organizational development. Companies, organizations, and communities should evaluate each approach before determining an appropriate method.

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Background

Appreciative inquiry (Ai) is rooted in radical social constructionism and action research. Social constructionism is a philosophy of science that believes individuals have a considerable influence over the reality that they perceive and experience; moreover, individuals generally create their own reality through collective symbolic and mental processes (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Action research is the underlying basis for current organizational development approaches and the study of changing social systems (Cummings & Worley, 2009). In the 1980s David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva presented Ai as a compliment to traditional action research approaches (Fitzgerald, Murrell, & Newman, 2001). Ai emerged from a theory building process that encouraged collaboration within organizations (Cooperrider, 1997). Previous models of planned change served as the basis for building a positive model for organizational development.

Appreciative inquiry is an approach to organizational development that is centered on the practice of asking positive questions about system potential (Cooperrider, 1997). A practice-oriented definition of Ai is described as a "co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives 'life' to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. Ai involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It

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centrally involves the mobilization of inquiry through the crafting of the "unconditional positive question" often-involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people"(Cooperrider & Srivastva, p. 131).

AI is an organizational intervention that allows for collaboration, inclusion, imagination, and innovation.

AI is "more than a method or technique" for organizational development, it is "a way of life" grounded in theory based on five underlying principles:

constructionist, simultaneity, poetic, anticipatory, and positive (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, p. 131). The constructionist principle emphasizes the connection between socially constructed knowledge and organizational destiny (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The leader must overcome habitual ways of thinking in order to "unleash the imagination" of individuals to construct the future (Cooperrider et al., p. 8). The principle of simultaneity recognizes that inquiry and change are not separate but simultaneous questions that evoke change (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The leader, or change agent, must articulate provocative questions for discovery so that the future can be conceived from the stories shared through inquiry. The poetic principle provides an understanding of human organizations. This principle looks at organizations like an open book with their stories continually being co-authored, providing an unlimited source to focus inquiry (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The anticipatory principle suggests that the behavior of a company can be influenced and changed by the organization's image of the future. The collective imagination of an organization is a crucial resource in generating constructive organizational change (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Lastly, the positive principle holds that

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human organizations are affirmative systems. Within this system it is believed that humans respond best to positive thought and knowledge therefore the organizational system should also operate-in this fashion. The momentum from an affirmative system fosters lasting and effective change while promoting team building and organizational commitment (Cooperrider et al.). These principles provide a foundation from which Ai is grounded.

Characteristics

The principles of Ai are represented in the practice of the Ai approach. The Ai cycle was originally organized into four phases of discovery, dream, design, and destiny, of which is known as the '4-D cycle'(Figure 2-3) (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The discovery phase is a time for diverse members of the organization or community to share positive experiences. Moreover, participants discuss in depth the organization's positive core (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Facilitation of this phase often includes one-on-one interviews with staff by consultants or the staff themselves. During the interview, staff members are asked to share positive and meaningful experiences from working within their organizations. Interviews vary in length, 20 minutes to an hour, depending on the circumstances of the intervention or summit. Highlights from the interviews are then shared in larger groups. Progression into the next phase can take place through a continuity search that focuses on what the organization does best.

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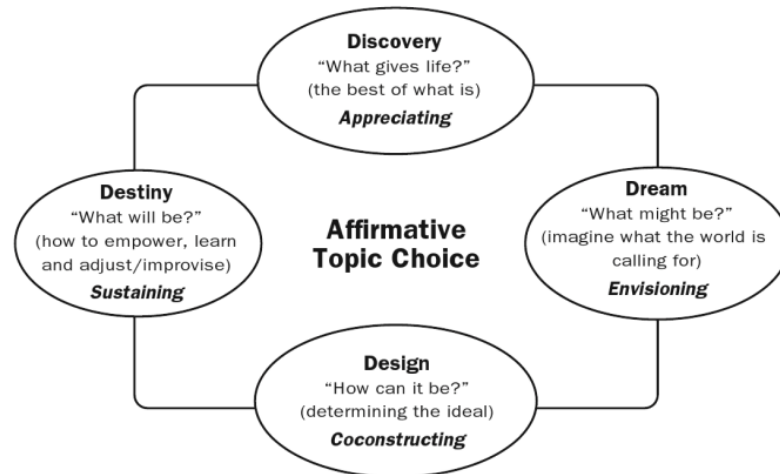


Figure 2-3. The 4-D cycle of appreciative inquiry. From *Appreciative inquiry handbook: For leaders of change*, by Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney, D., Stavros, J. M., & Fry, R. (2008). Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Copyright 2008 by Crown Custom Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

The dream phase allows participants to envision their organization with a foundation built on the exceptional and positive experiences discussed in the previous phase. “Dreaming” uses participant stories to co-construct a vision of the organization’s positive influence and impact. During this phase participants are encouraged to be creative and share images of hope. A common prompt used by practitioners is to “imagine you have awakened from a long, deep sleep. You get up to realize that everything is as you always dreamed it would be. Your ideal state has become the reality” (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003, p. 24). The dream phase is generally conducted in small groups working to envision their organization’s potential.

The design phase articulates the systems and structures necessary to support positive experiences and co-created dreams. Participants have the opportunity to co-create design statements that highlight the positive qualities and realities discussed in the previous two phases (Cooperrider et al., 2003, p. 24). These

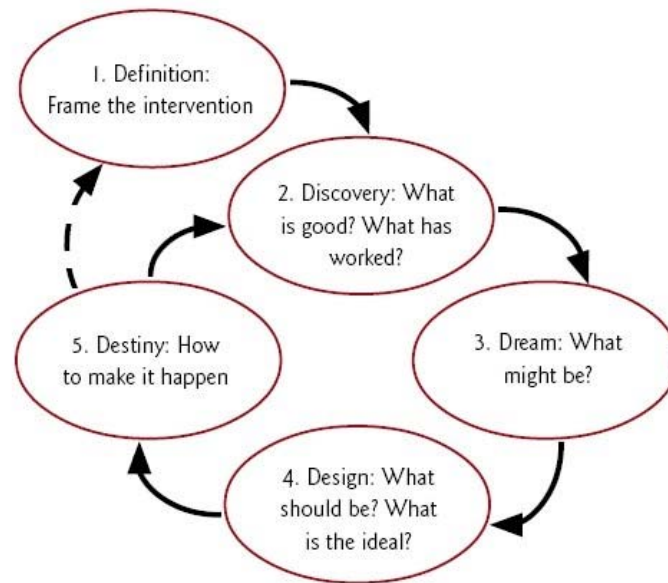
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statements can also detail environments and relationships that must take place in order for the vision to become a reality. A key activity in this phase is the creation of an organization's architecture (D. L. Cooperrider & D. Whitney). Within the design phase, basic project plans begin to form and participants feel empowered to take action.

The destiny or delivery phase involves language that relates to practical implementation of those systems. Participants in this phase create a list of inspired action-oriented tasks that reflect the work of the previous phases (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). A key activity within the destiny phase is the selection of possible action tasks and the formation of task forces that discuss and establish principles for future work.

Since the first publication and conceptualization of Ai by (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) a fifth phase has been added to the Ai cycle. In the 5-D model (Figure 2-4), "define" was added as a precursor to the discovery phase to focus the appreciative intervention around a specific area of inquiry.

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*Figure 2-4. Appreciative inquiry 5-D cycle. From *Appreciative inquiry: An approach for learning and change based on our own best practices* by Acosta, A. & Douthwaite, B. 2008. Copyright attained under Fair Use.*

This phase reflects affirmative topic choice, which is at the core of the Ai cycle Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987). Affirmative topics reflect areas that are of strategic importance to an organization and these areas may exist at the individual, group, or organizational level.

Two of the most commonly used and successful ways to apply Ai are whole system inquiry and an Ai summit (Cooperrider et al., 2008). An Ai Summit “is a large-scale meeting process that focuses on discovering and developing the organization’s positive change core and designing it into an organization’s strategic business processes, systems, and culture” (Cooperrider & Whitney, p. 117). An Ai Summit invites everyone in an organization to participate. Cooperrider and Whitney noted that a successful summit takes time, generally three to four days, and attention. While Ai is noted for its application to whole systems, as Whitney and

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Trosten-Bloom (2010) have pointed out the technique can be used in a variety of ways: core group inquiry, Ai learning teams, and mass-mobilized inquiry.

Ai has been welcomed into the field of organizational development while subsequently starting “a positive revolution” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The new frontier of Ai has been described as a provocative and groundbreaking paradigm of conscious evolution (Hubbard, 1998), and a part of the positive phenomenon (Cameron et al., 2003). Bushe and Coetzer (1995) considered the approach to be the greatest advancement in action research in the past decade. The approach is distinguished from other organizational development approaches because of the affirmative value choice (Fitzgerald et al., 2001). Unlike other methods or techniques in organizational development, Ai is described as a worldview that shapes organizational inquiry. Inquiry is considered to be the most powerful tool of the Ai approach. Continuous inquiry requires a change in the way individuals think (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

Critiques

Through the development of Ai, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) believed that interviews should be conducted with all employees working from the bottom up to learn about positive experiences and superior performance, all the while inspiring positive, change at the grassroots level. However, this approach was ineffective, daunting, and lacked focus. “The most important next steps for appreciative inquiry will be in theoretical breakthroughs in understanding leadership, facilitation and change processes in social systems” (Bushe, 1999, p. 14). Additionally, there is a need for analysis on Ai and better data collection on the Ai

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approach and related outcomes (eg. Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Grant & Humphries, 2006; Messerschmidt, 2008; van der Haar & Hosking, 2004).

Appreciative inquiry has not received as many threats for a “product recall” as SWOT, which could be due to its recent popularity (Bushe & Kassam, 2005) and use by consultants (Rothwell et al., 2005). However, Ai has been a victim to many myths and assumptions related to the positive and radical change method. As described by Fitzgerald et al. (2001), Ai is very commonly associated with the misconception that the approach facilitates warm and fuzzy experiences with group hugs. Ai is perceived to have no basis in “hard data.” Another assumption is that Ai cannot be used to address complex organizational changes because the approach hides behind a blanket of positive thinking (Fitzgerald et al., 2001). Lastly, many believe that Ai is a very unbalanced approach to organizational development and other approaches that use problem-solving techniques are more balanced (Fitzgerald et al.).

Applications

Like SWOT, Ai can be used in addition to other approaches for enhanced outcomes (van der Haar & Hosking, 2004) and data analysis (Messerschmidt, 2008). As described by van der Haar and Hosking (2004) a relational constructionist approach to Ai could derive enormous benefits. Ai also compliments action research approaches as well as intervention approaches which are used amongst practitioners of organizational development (Bushe & Coetzer, 1995; Egan & Lancaster, 2005).

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Ai has been used in many organizations to facilitate transitions into leadership (eg. Havens, Wood, & Leeman, 2006; Keefe & Pesut, 2004). Transformational change has also been associated with Ai (Messerschmidt, 2008), however not all cases in their study resulted in a change of this caliber. Bushe and Kassam (2005) determined that in order for transformational change to occur as a result of Ai there must be a focus on changing how people think as well as a focus on supporting self-organizing change processes that flow from new ideas.

Ai is practiced in community development and is often included in community development textbooks (Haines & Green, 2011) to showcase the power of dialogue for community change (Finegold et al., 2002). The first phase of Ai, discover, is an excellent entry point to learn from and connect with community members when initiating asset-based community development (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Finegold et al. found many successful applications of Ai for whole system change in the public and non-profit sectors as well as in extension work (Peutz & Kroth, 2009). Ai has also been used for program evaluation (Norum, Wells, Hoadley, & Geary, 2002; Preskill & Catsambas, 2006).

Within higher education, student affairs staff and faculty use appreciative advising as an approach evolved from the Ai principles (Bloom et al., 2009). Appreciative advising under these principles encourages a strengths-based mentoring approach. Faculty professional development was successfully facilitated with the application of Ai (Davis, 2005). Cockell, McArthur-Blair, and Schiller (2012) suggest that universities adopt Ai in order to transform many of the existing systems, further impacting the next generation of positive change makers.

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Ai is not as commonly published for its use in the private sector in comparison to the long ranging and extensive reports on company's use of SWOT analysis. A recent book, *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A practical guide to positive change*, by Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) details the application of Ai for business and community planning. Ludema and Barrett (2009) discussed Ai summits conducted by various businesses that yielded higher quarterly profits and lower company costs. Berrisford (2005) conducted a case study on BBC to discover how Ai affected organizational change and dialogue.

Vision Clarity and Organizational Commitment: A Desired Outcome

Vision has been established as integral to the definition of leadership. In addition to vision, transformational leadership focuses on the emotional bond and relationships between leaders and followers. Moreover, transformational leadership is widely discussed as a highly sought after approach to leadership, further suggesting that vision and relationships are a desired outcome.

Additionally, vision and organizational commitment have relationships to desired organizational outcomes such as performance and suitability; therefore, these two variables are examined for their relationship to leadership and organizations.

Denison (1990) suggested that there are three components of an effective organizational vision: 1) vision clarity, 2) vision support, and 3) stability.

Kantabutra (2008) summarized the shared characteristics of vision attributes by other scholars to include brevity, clarity, future orientation, stability, challenge, abstractness, and desirability or ability to inspire. Vision clarity is referred to as, "having a well-articulated, easy-to-understand target, a very specific goal that

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provides direction to others in the organization” (Denison, 1990, p. 375).

Communication of the vision is needed for employees of a company to clearly understand their role within an organization. The leader also needs to clearly articulate and reinforce the vision during times of change and crisis (Kotter, 2007).

Vision communication has been found to be an integral component to successful visioning (Kantabutra & Avery, 2002). In *The Leadership Challenge*, by Kouzes and Posner (2007), they include tips for articulating the vision such that the vision is motivational, inspiring, and comes across as conversational instead of stiff and formal.

Vision support “implies securing the commitment from people throughout an organization for what the company is trying to do” (Denison, 1990, p. 375). As mentioned, Kakabadse et al. (2005) believes that senior executive support is essential to the visioning process; while other scholars stress the importance of company-wide involvement. Vision support relates to Kouzes and Posner’s (2007) model, “inspiring a shared vision,” in that the employees must feel committed to the vision and invested in working towards such aspirations. And lastly, vision stability refers to the sustained consistency of the vision statement over time. Lynna and Akgünb (2001) assert that a stable vision reduces confusion and frustration from employees about their role in the organization and the organization itself.

Vision has been researched to show significant contributions to organizational effectiveness (Zaccaro, 2001). On the flip side, research has also shown that the lack of vision within organization has resulted in failed change management (Kakabadse et al., 2005; Porras & Collins, 1994). Avery (2005) found

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that vision was important to considering long-term perspective in European sustainable enterprises. The author explained that vision provides a cognitive map for the distribution of resources with an organization, which can be especially helpful for sustainability (Avery, 2004). In study of high-tech employees, Dvir et al. (2004) suggested that vision formulation and content of social-oriented values were positively related to affective commitment to the organization.

Allen and Meyer (1990) created a model with three components to conceptualize organizational commitment. The affective component of organizational commitment refers to “employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization.” The second component, continuance commitment, refers to “commitment based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organization.” Finally, the third component, normative commitment, “refers to employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organization” (Allen & Meyer, p. 1). The study of the complexities within organizational commitment is important to leadership and organizational success (Ash, Clayton, & Atkinson, 2005).

A particular emphasis has been placed on affective commitment in relation to various leadership styles as well as its impact on employee performance, satisfaction, and well-being. Affective or attitudinal commitment is often a focus within the field of leadership. Leaders can cultivate and enhance affective commitment as they build relationships with followers. Morgan (1997) found that transformational leaders have a greater impact on followers' affective commitment than on their normative commitment. Leader member exchange also contributes to

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the relationship between transformational leaders and affective commitment (Lee, 2005). Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) suggested, along with many other scholars, that participative leadership styles foster a followership with a great commitment to their work, higher levels of performance, and great job satisfaction.

In a study by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Bommer (1996), transformational leader behavior is examined as a determinant of employee satisfaction, commitment, trust, and organizational citizenship behaviors. The authors found that “only one of the leader behaviors (vision articulation) had a significant main effect on organizational commitment” (Podsakoff et al., p. 277). The study also indicates some enhancers of the leadership behavior correlations such that intrinsically satisfying tasks affected the positive relationship between vision articulation and general job satisfaction. They found that group cohesiveness enhanced the positive relationship between vision articulation and organizational commitment. Additionally, the positive relationship between vision articulation and role clarity was influenced by the employee’s experience, training, and knowledge. The study illustrates the connection between the leaders’ ability to articulate the vision and employees’ organizational commitment.

Another study by Podsakoff et al. (1996) features the connection between articulation of the vision and organizational commitment as they relate to the execution of organizational change. Execution of organizational change refers to the perceptions of employees with regard to the introduction of change and the processes that unfold as a result of change. Although, the results suggested that execution of organizational change is the strongest predictor of organizational

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commitment; while, vision clarity played a supporting role Podsakoff et al. (1996).

Their research also agrees with the work of Cole et al. (2006) in that vision clarity was positively correlated with organizational commitment.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

With the many complexities surrounding the visioning process, a mixed methods research approach has become increasingly relevant for the study of this leadership phenomenon (Klenke, 2008). As a mixed methods case study, this research shares both the qualitative and quantitative perspectives generated from multiple sources of evidence. Data triangulation was purposefully executed according to the case study guidelines set by Yin (2009). Further, the research design follows a mixed model explanatory sequential design as detailed by Creswell et al. (2003). In this case study, quantitative data is analyzed to inform the qualitative data collection. The explanatory sequential design has been referred to as a qualitative follow-up approach in that the qualitative data elaborates on the quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The design allows for further investigation of learned and specific results. Mixing of the data occurs at data collection and interpretation. Quantitative data was analyzed using a repeated measures ANOVA with random subject effects and the qualitative data was analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009).

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods case study is to better understand techniques used in organizational visioning by converging quantitative numerical data and qualitative thematic data. As defined by Finlay

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(1994, p. 64), organizational visioning involves “activities which can effectively push a group of leaders of an organization to an inspiring, rich, and beyond-the-present paradigm view of a positive future for their organization.” Multiple sources of data are used to develop and inform research methods, in addition to elaborating and clarifying results with the intent to increase meaningfulness and validity of constructs and inquiry results (Greene et al., 1989). In this study, the organizational commitment questionnaire (short form) (Mowday et al., 1979) and a vision clarity questionnaire adapted from Cole et al. (2006) was used to measure organizational commitment and vision clarity and their relationship to intervention treatments: Appreciative inquiry (Ai) and Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Following quantitative data collection and analysis, organizational visioning was explored using focus group interviews with staff at Virginia Tech. Quantitative data analysis informed the qualitative selection and protocol, while mixing of the qualitative and quantitative data occurred during data collection and interpretation to provide a more thorough explanation of organizational visioning.

The thesis aims to answer the following questions:

1. What were the levels of organizational commitment and vision clarity before and after the interventions?
2. What were the differences in organizational commitment and vision clarity within and between treatment groups?
3. What were the process and products of each intervention?
4. How did participants’ perceive the visioning process and resulting effects?

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5. What similarities and differences are there between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group?
6. Is there a significant difference in pre/post test results between intervention groups based on their visioning process?

The following figure connects the research questions to the research design and methods (Figure 3.1).

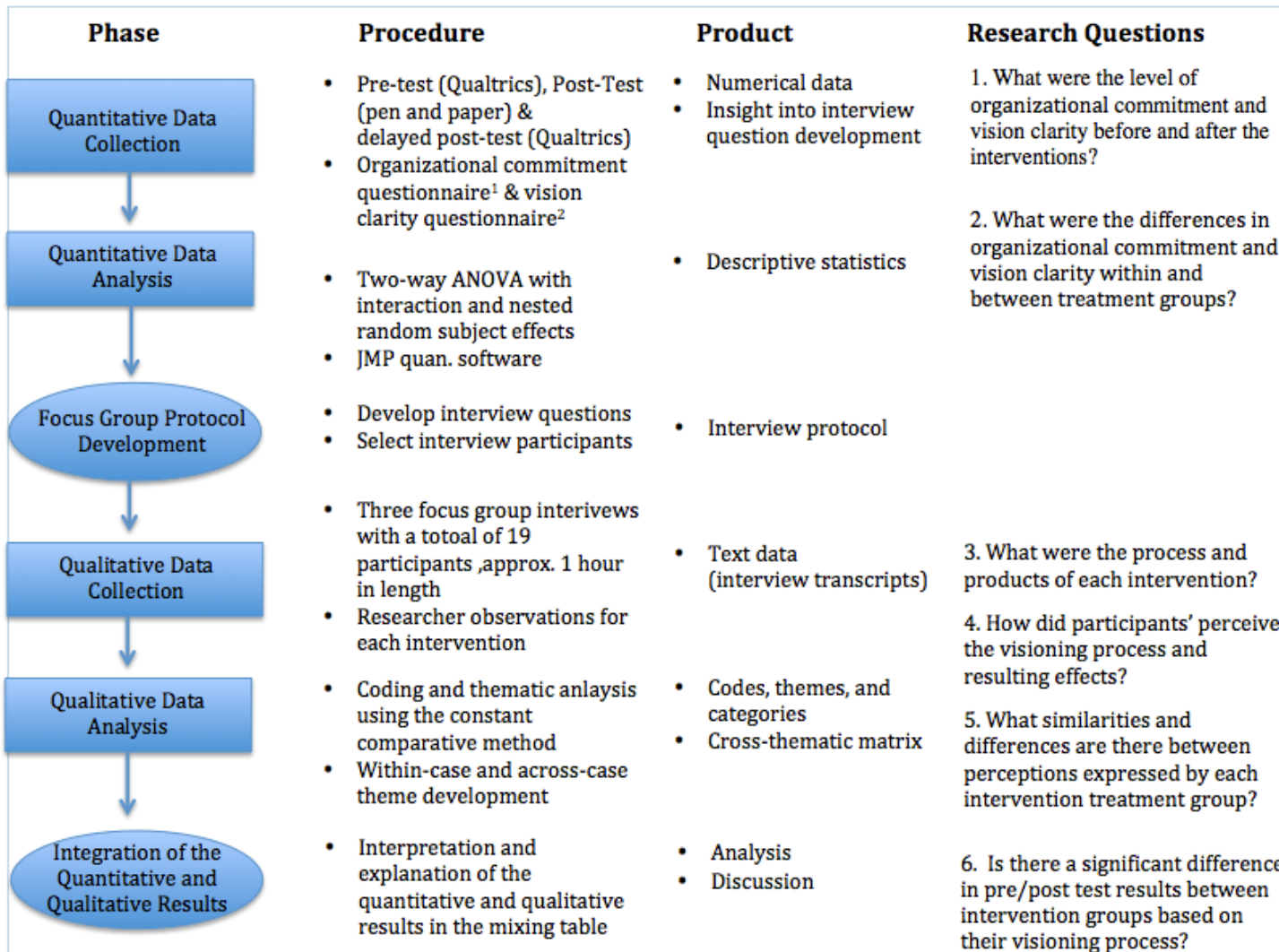


Figure 3-1. Mapping case study objectives to research design and methods. Outlines the design phase, methods and procedures, products, and objectives of the case study to the explanatory sequential design. Adapted from “Students’ persistence in a distributed doctoral program in educational leadership in higher education: A mixed methods study,” by Ivankova, N. V., & Stick, S. L. (2007). *Research in Higher Education*, 48(1), 93-135. 55

Framing the Research

It is necessary to consider the philosophical assumptions associated with each researcher in order to better understand the framework from which the research is derived. Theories related to how one views the world are epistemology, ontology, axiology, rhetoric, and methodology. Greene (2007) noted the evolutionary history of mixed methods research as a field largely dominated by positivism and then post-positivism, both of which contrast with the worldview of constructivism. Unlike constructivism, positivism rejects the use of intuitive knowledge and believes society operates according to general laws. Researchers who subscribe to this paradigm find truth only in scientific knowledge derived from a sensory experience. Conversely, individuals situated in constructivism believe that reality is subjective and experiential, meaning that humans construct their own social realities in relation to one another (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008).

Many researchers agree that the “best” worldview for mixed methods research is pragmatism, a paradigm not committed to any one system of reality or philosophy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Pragmatism values both objective and subjective knowledge and believes in the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data to address the research question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). The research design chosen for this study exists within the post-positivist and constructivist paradigms as one phase of the research connects and informs the latter phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). As a mixed methods researcher, I adopt the pragmatic paradigm and it is from this worldview that the study has been

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conducted. The pragmatic paradigm appropriately answers the research question under investigation and fosters a mixed methods way of thinking.

Reflexivity Statement

I am a 25 year-old, single, white, heterosexual female. I was born in rural Virginia, and I am in the lower middle class. I am a masters' student in the department of Agricultural and Extension Education at Virginia Tech. As a graduate student, I participated in our department retreat, which was facilitated using Appreciative inquiry. A year later, our department had another retreat that was structured according to SWOT analysis. Within this time, many of my beliefs about organizational visioning were formed. During the department retreat I found that the time spent with everyone from the department was valuable. I believe in an inclusive and bottom-up approach to strategic planning and visioning, because I value the opinions and contributions of others.

Through the department's retreat, I gained a much deeper and broader understanding of my department. I developed perspective on the context in which the department exists and how that impacts the decisions we have made and will make. I felt as sense a unity and energy surrounding our work. I also found that the work we did at the retreat helped to guide our efforts throughout the year.

The visioning and planning required during the department retreat was a challenging process for others and myself. I was challenged to consider the current state of affairs while trying to conceive what the future should look like. Envisioning the future was frustrating and time consuming. It was also challenging to envision how our department was situated within other strategic plans and research

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agendas. I found the act of visioning to be something that was out of my comfort zone and unlike my normal thought process. From this experience, I found the facilitation of a visioning process and/or department retreat to be extremely important. The structure of the retreat helped to inform and facilitate the visioning process for each individual. I believe that facilitating a positive visioning experience during an annual retreat sets the tone for the rest of the year.

Research Design

A case study was used for this research as an explanatory strategy to answer how and why questions of this contemporary phenomena. Case studies offer explanations of presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for a single survey to explain (Yin, 2009). Yin states that case study inquiry:

1. Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
2. Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, and as another result
3. Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 18)

Research of this kind is especially relevant for studies with small population sizes that can collect multiple sources of data. The ability to converge a variety of data points such as researcher observation, interviews, pre-tests and post-tests, for purposes of corroboration is unique to case studies. Having multiple sources of data increases construct validity and inquiry within a given study (Greene et al., 1989).

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Moreover, the triangulation of data is a classic example of mixed methods research and evaluation (Greene et al.). The culmination of evidence provides a richer and more descriptive case study as well as mixed methods study.

As mentioned previously, mixed methods research is commonly being used to study the many complexities of leadership, visioning being one of them. Given that this methodology has emerged with great controversy over paradigms and terminology, the research performed in this study adopts Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) definition of mixed methods. These authors believe that:

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and the analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. (p. 5)

They go on to say that a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon can be fostered through the use of mixed methods research, as opposed to a single method (Creswell & Plano Clark).

Within mixed methods, there are a variety of ways to design and conduct research. The reasons for mixing data in this thesis are for the purposes of corroboration and elaboration (Greene et al., 1989) that are evident in the triangulation foundations of a case study as well as the explanatory research design. The researcher has chosen to adopt an explanatory sequential design for the study

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based on its framework and relevancy to the research questions. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) define the model as, “a multi-strand mixed design in which the conclusions that are made on the basis of the results of the first strand lead to formulation of questions, data collection and data analysis for the next strand” (p. 715). Further, the purpose of this design is to explain the quantitative results with qualitative data. The implementation of quantitative and qualitative methods in the explanatory sequential design is shared below.

Every participant was asked to take a pre-test two weeks before the interventions (Appendix F). This measurement of time was chosen to avoid test-retest bias and complement the availability of the participants (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2008). The pre-test included questions from organizational commitment and vision clarity constructs (Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed based on a portion of a survey in a study by Cole et al. (2006) to determine the implications of organizational change. An expert panel was used to ensure validity of the pre-test questionnaire. The results of the pre-test determined which participants were in intervention treatment one (SWOT analysis) or treatment two (Ai). An effort was made to establish equal construct averages across treatment groups while accommodating participant schedules.

All participants were asked to meet before the study commenced to provide overall instruction and framing for the organizational visioning sessions. The interventions were conducted in two consecutive days by the same facilitator and each intervention lasted approximately four hours. The facilitator was a professional consultant in the field of organizational development with experience

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in facilitating both techniques used in strategic planning and visioning. Treatment one was conducted in the afternoon, while treatment two was conducted in the morning. Careful planning and preparation by the facilitator ensured that both treatments lasted the same amount of time (four hours) in order to keep the length of time a constant variable in the study. Once each intervention was finished, the participants were asked to complete a post-test to determine any changes in organizational commitment and vision clarity (Figure 3.2.). The post-test consisted of the same questions asked in the pre-test as well as a free response section in which participants were able to share comments or feedback about the intervention (Appendix B).

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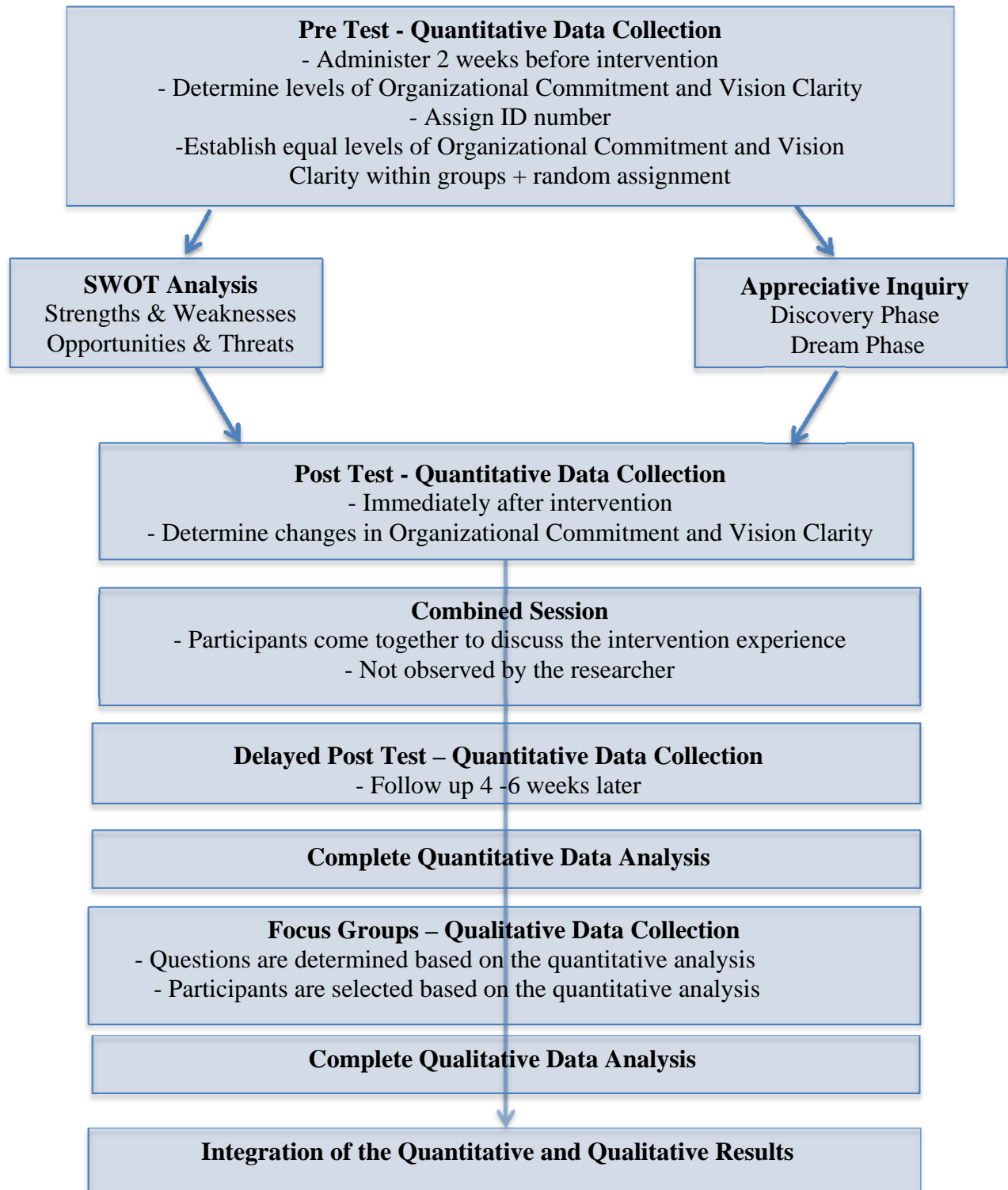


Figure 3-2. Explanatory sequential research design. The research design for this case study based on the mixed model explanatory sequential design. Adapted from “Mixed Model Explanatory Sequential Design” by Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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The facilitator conducted a discussion session on day three with the staff and director to share the experiences and ideas generated from both treatments. The activities that took place in phase two were not documented or researched directly as a part of this case study. The goals generated from strategic visioning and planning sessions can take many years to complete, which could not be studied due to limited time and resources. A delayed post-test was administered six weeks after the intervention (Appendix K & L).

Participants were invited to participate in focus group interviews to collect follow-up qualitative data drawn from the information collected from phase one of the study: pre-test, post-test, and observational data. The focus group interviews were intended to further explain the participants' perceptions of the intervention, their organizational commitment, and their understanding of the vision. The interviews took place over a month after the interventions.

Research Context and Case Study Population

Virginia Polytechnic State University is a large land grant university in the Southeastern area of the United States. The research covered a three-month period from July to September, 2012.

The student affairs department at Virginia Tech consists of approximately 40 employees, including interns and student workers. Within the last 18 months the department hired six new full time staff members. Additionally, the director had been absent for the past 18 months and recently returned to her post within the department. The department will be up for their five-year review and efforts will be

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made to complete their review within the year. The vision and mission statements have recently been revisited by the leadership team, comprised of a group of senior professionals within the department. The vision statement was shared with the entire staff, and feedback was requested via email from the department. The director shared that little feedback from the staff was received. This information was shared with the interviewer at a pre-study meeting with the director. The vision statement states that the department:

“will be recognized by the university community as the premier resource for actively engaging students in exploring and pursuing their career aspirations leading to meaningful and purposeful contributions to our global society.”

The department’s mission and core values reflect their efforts, as stated in the vision statement (Appendix C).

The director of the department felt that the study would benefit her and her staff. She hoped that the visioning process would focus on strategies for becoming the premier resource for their services at Virginia Tech. Moreover, great focus had been placed on the creation of the vision statement, but little discussion had revolved around the execution of their vision. Due to her absence from the department, she hoped to gain an understanding of where the current staff was in understanding the vision statement. Additionally, the director was interested in learning more about the two intervention treatments. For these reasons, staff participation in the visioning interventions was encouraged; however, no participant was forced to complete the study. The researcher and the department

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director communicated via email to invite participants to the study (Appendix D & E). The study had a total of 22 participants.

Selecting the Facilitator

Because the participants for this study work within a university, university resources and staff were used to select a facilitator. The facilitator worked at the university in the organizational and professional development department as a consultant. The facilitator had over 20 years of experience working in the field of organizational development. Furthermore, the consultant had experience working with many departments across campus using both SWOT analysis and Ai.

Intervention Treatments

The researcher met with the consultant to discuss the goals, timing, details, and intended outcomes of each treatment. Both treatments were facilitated and structured according to their “true” form. The SWOT analysis session was based on the work published by Leigh (2010) on SWOT analysis, in a chapter of the handbook on *Improving Performance in the Workplace*. Additionally, the Ai session was derived from the format provided by Cooperrider et al. (2008) in *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: For Leaders of Change*. Both treatments were presented with the same goal statement for the session as well as same question to frame their work. The goal and question for the sessions were derived from conversations with the department’s director, the researcher, and the consultant.

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Survey Instrument

The instrument adopted for the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test was based on the study by Cole et al. (2006) regarding the implications of vision, appropriateness, and execution of organizational change. Two components of the study's survey were adopted for this case study, specifically the questions related to organizational commitment and vision clarity. The study used the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (short form) developed by Mowday et al. (1979) to assess organizational commitment. The assessment of affective or attitudinal commitment of employees to their organization is commonly measured using the instrument developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Eight positively worded questions from the short form questionnaire were used in the tests to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding. The instrument was compared to other instruments measuring organizational commitment in a study by Ferris and Aranya (1983) which found the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire to have high internal reliability and high predictive validity. The prompt was changed to appropriately reflect the positions of the participants in the department. A total of eight questions were asked using a seven-point scale (1 = "strongly disagree", 4 = "neither agree nor disagree", and 7 = "strongly agree") to measure organizational commitment. Mowday et al. (1979) report a high internal consistency reliability score of .90 and in the case study it was found to be 0.844. For part of the analysis two questions were removed from the construct that resulted in a reliability of 0.80.

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Three of the vision clarity questions were adopted from Cole et al. (2006) as they related to clarity and execution: “The vision guiding [department] has been clear,” “The purpose of [department] has been well communicated,” and “The vision of [department] has been well executed.” The authors published internal consistency reliability scales of 0.86, 0.67, and 0.73 respectively that met accepted research standards. A fourth vision clarity question was adopted from Ferris and Aranya (1983): “The team had a clear understanding of the target customers’ needs, and wants.” This question was altered to reflect the population of the case study: “The [department] has a clear understanding of the University community’s needs and wants.” A total of four questions with a five-point response format (1 = “strongly disagree”; 5 = “strongly agree”) were adopted to investigate vision clarity. The internal consistency for the vision clarity construct was determined to be .794. Both organizational commitment and vision clarity construct scores were calculated by averaging the responses for each individual measure.

The pre-test yielded a 100% response rate from the 22 participants. The post-test yielded a 95% response rate. Lastly, the delayed post-test yielded a 86% response rate. Analysis of the quantitative data is further discussed in chapter four.

Focus Group Interviews

Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to use both close-ended and open-ended questions. While the content of the interview is focused on the research question, this format allows for greater flexibility and discussion (Klenke, 2008). At each focus group, five structured open-ended interview questions were asked with a number of probes designed to help participants elaborate on the research issues

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(Appendix M). Qualitative inquiry through truly open-ended questions allows participant to respond in their own words to fully explain their experiences, reactions, and opinions (Patton, 2002).

The five structured questions asked participants to expand on their experience, values, and knowledge related to the issues that are central to the research questions (Patton, 2002). In the case study, questions were asked to further investigate the participants' experience, their understanding of the vision, and their organizational commitment. The questions were developed based on the literature, as explained in the a priori propositions table (Appendix N & O). The focus group questions were also developed in lieu of the quantitative data analysis performed on the organizational commitment and vision clarity constructs. The probes were written to ensure completeness in the participants' responses so that rich data could be derived (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Aside from the five structured questions, the researcher was able to freely add further inquiry as the discussion evolved, which is in keeping with the guidelines of semi-structured focus groups (Klenke, 2008).

Data Collection

The pre-test was administered two weeks before the interventions, using an online survey system called Qualtrics. The survey was delivered to the participants' work email, and all participants had access to a computer. One reminder email was sent to participants who had not completed the questionnaire after three days.

During both treatments, the researcher observed the intervention to gain additional insight into social patterns, participant reactions, and intervention

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activities. Researcher observations are a written record of the researcher's perceptions. In this study, the researcher was able to monitor actions during the interventions and infer participants' meaning behind their actions (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). An observation protocol based on the organizational commitment and vision clarity literature was created to ensure that the researcher looked for specific interactions in both treatments (Appendix G) (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006). Rossman and Rallis (2003) note that "observation is fundamental to all qualitative inquiry" (p. 194). A holistic description of the events and behaviors was used to document both treatments. After the interventions, raw data from the field observation, including running records and observer comments, were transcribed into the computer.

A post-test was administered immediately after each intervention via pen and paper. Participants were given the option to take the survey with them and complete later in the day. These questions were identical to the pre-test, in addition to an opened question for comments or feedback related to the intervention. A delayed post-test was administered via Qualtrics four to six weeks after the intervention, to test for sustained change in organizational commitment and vision clarity (Appendix J). These questions were identical to the pre-test questionnaire. Participants were given a two-week window to respond to the survey and were reminded once to take the delayed post-test.

The explanatory sequential design states that data collection is the primary point for mixing (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). During phase one of data collection, the quantitative data analysis is connected to the qualitative data

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collection. The semi-structured interview questions were composed based on the analysis that emerged from the first phase of quantitative research. The sequential design of the case study reduces some of the disadvantages of structured interviews in that a deeper and directed understanding of the issue is developed before the questions are composed (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Focus groups with selected participants were conducted six weeks after the intervention: 14 staff members joined in the discussion. Participant selection was based on the quantitative analysis. Participants were placed into three different focus groups: positive change, no change, or negative change, based on their pre-test and post-test scores for organizational commitment. The focus groups' comments were audio recorded and transcribed into written form and used for the data analysis.

Procedures Used

The case study was conducted in congruence with the mixed methods standards set by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011). Within these guidelines, they detail the need for qualitative and quantitative data strands to respond specifically to the phenomenon addressed in the research question. Second, a quality study should have a methods section that conveys rigor and persuasiveness (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A third criterion of a mixed methods study is that it explains when and how the mixing took place. Lastly, the authors assert that mixed methods terminology and procedures must be sought and applied to the research.

Qualitative inquiry procedures were followed to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity within the research. Both of which are essential to ensuring the rigor of

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qualitative inquiry and its use in mainstream science (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008). Trustworthiness involves credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability; moreover, these criteria are integral to qualitative research, just as internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity are integral to quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Strategies for increased quality in qualitative research have been derived to enhance credibility and authenticity such as: prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, member checking, negative case sampling, reflexivity, and triangulation (Klenke, 2008).

Credibility for this study was established through peer debriefing in which regular meetings were held to discuss the qualitative data with professors who were not directly involved in the research. These colleagues were qualitative research experts and raised questions to facilitate meaningful interpretation (Klenke, 2008). Prolonged engagement was established with some of the participants in the study, and they helped to confirm the emerging themes. Issues of internal validity were also addressed through the use of triangulation as researcher observations of SWOT and Ai interventions were synthesized with the focus group data. Credibility and trustworthiness are addressed with the inclusion of a reflexivity statement. The reflexivity statement, “involves self awareness and ‘critical self-reflections’ by the researcher on his or her potential biases and predispositions as these may affect the research process and conclusions” (Johnson, 1999, p. 283).

Dependability was addressed in this study through rigorous and detailed documentation of data collection protocols and analysis procedures. Being that this is a case study, there is no attempt to generalize the results. However,

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transferability can be achieved on a case-by-case basis, if researchers find the themes applicable to other contexts. Confirmability for this study was derived from thick descriptions and excerpts of raw data in support of the thematic discoveries and conclusions.

The researcher completed Institutional Review Board (IRB) training and certification before the conception of the case study. The Virginia Tech IRB approved the case study (Appendix P), which granted the researcher access and permission to test and interview participants. All participants in the case study signed a consent form condoning their participation in the study (Appendix X).

Data Analysis

Research Question One. The pre-test data was collected and analyzed to determine participants' level of organizational commitment and vision clarity. With this data, participants were randomly selected for treatment while maintaining an equal level of organizational commitment and vision clarity among groups. Post-test and delayed post-test data were collected to determine any change from the pre-test after the interventions. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using JMP, statistical software comparable to SPSS, to express the data from the organizational commitment and vision clarity instrument.

Research Question Two. A repeated measures ANOVA, with random subject effects, examined the difference in treatments based on participants' pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test results. The analysis was used to investigate the variables between and within subject variables (Ott & Longnecker, 2010). The statistical analysis allows for two factors to be examined between subjects and

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single factors to be examined within subjects, representing the change in participant's organizational commitment and vision clarity (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Each factor was then analyzed for statistical significance.

Research Question Three. Research observations were made during both Ai and SWOT interventions. Observation protocols were used and coded using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). Researcher observations of the visioning process and resulting products were used to supplement the participant's perceptions of the interventions.

Research Question Four. Analysis of the qualitative data derived from the focus group interviews followed the constant comparative methods outlined in Glaser and Strauss (2009). The researcher read through the focus group transcripts multiple times "to get a sense of the whole" and to further understand the meaning behind each statement from which codes were derived (Patton, 2002, p. 440). In the first reading a "feel" for the data was noted. The transcript was read a second time to allow the researcher to focus on material that pertained to the phenomenon. Using a line-by-line approach, excerpts of relevant material related to the phenomenon were drawn from the transcript. An excerpt is a passage or unit taken from a sentence to be used for analysis.

Inductive analysis was used to interpret the data, and codes were derived based on meaning. Codes were written and presented in the margins of the transcript. The coding process requires the researcher to slow down and engage in extended reflection (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Codes were developed based on "clues" about the participant's meaning, of which is pertinent to coding for deep

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structural meaning. During the process, it was relevant to code each excerpt prior to the next stage of the data analysis.

Themes and categories were produced based on patterns that emerged from the codes. Codes could have been in more than one category, if they had multiple meanings. The labels were revised and merged with other clusters to form categories. A category is a group of codes with similar meaning that represent a higher level of data abstraction (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The themes were then used to reduce the raw data and to organize the codes through sense-making (Corbin & Strauss). Rich descriptions were drawn from the transcript to support the themes that emerged from the qualitative data.

Research Question Five. Codes were re-examined to determine if any similarities or differences existed between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group. The comparison of codes between intervention groups follows the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), in making purposeful comparisons within groups with lower levels of complexity and then comparing between groups with higher levels of complexity (Boeije, 2002). Boeije, refers to comparison complexity in reference to the amount of interviews, diversity between participant experiences, and level of analysis.

Research Question Six. The last question is a mixing question that requires an integration of the quantitative and qualitative data. The question is addressed in the study as changes in organizational commitment and vision clarity are explained by the themes generated from SWOT and Ai participant experiences. The change groups are representative of participant changes from pre-test to post-test, as

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derived from a repeated measures ANOVA. The qualitative data are thematically represented as columns in the mixing table. Within this analysis, the qualitative findings further explained the quantitatively derived constructs of vision clarity and organizational commitment.

Summary of the Methodology

This chapter has explained the methods used in the mixed-methods case study. The study evaluates changes in organizational commitment and vision clarity as a result of two different organizational visioning techniques: SWOT and Ai. An explanatory sequential design was used to investigate the phenomenon within which qualitative data further explains quantitative data. Participants in the study completed a pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test that was examined using a repeated measures ANOVA with random subject effects. Selected participants were involved in focus group interviews, and semi-structured interview questions were discussed. The qualitative data was investigated using sense-making, inductive analysis, and case comparisons. Chapter four presents the results obtained by these methods.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

As stated in chapters one and three, the case study reported here examined two methodologies used in organizational visioning. More specifically, SWOT and Ai techniques were implemented, measured, and compared to analyze changes in organizational commitment and vision clarity. This chapter is organized in terms of the six research questions posed in chapter one which are restated here:

1. What were the levels of organizational commitment and vision clarity before and after the interventions?
2. What were the differences in organizational commitment and vision clarity within and between treatment groups?
3. What were the process and products of each intervention?
4. How did participants' perceive the visioning process and resulting effects?
5. What similarities and differences are there between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group?
6. Is there a significant difference in pre/post test results between intervention groups based on their visioning process?

Accompanying each research question is a description of the associated results.

Research Question One

What were the levels of organizational commitment and vision clarity before and after the interventions? Both treatment groups were tested with the same questionnaire before and after the intervention. As seen in Figure 4-1, the

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participants in the Ai treatment showed, on average, a slight increase in organizational commitment scores at the post-test. The participants in the SWOT treatment showed a slight decrease in scores from pre-test to post-test. On average, both treatment groups showed a decrease in organizational commitment scores from the initial pre-test to the delayed post-test. Further, both treatment groups exhibited a very similar organizational commitment score for the delayed post-test. The mean/standard deviation of organizational commitment for the Ai treatment was calculated to be 6.016/0.94 (pre-test), 6.156/0.84 (post-test), and 5.859/0.81 (delayed post-test) and the mean/standard deviation for the SWOT treatment was found to be 6.100/0.81, 5.978/0.86, and 5.807/0.90, respectively.

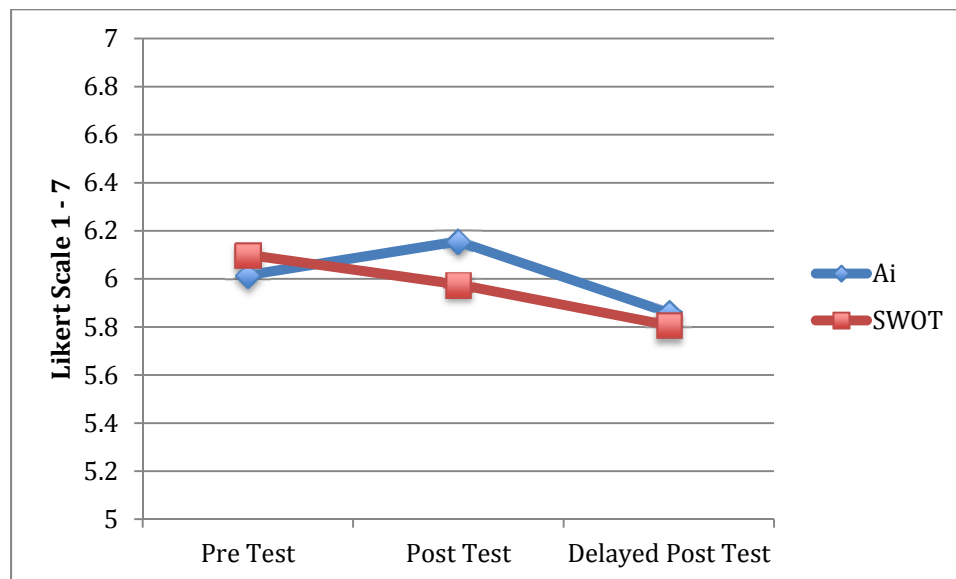


Figure 4-1. Mean score of the organizational commitment construct for both intervention treatments. Scores from Ai participants are displayed with a diamond shape and SWOT scores are displayed with a square shape. Note that the Likert scale was from one to seven while the figure only displays five through seven for reporting purposes.

As for vision clarity, Figure 4-2 depicts very similar scores throughout the testing period for both treatment groups. It can be observed that the group of

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participants in Ai started with and maintained a higher average vision clarity score than the SWOT treatment. There are few differences between test scores with relation to intervention treatment. The mean/standard deviation of vision clarity for the Ai treatment was calculated to be 4.28/0.23 (pre-test), 4.16/0.16 (post-test), and 4.06/0.25 (delayed post-test) and the mean/standard deviation for the SWOT treatment was found to be 3.66/0.45, 3.63/0.38, and 3.73/0.47, respectively.

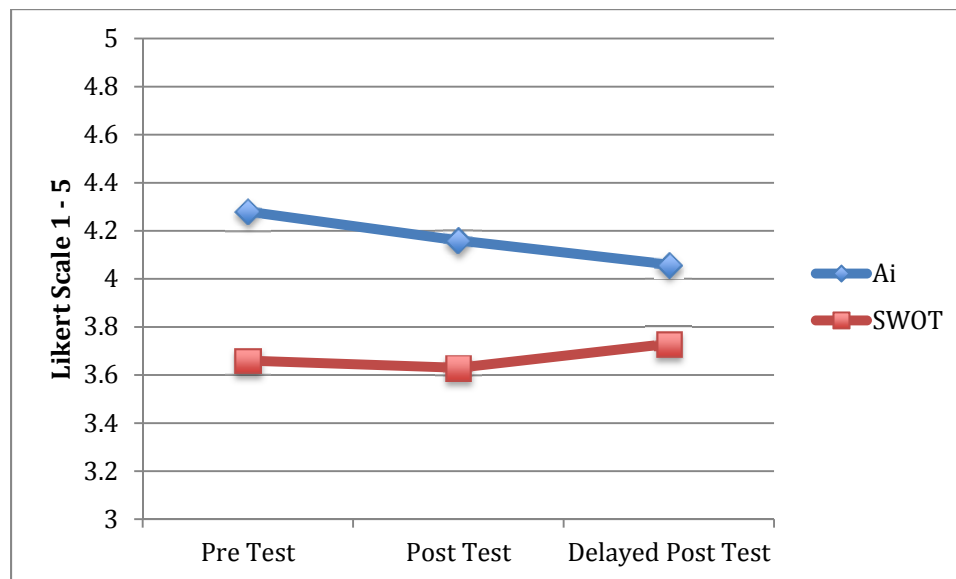


Figure 4-2. Mean score of the vision clarity construct for both intervention treatments. Scores from Ai participants are displayed with a diamond shape and SWOT scores are displayed with a square shape. Note that the Likert scale was from one to five while the figure only displays three through five for reporting purposes.

Research Question Two

A two-way analysis of variance (AONVA), with random subject effects, was conducted to evaluate changes in organizational commitment and vision clarity within and between treatment groups. The main effect terms are time (pre-test, post-test, delayed-post test) and intervention treatment group (SWOT vs. Ai). Specifically, the main quantity of interest is the interaction, which determines

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whether there is a significant difference in the treatments groups between the tests.

Subjects are treated as nested random effects because they represent a random sample of individuals and no subject is in both treatments groups.

The analysis for organizational commitment across all tests reports a 0.515 value for random effects (Table 4-1), while vision clarity reports 0.086 (Table 4-2). The random effect of subjects was considered to account for natural or inherent variability between subjects. This effect accounts for some characteristics that we cannot measure for each individual. Subject effect is removed because the differences in tests are used for analysis, as opposed to a fixed effect with subjects.

Table 4-1.

Variance component estimates for organizational commitment across all tests

Component	Var Comp Est	Percent of Total
subject[Treatment]&Random	0.515	82.54
Residual	0.109	17.46
Total	0.624	100.00

Table 4-2.

Variance component estimates for vision clarity across all tests

Component	Var Comp Est	Percent of Total
subject[Treatment]&Random	0.086	53.86
Residual	0.074	46.15
Total	0.160	100.00

The repeated measures ANOVA for organizational commitment across all three tests reports that 82% of the experimental error is being accounted for as differences between subjects are accounted for in the analysis (Table 4-1), additionally the vision clarity reports 53% (Table 4-2). This value explains the

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differences from one person to the next. The differences between subjects are to be expected and this is reason for inclusion of this effect in the analysis. Without the consideration of differences between subjects the effect would have been associated with overall experimental error.

A repeated measures ANOVA for organizational commitment across pre-test and post-test reports much more of the variation than the previous test with all the data. The variability between subjects increases and the residual variance decreases which eliminated noise from the data. Variation across the pre-test and post-test data is being explained by 93% of the differences between subjects for organizational commitment (Table 4-3), additionally, the vision clarity reports 86% (Table 4-4).

Table 4-3.

Variance component estimates for organizational commitment across pre-test and post-test

Component	Var Comp Est	Percent of Total
subject[Treatment]&Random	0.494	93.30
Residual	0.036	6.70
Total	0.529	100.00

Table 4-4.

Variance component estimates for vision clarity across pre-test and post-test

Component	Var Comp Est	Percent of Total
subject[Treatment]&Random	0.127	86.282
Residual	0.020	13.718
Total	0.147	100.000

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Pre-test and Post-test Analysis

The repeated measures ANOVA with random subject effects considered the pre-test and post-test results from the organizational commitment construct, which showed an interaction between time and treatment. The repeated measures ANOVA reports a p-value of 0.048. While the interaction between time and treatment is statistically significant, it is not significantly different than zero. Therefore despite the significance, the possibility of observing the interaction is still quite small.

Through further analysis of the data and the construct, it was observed that two questions within the organizational commitment construct averaged 6.5 or higher in the pre-test scores. As a result of the high averages from question six and seven within the construct, both questions were excluded from the analysis and the repeated measures ANOVA for organizational commitment between the pre-test and post-test was rerun. The exclusion of these questions from the analysis is a result of the ceiling effect that can be seen when using a Likert scale. A ceiling effect exists when the variance above an independent variable can no longer be measured. Because a ceiling effect exists within the data, the analysis should be considered cautiously. As seen in Table 4-5, the analysis yielded a p-value of 0.028 meaning that there was a statistically significant interaction between treatment groups and tests. Within this analysis, an interaction signifies the difference in the levels of one effect change over the levels of the other, remembering that main effect terms are time (pre vs. post) and treatment group (SWOT vs. Ai). The effect size for Ai pre-test to post-test was reported to be .208 with a p-value of .065. The effect size for SWOT pre-test to post-test was reported to be -0.133 with a p-value of .176.

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Table 4-5.

Repeated measures ANOVA with random effects for the organizational commitment construct considering pre/post tests

Source	Sums of Squares	Mean Square	DF	F Ratio	Significance
Test	0.013	0.013	1	0.282	0.603
Treatment	0.002	0.002	1	0.002	0.964
Treatment*Test	0.259	0.259	1	5.848	0.028*
subject[Treatment]&Random	20.217	1.189	17	26.810	<.0001*

Note: A single asterisk () denotes significance, $p < .05$.*

In considering the pre-test and post-test results from the vision clarity construct, a repeated measures ANOVA, with random subject effects, reported an insignificant interaction between treatment group and test. These results are reported in Table 4-6. Because there is no interaction between treatment and test, the influence of treatment group and test can be considered independently of each other. The analysis shows a statistical significance in the treatment as seen in the table below. This is a result of the unequal vision clarity scores between treatment groups at the pre-test. Further, the vision clarity scores indicated little variation between all three tests despite the differences between treatment groups. The effect size for Ai pre-test to post-test was reported to be -0.125 with a p-value of .096. The effect size for SWOT pre-test to post-test was reported to be -0.03 with a p-value of .623.

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Table 4-6.

Repeated measures ANOVA with random effects for the vision clarity construct considering pre/post tests

Source	Sums of Squares	Mean Square	DF	F Ratio	Significance
Test	0.056	0.056	1	2.775	0.114
Treatment	3.061	3.061	1	11.198	0.004*
Treatment*Test	0.021	0.021	1	1.032	0.324
Subject[Treatment]&Random	4.647	0.273	17	13.580	<.0001*

Note: A single asterisk (*) denotes significance, $p < .05$.

Pre-test, Post-test and Delayed Post-test Analysis

After adding the delayed post-test data, a repeated measures ANOVA, with random subject effects, was rerun. Within the organizational commitment construct it can be observed that the interaction between treatment and test is not significant (Table 4-7). Looking independently at the test and treatment group, the analysis does not yield significant values for either variable. The analysis for vision clarity tested similarly, with an insignificant interaction between treatment group and test (Table 4-8). As seen in the previous analysis, the treatment is again considered to be a significant factor in the differences in vision clarity scores with a p-value of 0.005. The statistical significance is a result of the initial variation in scores at the pre-test.

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Table 4-7

Repeated measures ANOVA with random effects for the organizational commitment construct considering all three tests

Source	Sums of Squares	Mean Square	DF	F Ratio	Significance
Test	0.504	0.252	2	2.088	0.140
Treatment	0.015	0.015	1	0.008	0.930
Treatment*Test	0.237	0.118	2	0.981	0.386
Subject[Treatment]&Random	31.518	1.854	17	15.352	<.0001*

Note: A single asterisk () denotes significance, p<.05.*

Table 4-8

Repeated measures ANOVA with random effects for the vision clarity construct considering all three tests

Source	Sums of Squares	Mean Square	DF	F Ratio	Significance
Test	0.061	0.031	2	0.414	0.664
Treatment	3.549	3.549	1	10.67	0.0045*
Treatment*Test	0.155	0.077	2	1.048	0.362
Subject[Treatment]&Random	5.652	0.332	17	4.501	<.0001*

Note: A single asterisk () denotes significance, p<.05.*

Research Question Three

What were the process and products of each intervention? This data was collected and reported from researcher observations taken during the interventions (Appendix H & I). Data analysis of these observations followed the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). The information and themes shared here are derived from the researcher protocols. The organizational development practitioner strategically created similar agendas while honoring the technique assigned to each treatment group. In both sessions the practitioner was careful to explain the purpose and expected outcomes of the visioning process. The

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practitioner explained that a plan for vision execution would not be a product of the session but instead groundwork would be laid for future development of vision execution. Both intervention treatment groups had the same goal: to create groundwork for achieving the Careers Services vision. The vision statement was posted in both rooms for participants to view throughout the interventions. Both groups also discussed the vision statement and were asked the same question about the vision: how do we make our vision a reality? The practitioner used the same check-in activity to open and close both groups by simply asking each participant to share a statement about how they feel/felt about the process.

SWOT intervention. The agenda for the SWOT treatment included: goals and agenda, check-in activity and introductions, vision and question, the problem to solve, generate goals, generate solutions, SWOT analysis, and close with check in activity. In the vision and question phase of the session a participant was asked to read the vision statement and all participants were asked to share their interpretation of the vision. Some participants were unsure of the underlying purpose of a vision statement and some had a hard time understanding the statement. The participants focused primarily on the first half of the vision statement that related to being a premier resource.

In the next activity, “the problem to solve”, the practitioner asked, “what is the problem we are trying to solve? What’s holding us back from achieving this vision?” With this prompt, the participants discussed various hurdles in having the department recognized as the premier resource for their services. The practitioner consolidated these statements into one, “they don’t get it,” which became the focus

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of the next brainstorming activity. The framework for the brainstorming activity can be found in Appendix Q, and SWOT participants brainstormed ways in which they could address this problem. During the 15 minutes that were allocated to this exercise, they generated many ideas that are detailed in (Appendix R). The participants were given dots to place by the ideas they liked. The idea with the most dots was determined to be: “one-on-ones with faculty.” This activity proved to be enjoyable and energizing for the staff.

The practitioner then used “having one-on-ones with faculty” as the prompt to generate a SWOT. The participants discussed the strengths they bring as a department to this idea. One example, among many others, was that the department could serve as experts to the faculty in career decisions and services. Weaknesses, something that the department might have to overcome, were also discussed. An example of this was that the department was not regarded as an academic peer to faculty. The list of strengths and weaknesses generated can be found in Appendix S. Opportunities to leverage were discussed among participants, such as collaborating with other departments in student affairs. Lastly, threats were interpreted as something that might undermine the department’s efforts. The participants listed the lack of time and interest of faculty as something that could undermine their idea. The list of opportunities and threats can be found in Appendix S.

Throughout the closing check-in activity, many participants shared that the brainstorming activity was valuable. One participant shared that she was unsure if she would continue with the idea now that the analysis had been completed. The participants viewed this as a benefit to the process, which added value to the

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analysis. One participant noted that their SWOT had more strengths and opportunities than weaknesses and threats. Another participant spoke specifically to the “negative” language that was used during the intervention. The researcher also observed a difference in the tone and mood of the group when they were discussing the strengths and opportunities versus the weaknesses and threats. Participants were much more hesitant to share weaknesses and threats, and they were much more quiet. Fewer participants contributed to the discussion of weaknesses and threats compared to the discussion about strengths and opportunities. Many participants were excited about discussing strengths and opportunities and the overall mood of the group was more positive.

Ai Intervention. The agenda for the Ai treatment included: goals and agenda, check-in activity and introductions, vision and question, discovery phase, dream phase, and close with check-in activity. Many members of the leadership team who composed the vision statement were present in the Ai intervention. As a result of this, many participants had a clear understanding of the vision and engaged in a deep dialogue about the meaning of the vision. The group closely evaluated the details and the wording of the vision statement. Much of the discussion focused on the first half of the statement stating that the department will be “the premier resource.” A participant shared that it was very helpful to discuss the big picture because much of her work is often very focused on the day-to-day details.

To highlight the unique phases of Ai, the discovery phase consisted of paired interviews that were structured according to *The Appreciative Inquiry Handbook* by Cooperrider et al. (2003). The participants were asked to follow the interview guide

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(Appendix T) and to spend approximately 20 minutes on each interview. The interview questions asked the participants to tell a story about a time they felt most alive at work. The participants were asked to partner with a colleague that they did not work with closely. During this time staff members were connecting with one another about their experiences in the department. Once the interviews were completed, the participants discussed their interview experience and shared information they learned about the colleague they interviewed. All participants expressed that they learned something new about their interviewee. During these conversations many shared values among employees were realized and discussed. Common themes from these experiences were written down on a large paper for all of the staff to see. Such themes included teamwork, willingness and openness of the staff, collaboration, caring and trusting colleagues, and good communication.

In the dream phase, participants were asked to draw an image of what the department might be with markers and a poster board. In accordance with a prompt published by David Cooperrider, the practitioner explained the drawing assignment with the prompt that the entire staff has fallen asleep for many years and when they wake up the department has achieved the vision. The practitioner asked each participant to draw an image of what the department, the university, the staff, and/or the students look like now that the department has achieved its vision. All but one participant drew an image on the poster (Appendix U).

Once the images were completed, they were posted around the room as a gallery for the participants to view. During the gallery walk activity, participants could ask questions about the pictures. Each participant received two dots and they

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were asked to place a dot next to any image of the future they identified with. The three images with the most dots were then explained and used for a second activity. Participants were broken up into groups of three and asked to create a narrative or story about what the drawing meant and how the department got there, (Appendix V). This was observed to be an enjoyable activity that brought to light many underlying strengths the department.

Towards the latter half of the intervention, the practitioner discussed how the organization's strengths, detailed on the display paper, can be developed to fulfill the department's vision. The practitioner used "relationships with faculty," chosen from a list developed by the participants, as an example to correlate strengths of the organization with successful actions taken to develop relationships with faculty. The participants shared experiences in which they have successfully engaged with faculty. The practitioner helped the participants to see how the department can use these experiences and strengths to build on one another to develop a plan for vision execution.

At the end of the intervention, participants were asked to share a statement about the process in a "safe space" that was free from discussion. The check-in activity was a reflective time for participants. Many participants felt fulfilled after identifying the department's strengths; however, some participants voiced the lack tangible outcomes as a result of the Ai intervention. One participant noted that the interview experience was valuable and rewarding, while another noted that this experience helped them to see that the department is actively working towards their vision. These responses help to showcase the outcomes of the intervention.

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Intervention Comparisons. Based on the varying descriptions of the intervention treatments above, it can be determined that the visioning processes had many differences despite their shared goal. The two treatments used different perspectives in which the visioning process was framed and executed. The Ai treatment asked participants to envision the future of the department from a strengths-based foundation. On the other hand, the SWOT treatment required participants to identify hurdles facing the department's execution of the vision. With the problem identified, SWOT participants analytically investigated and analyzed a possible solution. Both intervention groups discussed the department's strengths; however, the SWOT participants discussed the strengths of the department that would contribute to implementing their visioning strategy: one-on-ones with faculty. The discussion of strengths in the SWOT intervention was limited by the narrow focus of the topic. Additionally, the accomplishments and successes of the department were not discussed. Alternatively, the Ai intervention fostered a comprehensive discussion of the department's strengths and recent accomplishments. Ai participants were asked to think holistically about the department as opposed to responding to a specific strategy. Both treatment groups focused on the department's relationship with faculty as a strategy to help the department execute its vision.

Research Question Four

How did participants perceive the visioning process and resulting effects? A qualitative analysis was performed on focus group interviews related to strategic

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planning interventions using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). Staff experiences related to the interventions generated four categories that are discussed in seven themes (Figure 4-3). The themes are used as a framework to guide the discussion of staff experiences related to the phenomenon; moreover, it should be understood that these categories do not exist independently or in isolation of one another, but instead the categories are interrelated. Please reference Appendix W for a list of codes, themes, and categories.

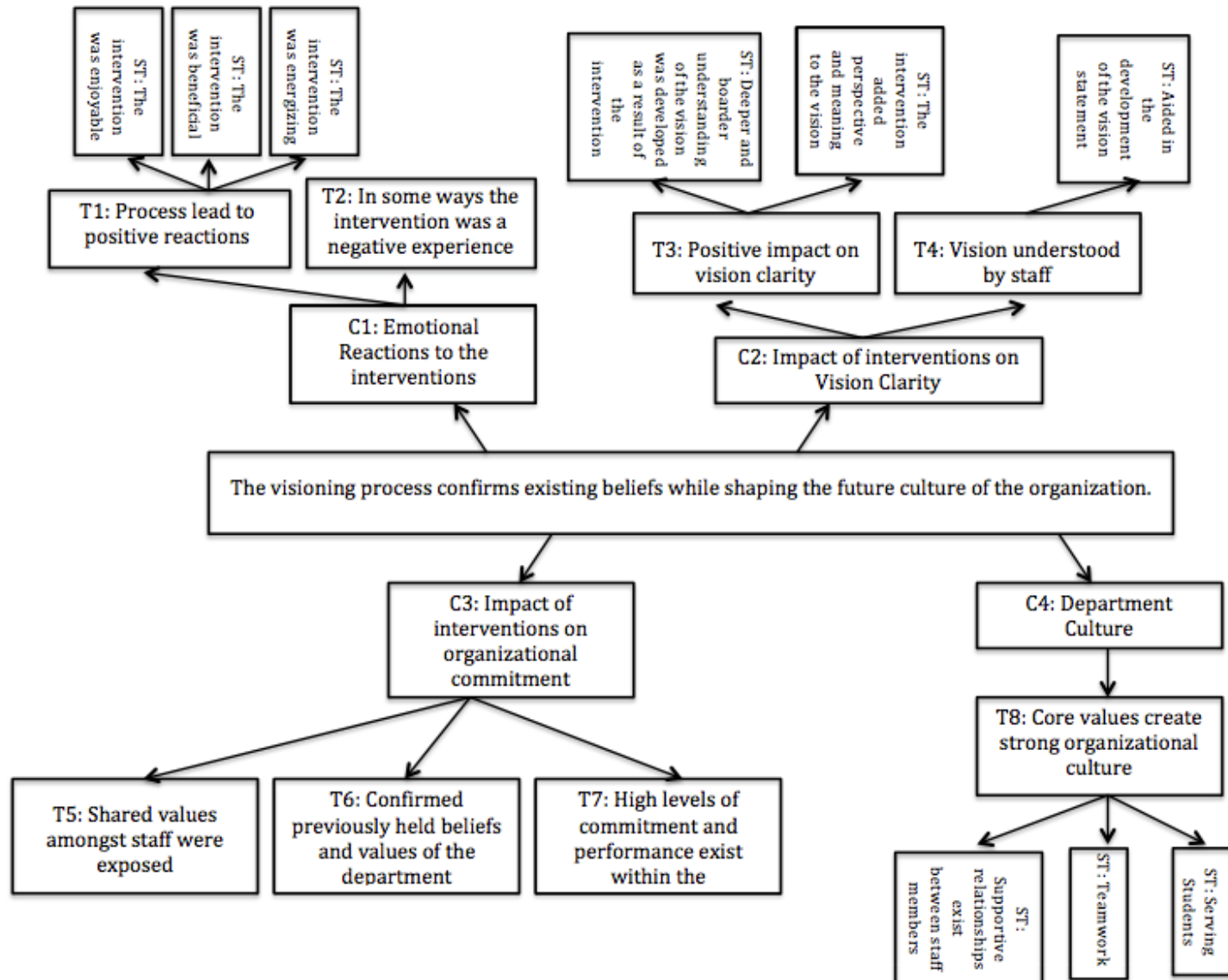


Figure 4-3. Emerging themes for the organizational visioning case study. Interventions generated four categories that are discussed in eight themes.

Category: Emotional Reactions to the Interventions

The visioning process led to positive reactions. Many of the staff members had positive reactions to the interventions from which they found the visioning process to be enjoyable, beneficial, and energizing. AB enjoyed the brainstorming activity and liked the, “idea of getting all of the ideas down, I thought that was actually great, I felt that once we got on a role with that, there was a lot of energy around the ideas” (C146). In the SWOT intervention, HJ noted that the staff generated over three pages of ideas in the brainstorming activity. Many enjoyed this activity and CF found it to be beneficial for further development of ideas in the future. Additionally, the SWOT intervention was valuable in building consensus as explained by ST:

The group of people that we were with did a really good job in identifying our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The thing I like the most about it was the idea generation of the things that we could or couldn't do, and it was really good to see what the consensus was of our group. (ST, A8)

FP and many others felt that the Ai intervention was a positive process and experience. The opportunity to interview fellow colleagues was rewarding and affirming for the staff as stories were shared. The visioning process was facilitated with a drawing activity that required the staff to envision the future of the department. As reflected in the following description, this experience energized KL:

I think it did kinda of re-energize me, it was just a real, it was a very positive day and it was, ya know, back to that picture thing, I mean thinking about what

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could be, that was just a great experience thinking about what could be so I.

(KL, C203)

Through this excerpt, KL also discusses a positive visioning experience in Ai.

In some ways the intervention was a frustrating and negative experience. On the other hand, a majority of SWOT participants had frustrating experiences and negative reactions to the visioning process. AB and GW expressed a desire to have more time to be creative during the SWOT intervention and were frustrated by the brief brainstorming activity.

There were some frustrating times: I felt like we didn't spend as much time of the parts that I wanted to spend time on. ... And out of four hours, we had 10 minutes to be super creative and then, uh I would have liked more of that. (GW, B38)

GW also thought that there was a great deal of time that was dedicated to explaining the process and differentiating terminology. This resulted in a feeling of exhaustion for QU who felt drained after certain parts of the intervention. SWOT participants expressed frustration by the lack of tangible outcomes and action steps. Even further, RS explained:

I felt frustrated because we didn't actually get there, ya know, and part of it's my personality: okay action steps now lets do it, ya know; we just didn't get to that and so that was a little frustrating. (RS, B75)

Staff members from the SWOT intervention mentioned the negative tone that was underlying the visioning process. As reflected in the following description, HJ felt frustrated by the focus on the “negative” aspects of the department:

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Uhm I think the one frustration was that we kind of had this natural inclination to focus on the weaknesses or the threats so I think our session was a little bit more negative than the appreciative inquiry, after hearing from their experiences. (HJ, C120)

The framing of the SWOT intervention also frustrated QU because the visioning process did not build off of the strengths or successes of the department. This process forced the staff to think of new ideas in order to achieve the vision instead of focusing on what the department is currently doing:

But I think its difficult because its almost as if, there's a feeling that were just not doing anything where as, WE ARE doing things, and so there's just this feeling, at least in that particular group, I mean you would think that we were lazy (QU, B298).

This perspective used in the SWOT visioning process made QU feel as if the vision statement and future goals were insurmountable. Despite this feeling, she believes that the department is actively pursuing the vision.

Category: Impact of Interventions on Vision Clarity

Vision previously understood by staff. While staff members, from both interventions, discussed the vision statement explicitly and implicitly during the visioning process. Many expressed that they had a clear understanding of the statement prior to the intervention. Specifically, staff members who were on the leadership team and took part in creating the vision statement were clear on the meaning and content of the statement:

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I think there were some areas where, like I said, we could probably tweek it; I know that your vision is not something that your planning on meeting; its something that you work on, and it's a goal that's set out and you strive to get that. (VO, C319)

Through discussion, most of the staff acknowledged that some of the words in the vision statement could be reconsidered or revised. However, the general consensus was that the staff was happy with the statement and there was no need to exhaust further discussions related to wording. This discussion did not make the vision statement unclear.

In addition to the leadership team, the staff members who were not involved in the origination of the statement also felt that the vision was clear. As RS said, "I think it's a very clear vision statement...this is understandable; I understand this" (RS, B235). And AB said, "well, I mean, I already knew what the vision was, so I don't know that the vision was any clearer to me when we finished that discussion" (AB, C370).

Positive impact on vision clarity. Staff members commented on gaining a deeper and broader understanding of the vision statement as a result of the interventions. AB said, "I think for me, ya know, I've been here [number] years, and it's the first time we have ever had a discussion [about the vision statement] with the whole staff" (C335). The intervention provided an opportunity for all staff members to engage in a discussion about the vision that was especially beneficial to FP who does not normally participate in such dialogue because of his/her current

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role. As a result of the discussion and activities that took place during the interventions FP felt that:

The ideas that were generated, the fun and interesting ways that things were done, just helped broaden the sense of 'okay this is what were doing, this is the direction we're going.' (FP, A40).

Another staff member commented that the visioning process helped to provide clarity in vision execution and deeply rooted barriers in moving forward with vision fulfillment. New employees remarked that the discussions that took place during the interventions were especially helpful in developing a rich education and understanding of the vision. HJ gained valuable insight and perspective through discussions with colleagues:

I thought that it was REALLY good for me as a new staff member just to kind of go a little bit more in depth about what the vision meant from some of my colleagues and what they thought it meant, in depth (HJ, C113).

The meaning behind the statement was made clear for recent and tenured staff as different perspectives were shared. CF said, "We can even get siloed in [department], so it was interesting to hear each person's take... of what's going on – in terms of the vision" (B58). The discussions lead to an understanding that added meaning to the words, as described by XD:

I think we have had some conversations about really, if we say that our vision is to be the best [department], what does that REALLY mean. When you pinpoint it, and if your trying to put it down on paper, what does that really mean. (XD, A153)

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The personal interpretations and varied perspectives from the staff offered a deeper focus on meaning and value of the department. MR described an alignment of daily tasks to the vision statement through the visioning process, further adding clarity and meaning.

Throughout both interventions, there were opportunities for critical reflection by the staff of the vision statement. Discussion of the vision sparked questions that had not been previously posed or considered by some of the staff. KL said, “so I was in the group that came up with the initial vision, and I –it [the Ai intervention] made me kind of question it [the vision statement]” (KL, C360). The visioning process also clarified questions surrounding vision fulfillment and execution as detailed in the following description:

Do you think that it kinda helped us clarify... why are we not there yet, who are we not reaching or why are we not reaching that recognition as being the premier resources, so I think that was good. (RS, B266)

Category: Impact of Interventions on Organizational Commitment

Pre-existing high levels of commitment and performance. Both intervention groups commented on the highly committed staff and the high level of department performance. Moreover, the intervention had little to no affect on the staff's commitment to the department, because commitment levels are already very high. As expounded by CF, “I don't think it really impacted my commitment to [department], uhm. Obviously, I am committed to [department] already, I have worked here for [number] years and I don't get paid enough” (CF, B357). “I feel like I am already at a pretty high level of commitment” (CF, B367). Testament to high

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levels of commitment were reiterated by FP: “For myself... I just love my job, doing what I do... so I don’t really see more of an impact of, ya know; I really wanna go out and do better and stuff, but I am always like that anyways” (FP, A66). Many within the department exhibit a sustained level of commitment to their jobs and to the department.

The department’s high level of performance transpired from group discussion about vision execution and fulfillment. QU said, “And we do it well, and I think that’s the theme... well we actually do a pretty good job” (B448). This point is echoed by XD: “And I don’t know that it affected my performance, because I think this department already has a lot of ground work laid for our success... It’s an overall goal of success for us, already” (XD, A76). The department and the staff instinctively go above and beyond when working with others. AB said, “I think what it takes to, uhm, to satisfy people, here both in this environment, specifically our department, but at Tech, is it’s already in-grained in us to do this extra stuff for people” (AB, C570).

Confirmed previously held beliefs and values of the department. A majority of staff members from the Ai intervention group explained that the visioning process confirmed many of their previously held beliefs and values about the department. KL explained that the visioning process helped reinforce her previously established commitment to the department. MR noted that:

It confirmed things about what I already believed about this office... I think if anything this activity got me even more excited about [department] and the

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group of individuals, the wonderful group of individuals that work within side the walls. (MR, C59)

Feelings of re-affirmation and confirmation were a theme for participants of the Ai intervention. RH felt that the Ai intervention was an affirmative process.

Additionally, VO mentioned that some of the Ai activities were used in a staff retreat after the intervention.

Staff members who participated in Ai also mentioned that they felt connected to others through the interviewing process. Activities during the visioning process allowed staff members to discuss values that were shared among the department. KL noted that the visioning process was, “just confirming things that I already felt about our office, but it was fun to see other people feel that way” (C84). In response to the interviews that took place, KL felt, “that was just a really nice exercise, to find out that we both felt the same way about our jobs and we do very different things, which was really neat” (C92). As evident in the previous excerpt, discussion with co-workers resulted in a discovery of mutual feelings. And throughout these discussions, MR noticed common themes among the staff:

So that was most enjoyable and to hear the common themes about what folks felt about working in the office, and what we learned about each other individually, but also how that transcended to the group of what we thought about working in this particular office. (MR, C55)

Category: Department Culture

Core values create strong organizational culture. Many members of the Staff discussed the strong culture of the department, and through this discussion

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core values emerged. RH described the department while saying, “It’s like we don’t know how else to be, like this is how we are, ... we all have the same core in a lot of ways; that’s why we do what we do; we wouldn’t be here if we didn’t” (B443). A large number of the staff have worked in the department for an extended amount of time. These lasting relationships have fostered a strong organizational culture as explained by ST:

There are a lot of people who have been here like long term, so you’ve got this long rich history, you’ve grown together, you’ve-I mean you’ve had similar life experiences and stuff like that; I think all that just kinda helps us to be cohesive.
(ST, A458).

And when the department does have an opportunity to hire new employees, they are careful to select employees whose values align the departments. This is further explained by MR in the following description:

And the thing is with this office, we don’t have very often the need to hire folks, because people don’t want to leave; well when the time comes to do that, then I think we all know how important it is to try and find these folks that will continue to fit well within our culture and bring in new ideas because we don’t want to stay stagnant or have a yes culture, that would be a little scary. (MR, C486)

The Staff discussed the importance of new ideas and organizational learning within the department. It was mentioned by many that they valued the opportunities they had for professional development. The department also encourages staff to expand their skills and knowledge, as described by AB: “I think

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the other thing is learning and supporting the learning here.... I like learning about my craft of working with students in advising, and coaching, and counseling, that's what I like to do" (C282). Personal development is encouraged by the department in an effort to build self-awareness and connectedness with one another. The staff values the opportunities they have received for personal growth, as expressed by XD:

Well I think it has been all the opportunities that we've had to grow and develop ourselves. ...I have learned so much about myself; it's helped me to understand myself and how I can contribute to a team and my strengths and weaknesses. (XD, A363)

Such investments in the staff and feelings of empowerment have played a larger role in building the department culture.

A staff member noted that the Director plays an influential role in establishing values, building a community, and communicating the vision. ST exemplifies the Director's role in the following statement:

But it definitely is like our director. It's like her vision ... it's always been instilled in us customer service is first, ya know: the family and then students are first, ya know that kinda thing; so we all just kinda have that instilled in us. (ST, A461)

Staff members repeatedly mentioned the support they receive from fellow colleagues in the department:

One word that I think of is 'support': whether it is support for professional development, support to try out something new, uhm just all kinds of different

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support. You get that here, where maybe other places you might not get that.

(KL, C617)

To build on these remarks, VO explained that “everybody’s always willing to support one another; even if it’s not in there area, they’re willing to step up and help out where, ya know, where needed” (C470). A strong organizational culture has been built on the strong support of others in the department.

The Staff’s desire for serving students has also added to the culture of the department. As described by MR, “I think again, if you ask anybody here in the office, they are here because they love working with students and they have that passion to do that” (C497). Staff members from both interventions spoke to the value they see in educating and developing students. KL noted the service that the department strives to give students, “that’s just how things are here, student centered, very customer service focused” (C616). Many of the staff felt that the department treated students with respect, further reiterating this theme. AB said, “everyone is committed to the education and service to each and every student who walks through those doors and that takes different forms at different points in time” (C506).

Research Question Five

What similarities and differences are there between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group? Both Ai and SWOT participants express many of the themes listed above. A majority of SWOT participants spoke specifically to the visioning process being frustrating and negative. A majority of Ai participants expressed that the intervention served to confirm many preexisting values and

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beliefs. Staff members were able to connect during the interviews to expose shared values. With this being said, five out of the seven themes that emerged were found in both Ai and SWOT interventions. SWOT had one theme that was identified to be specific to the intervention treatment. Additionally, Ai participants spoke directly to values confirmation as a result of the intervention.

Research Question Six

Is there a significant difference in pre-test and post-test results between intervention groups based on their visioning process? Qualitative data about participants' intervention experience was used to explain connections and relationships among the quantitative data. In a review of the qualitative data, it was found that the qualitative themes related most closely to their visioning process as opposed to their change scores, which were determined during quantitative analysis. Moreover, the qualitative themes related to the treatment intervention (Table 4-9).

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Table 4-9

Themes by intervention treatment

Themes	Ai	SWOT
Enjoyable, beneficial, and energizing process	X	X
Negative and frustrating process		X
Vision previously understood by staff	X	X
Positive impact on vision clarity	X	X
Pre-existing high levels of commitment and performance	X	X
Confirmed previously held beliefs and values of the department	X	
Core values create strong organizational culture	X	X

*(X) represents the presence of that theme in the intervention Themes were derived from participants in the SWOT and Ai intervention. Themes were discussed across all change levels. Differences in themes are related to intervention treatment.

Interestingly, the participants did not explicitly acknowledge a change in their organizational commitment or vision clarity scores. That being said, the quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis are not convergent. However, the significance associated with Ai is explained by the qualitative themes, specifically the theme exclusively related to Ai. The slight decline in organizational commitment scores can be explained by the qualitative themes related to the SWOT intervention. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008) suggest meta-inferences when the quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed separately to create inferences and then these inferences are combined to create meta-inferences. Quantitative inferences are

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combined with qualitative inferences to produce meta-inferences as discussed in chapter five.

Summary

The findings of this study, organized by research question, are presented in this chapter. Results of the data analysis from the study were reported next. Quantitative data analysis included a repeated measures ANOVA with random subject effects. A description of the visioning process and related outcomes were discussed. Findings from the analysis of the qualitative data were then reported. In keeping with the mixed methods study, the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to attempt to further explain the results and the phenomenon. Further, chapter five will provide scholarly reflections on the findings presented in this chapter. Conclusions, recommendations for practices, and implications for future research will also be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to provide a brief overview of the study, this chapter restates the problem statement, research questions, and methods used in the study. The major sections of the chapter summarize the results, relate findings to the theoretical basis of the study, and discuss implications for future practice and research.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars in the field agree that vision is considered to be an integral part of leadership. A vision statement provides a sense of direction for organizational members while explaining a positive image of the future. Vision is a vital part of business strategy and planning (eg. Porras & Collins, 1994; Schoemaker, 1992; Vandermerwe, 1995). With this understanding of vision and the Visioning Process Model (Kakabadse et al., 2005), it is easy to see how essential it is for a leader to be able to cultivate such a statement. However, many leaders struggle with creating and articulating a vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). This is detrimental considering the impact that leaders have in determining the success of visioning and, in turn, the success of the organization. We must be able to understand and effectively facilitate visioning within our organizations in order to successfully move into the future.

Despite the common use of organizational development techniques by leaders, practitioners, and consultants to facilitate visioning; there is still a need to analyze the techniques themselves (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Leigh, 2010). Considering how many

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companies are investing in executive education and leadership development, the effectiveness of the techniques being used ought to be an important issue. The approaches to organizational visioning and planning need further analysis to determine their outcomes, clarity, and return on investment (Helms & Nixon, 2010). Moreover, there is a growing need to compare strategies (SWOT and Ai), in order to help companies and organizations determine which technique is most appropriate for them.

Research Questions

The specific research questions for the thesis were:

1. What were the levels of organizational commitment and vision clarity before and after the interventions?
2. What were the differences in organizational commitment and vision clarity within and between treatment groups?
3. What were the process and products of each intervention?
4. How did participants' perceive the visioning process and resulting effects?
5. What similarities and differences are there between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group?
6. Is there a significant difference in pre-test and post-test results between intervention groups based on their visioning process?

Review of Methodology

A brief review of the methodology used in the study is presented here. The research was conducted using an mixed methods explanatory sequential design. In the first phase of the research, quantitative data was collected using survey questionnaires taken before and

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after interventions. This strand of data was analyzed and connected to the second phase of the study, as it informed participant selection and the composition of interview questions. In the second phase of the study, qualitative data was collected during three focus group sessions and researcher observations were made during each intervention. Focus group transcripts and observation protocols were thematically analyzed using the constant comparative method. Both strands of data were mixed and integrated in such a way that the qualitative analysis further explained the quantitative findings.

Summary and Discussion of Results

In this section, a summary and discussion of the results for each research question are shared. A brief summary of the results presented in chapter four is followed by a discussion relating the research in this case study to existing research. Moreover, the discussion provides explanations of unanticipated findings and theoretical implications of the study. Lastly, implications for practice and recommendations for research will be discussed.

Research Question One, Results Summary

The first research question asked: what were the levels of organizational commitment and vision clarity before and after the interventions? The results showed that Ai participants had slightly higher organizational commitment scores after their intervention. SWOT participants had slightly lower organizational commitment scores after the intervention. Both Ai and SWOT had delayed post-test scores that were lower than the pre-test organizational commitment scores. The results also showed that participants in the Ai intervention had higher vision clarity scores at the pre-test than the

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participants in the SWOT intervention. Both Ai and SWOT had very little change between vision clarity across all test scores. It should be noted that these differences are all within the reported standard error, meaning that these slight differences are not significant.

Explanation of unanticipated findings. While the researcher anticipated positive differences in organizational commitment and vision clarity scores at the pre-test and post-test, it is important to acknowledge the limited time for each intervention. Time allotted for each intervention was based on department availability. Cooperrider et al. (2008) suggested that an Ai summit could last up to three or four days and the intervention time allotted for this case study was only four hours. Therefore, the limited time for organizational visioning could account for these findings. However, the case study is intended to add insight into the future investment of either strategic visioning technique based on limited amounts of time.

Positive changes in organizational commitment were not sustained, as evident in the delayed-post test results. The data shows that there was a slight decrease in organizational commitment scores for SWOT participants at the post and delayed post intervals. Organizational commitment scores also decreased for Ai from post-test to delayed post-test. Both Ai and SWOT showed decreased levels of vision clarity between the pre-test and post-test. Additionally, participants from the focus groups discussed the lack of action taken after the interventions to continue the visioning dialogue. This information helps to further explain the decreased scores reported during the delayed post-test. The delayed post-test was also administered during the semester, where as the previous tests were taken over the summer. The increased workload over the semester may have played a role in the results from the delayed post-test.

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Relationship of the study to prior research. Mowday et al. (1979) surveyed nine samples and found the mean scores to be slightly above the midpoint on a 7-point Likert scale. Across the nine samples, the level of commitment ranged from a low of 4.0 to a high of 6.1. One of the nine samples surveyed 569 public employees who were found to have an average commitment score of 4.5 with a standard deviation of 0.90. Additionally, a survey of 243 classified university employees was found to have an average commitment score of 4.6 with a standard deviation of 1.3. These commitment levels give perspective to the organizational commitment scores of the department. Compared to the ranges reported by Mowday et al. (1979), it appears that the staff reports high levels of organizational commitment given that the average pre-test scores were above a 6.0 on a seven point Likert scale.

Research Question Two, Results Summary

This question asked: what were the differences in organizational commitment and vision clarity within and between treatment groups? After performing a repeated measures ANOVA, with random subject effects, it was determined that a statistically significant difference existed between Ai and SWOT organizational commitment scores from pre-test to post-test. The Ai treatment positively impacted organizational commitment scores. Within this analysis, the interaction is statistically different than zero, and the change in Ai from pre-test to post-test is different than the change in SWOT from pre-test to post-test. The tests being performed are used to determine whether the differences among the intervention treatment levels are larger than the differences among the individual observations within each level.

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Within the vision clarity construct, the relationship between intervention treatments and test time proved to be insignificant, while the treatment proved to be statistically significant. This is attributed to the difference in vision clarity scores seen throughout the groups at the onset of the testing. As determined from the qualitative analysis, the vision clarity scores found in Ai are higher than the SWOT scores because many of the Ai participants were on the leadership team that composed the vision statement. The researcher attempted to control for equal vision clarity scores amongst treatment groups, but participant availability and scheduling took higher priority in assigning groups. An important observation of this analysis is that the leadership team has a greater understanding of the vision and, according to one participant, the intervention was the first time the department vision was discussed as a whole.

Research Question Three, Results Summary

Research question three analyzes a component of the qualitative data in asking: what were the process and products of each intervention? Observation protocols were used to analyze and better understand the interventions. Both interventions were designed to have the same goal and overarching question guiding the activities. However, the two approaches to strategic visioning resulted in very different outcomes. Participants of SWOT analysis discussed barriers to completing the vision and then they carefully analyzed a possible solution to the identified problem. The resulting effects of the SWOT intervention were a specific and focused list of organizational attributes related to one theme: one-on-ones with faculty. Participants of Ai focused on the best experiences of the department to build a strengths-based foundation from which they envisioned opportunities for the future. Ai intervention outcomes resulted in a broad understanding

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of the department's future. The strengths-based foundation was briefly related to working with faculty to advance the department's vision.

Relationship of the study to prior research. These findings agree with the existing research on SWOT and Ai. SWOT is noted as a rigorous analytical tool that has the ability to critically evaluate specific strategies (Hill & Westbrook, 1997). Further, SWOT investigates a specific strategy using a limited and narrow focus, while Ai focuses broadly and holistically on departmental successes and accomplishments. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) emphasize the whole system thinking within Ai. Additionally, the first two phases of the 4-D cycle are intended to be divergent, while the latter two phases are intended to be convergent. These findings, from the researcher observations, coincide with the literature.

Research Question Four, Results Summary

Focus group interviews were conducted to learn how participants' perceive the visioning process and resulting effects? Based on the quantitative analysis, participants were placed into three different focus groups: positive change, no change, or negative change based on their change in scores from pre-test to post-test. Organizational commitment was chosen as the construct for analysis because of its statistical significance.

Themes that emerged from discussions with the staff were:

- Enjoyable, beneficial, and energizing process
- Negative and frustrating process
- Vision previously understood by staff
- Positive impact on vision clarity
- High levels of commitment and performance amongst staff were pre-existing

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- Confirmed previously held beliefs and values of the department
- Core values create strong organizational culture

Many of the staff discussions related to the culture of the organization. Additionally, themes about pre-existing high levels of commitment and vision clarity gave insight into the high performing organization. Few themes emerged that were specific to Ai or SWOT techniques.

Relationship of the study to prior research. While organizational and employee performance were not surveyed in this study, staff members mentioned the high levels of performance and excellence exhibited by the department. Mowday et al. (1979) suggested that a relationship exists between organizational commitment and employee/organizational performance, while acknowledging that performance is also influenced by many other factors. However, a meta-analysis of a decade worth of research yielded a weak correlation between affective organizational commitment and job performance (Riketta, 2002). A body of literature has been developed to further investigate this relationship. While the literature is not expanded on here, the results of this study suggest a need for future research on the relationship between high performing organizations and staff levels of affective organizational commitment.

Within the theme “core values create strong organizational culture,” a sub theme emerged focusing of organizational learning and professional development. This theme relates to many studies focusing on the importance of organizational learning within organizations. Kee and Newcomer (2008) argue that organizational learning is important and beneficial to public institutions. Denison (1990) included organizational learning as one of the twelve cultural traits in his framework for understanding corporate culture and

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organizational effectiveness. Additionally, Schein (2010a) suggested the need for leaders to enact organizational learning to better understand and compete with the environment within which organizations operate.

Research Question Five, Results Summary

This research question serves as another level of analysis in looking at the focus group data. In determining the similarities and differences between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group, it was discovered that there were only two themes specific to the intervention treatment. Ai participants spoke specifically to the confirmation of beliefs and the discovery of shared values amongst staff during the intervention. While a few of the Ai participants expressed some frustration with intervention activities, an overwhelming majority of SWOT participants mentioned feeling frustrated during the intervention. Additionally, the phrase "negative" was specific and unique to the language used by SWOT participants to describe the visioning process.

Mixing of Data. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) briefly define mixed methods research as "a type of research design in which qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in types of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis procedures, and/or inferences" (p. 11). This study adopted the explanatory sequential design (Creswell et al., 2003) as a framework for mixed methods research. Specific to this model, the quantitative data was collected and analyzed to guide the qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The model connects both research approaches during data collection and interpretation.

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Research Question Six, Results Summary

Research question six: Is there a significant difference in pre-test and post-test results between intervention groups based on their visioning process? This is a mixing question addressed through interpretations of both the qualitative and quantitative inferences. Positive, negative, and no change in organizational commitment and vision clarity are explained by the themes generated from SWOT and Ai participant experiences (Table 5-1). Relationships between the quantitative and qualitative data analysis are made based on meta-inferences and the literature. The table connects change groups (presented in columns) to focus group themes (presented in rows).

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Table 5-1

Themes by intervention treatment and change groups

Themes	Positive Change		No/Negative Change	
	Ai	SWOT	Ai	SWOT
Enjoyable, beneficial, and energizing process	X	X		
Negative and frustrating process				X
Vision previously understood by staff			X	X
Positive impact on vision clarity	X	X		
Pre-existing high levels of commitment and performance			X	X
Confirmed previously held beliefs and values of the department	X			
Core values create strong organizational culture			X	X

*(X) represents the presence of that theme in the intervention. Each theme is associated with an intervention treatment. The themes are related to positive, negative, and no change in organizational commitment and vision clarity. The connections within the table are made based on the findings of the study and the literature.

The participants explained that the intervention was an “enjoyable, beneficial, and energizing process.” This theme helps to explain positive changes as a result of the intervention. Additionally, the “pre-existing high levels of commitment and performance” that were expressed by the participants help to make sense of a lack of change as a result of the intervention. As determined, the department exhibited a high level of organizational commitment in the pre-test scores and a ceiling effect was found during analysis. With

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performance and commitment levels starting with a high score, it is difficult to measure or affect change during an intervention.

A majority of the staff members communicated that the SWOT or Ai interventions did not enhance their understanding of the vision nor their commitment to the organization. Even more intriguing, most of the staff members, excluding new hires, spoke to the fact that they already had an understanding of the vision and that they were very committed to the department. Drawing on this, participants yielded little variation in vision clarity scores across all tests, which can be explained by the theme related to a previous understanding of the vision. The participants attributed these attitudes to the supportive culture, shared values, and high levels of commitment and performance within the department that existed before the interventions took place. The discussion of a strong organization culture through the interviews helps to make sense of the high organizational commitment scores across all tests.

The theme, “positive impact on vision clarity,” represented a deeper understanding and broader perspective of the vision as a result of the interventions. However, this theme surfaced in addition to staff already having a clear understanding of the vision. The significance of these counteracting themes can be explained as changes in vision clarity, from pre-test to post-test, were found to be insignificant. On the other hand, new hires found that the intervention was a great way to learn more about the underlying meaning of the vision while gaining a deeper understanding of the staff.

Despite the differences in focus group composition (positive change, no change, and negative change), themes that emerged were commonly discussed throughout all interviews. The themes aided in explaining the changes, or lack thereof, for organizational

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commitment and vision clarity. Two themes that emerged were specifically related to a visioning process. SWOT participants spoke specifically to the intervention process being negative and frustrating. Ai participants spoke to the value added component of the visioning process in that many of their beliefs were confirmed during the intervention. The themes, relating to the confirmation of values and the exposure of shared values, are in response to the positive impact of organizational commitment and Ai activities. These findings build on the significant interaction between time and treatment as the Ai intervention positively impacted organizational commitment scores.

A majority of the staff members who participated in the Ai intervention mentioned, many times, that the visioning process helped to confirm their preexisting beliefs and values. They also mentioned that shared values amongst staff members were exposed during the Ai process. The researcher noted in the observations that staff members were making connections during the interview and visioning activities. These findings are supported by the ANOVA that reports a significant interaction between intervention treatment and time and the increase in organizational commitment levels.

A key finding of the study was discovered during mixing. Decreased levels of organizational commitment for SWOT participants can be explained by the “negative and frustrating” SWOT specific theme. It should be noted that the case study does not attempt to prove causation; however, the table helps to elaborate on both quantitative and qualitative findings. This relationship will be discussed further.

Relationship of the study to prior research. This study brings to light the connection between organizational visioning, leadership, and organizational culture. Through the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data, organizational culture has

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emerged to be an influential factor when studying organizational visioning techniques and leadership. Denison and Spreitzer (1991, p. 18) noted the “constraining and constrained nature of the interaction between organizational culture and human resource practices. Understanding these relationships is important for effective diagnosis and intervention in organizational problems.” To build off of this, Schein (2010a) explained that understanding organizational culture will provide knowledge of the inherent assumptions and norms of a particular organization. When choosing organizational visioning techniques, it is important to consider the pre-existing assumptions of the organization. Additionally, Mathieu (1991) noted the importance of knowing the level of organizational commitment amongst staff members in order for practitioners to consider the relative utility of different organizational interventions. Organizational commitment should be considered when choosing an organizational intervention.

This research reports the significant interaction between treatment, Ai and SWOT, and time. This relationship could be a result of the agreeableness of Ai’s theoretical assumptions with the positive culture of organizational support and learning that exists in the department. The high scores in organizational commitment were also an indicator that Ai could have been a better visioning approach for this high performing and highly committed department. As explained in the focus group interviews, many of the staff members reaffirmed their commitment to the department during the intervention. The staff also explained that they are well on their way to achieving their vision. This statement further emphasizes their positive outlook.

As noted in the researcher observations and focus group interviews, components of the SWOT intervention were not well received by the staff. Specifically, the negative

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language associated with the discussion of weaknesses and threats was determined to be frustrating. As explained by a SWOT participant, a great deal of time and energy was spent on addressing these attributes and little recognition was given to the work that was currently being done to address the problems identified. However, the table shows that SWOT has many of the same themes as Ai suggesting that there are positive components to this approach. These findings support the underlying purpose of the SOAR model: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results.

The SOAR model offers an alternative to SWOT through the combination of strategic inquiry and appreciative intent (Stavros, Cooperrider, & Kelley, 2003). SOAR is more than an approach to organizational visioning and strategic planning, it provides a framework that allows an “organization’s stakeholders to see where they are today and establish a vision of where they want to go” (Stavros, Cooperrider, Kelley, p. 6). While much of the model is grounded in the principles of Ai, it proves to be one of the first models to combine traditional strategic planning models with a contemporary vision-based approach. Furthermore, Stavros et al. (2003, p. 7) argue that the exclusion of weaknesses and threats from the model is in response to the tendency of people and organizations to “amplify the negative.”

Relationship of Findings to Theoretical Basis of the Study

This study is based on the conceptual framework proposed Kouzes and Posner (2007) in that a leader is tasked with responsibility of inspiring a shared vision. There are many techniques leaders can use to facilitate organizational visioning; SWOT and Ai were two examined in this case study to determine their effect on organizational commitment and vision clarity. Both techniques involved stakeholders in organizational visioning and

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decision-making, which encouraged ownership and commitment. Vision clarity is directly related to how well the vision is understood or accepted within an organization (Kantabutra, 2008). Further, a shared vision must describe a desirable future that followers will commit themselves too (Kantabutra; Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

The vision clarity results were not significantly impacted by either intervention. The analysis did show that the leadership team had a better understanding of the vision than other staff members. However, the focus group interviews described a meaningful dialogue between staff members that deepened their understanding of the vision as many perspectives were shared. These themes and intervention activities resonate with many of the practices proposed by Kouzes and Posner (2007) to inspire a shared vision. Such practices include “imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities” of the future and enlisting “others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations” (Kouzes & Posner, p. 26). Additionally, the interventions added meaning and perspective to the vision statement further contributing to vision clarity.

The Visioning Process Model (VPM) by Kakabadse et al. (2005) was also determined to be instrumental to the interpretation of findings of the study. The model showcases the resulting outcomes associated with di-visioning and visioning. The themes tied specifically to Ai relate closely to some of the proposed strategies for visioning within the model. Specifically, the authors note that the leader must have a personal conviction to the cause. The staff must also have similar conviction and aligned beliefs in the vision. This is exemplified in the comments from Ai participants in saying that the intervention helped to confirm preexisting beliefs and values about the department, further suggesting that their initial convictions were reaffirmed. The authors also detail another essential strategy to

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visioning, in that the leader must gain commitment from the senior team. Gaining buy-in and commitment from the staff is needed before the vision can be put into action.

Similarly, commitment was gained as Ai participants discovered many shared values among colleagues. Increased levels of organizational commitment from Ai participants can also be seen in the analyses.

On the other hand, some of the findings surrounding the SWOT intervention have potential connections to di-visioning. After the intervention, SWOT participants reported a lower organizational commitment score on the post-test and delayed post-test. The qualitative data from research observations and focus groups suggested a frustrating and negative description of the SWOT visioning process. The emergence of this theme, specific to the SWOT intervention, suggests the possibility of di-visioning.

VPM identifies four reasons attributed to di-visioning, one of which is in-fighting. Kakabadse et al. (2005) described in-fighting as a process by which corporate energy turns negatively onto itself, allowing an internal war to steal away from the company's competitive advantage. Even further, "mismanagement of the internal negotiating process could seriously damage the fabric of the company" (N. Kakabadse et al., p. 241). Di-visioning fosters an environment in which staff are disputing as well as focusing on internal competition instead of external competition. One can easily see how a SWOT intervention "gone wrong" could lead to in-fighting and quickly result in di-visioning. It seems that negative and frustrating descriptions of vision communication are not supportive visioning themes and could likely lead to di-visioning. This case study does not attempt to provide a statistical correlation; however, the findings the study provide reason to associate SWOT

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analysis with di-visioning. Moreover, leaders should consider these findings as they use visioning strategies within their own organizations.

In conclusion, the salient point of this case study is the connection made between SOAR and VPM in response to the qualitative and quantitative findings. The SOAR model is proposed as a combined approach that builds off the strengths of both strategies to organizational visioning (Stavros et al., 2003). SOAR highlights the shared positive outcomes experienced by both intervention participants. The statistical data suggests that Ai had a significant affect on participant's organizational commitment that is further explained by Ai specific theme development. These findings align with some of the strategies proposed in the VPM for visioning. Alternatively, the findings associated with the SWOT intervention suggest that they could be associated with some elements of di-visioning.

Recommendations for Practice

While a single case study cannot provide generalizable evidence for the practice of organizational visioning, this study suggests that:

1. Adoption of an organizational visioning technique should be in keeping with the organizational culture and desired outcomes.
2. Support from the organization of interest is essential to researching the visioning process.
3. Organizational visioning using Ai is a reaffirming process that can result in increased levels of organizational commitment.

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4. Discussion of the vision amongst staff members adds meaning and purpose to the statement. This activity is especially beneficial to new employees who are learning about the organization and its culture.
5. The SOAR model, Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results, is suggested as an organizational visioning strategy that combines elements of SWOT and Ai.

Recommendations for Research

1. Research is necessary to determine the impact of organizational visioning interventions on organizational commitment over an extended period of time.
2. The impact organizational visioning has on vision clarity remains unclear. Additional research is necessary to further explore the effect of Ai and SWOT interventions on vision clarity, specifically in the context of high performing organizations.
3. Since the findings of the case study are not generalizable, an evaluation of Ai and SWOT within diverse contexts should be conducted in order to better understand the visioning process and resulting effects.
4. Additional research should investigate the SOAR model to determine if there are benefits to this combined approach to SWOT and Ai, while looking specifically at the impact of the model of organizational commitment and vision clarity.
5. Exploration of di-visioning within the Visioning Process Model should be researched in order to better understand the symptoms and consequences with special interest its relationship to SWOT analysis.

Researcher's Reflections and Insights

The facilitator operated in a participatory action research paradigm through which the staff members were invited to collaboratively and reflectively serve as co-researchers in each intervention. Both groups were aware of the organizational visioning techniques being assigned to their intervention after they took the pre-test. While the notion to keep the participants informed and engaged in the research is appropriate, there are also some potential problems. The simple comparison of titles, Appreciative inquiry vs. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis, leads the most naïve and unbiased individual to begin to differentiate between the two techniques with weighted judgments. In the orientation meeting with participants, it was mentioned that there was going to be a “negative” and “positive” session. With this being said, if the case study were to be replicated with another population, it would be advised that the participants remain uninformed of the organizational visioning technique they are participating in until the beginning of that intervention.

Summary

The inferences of this study, organized by research question, are presented in this chapter. The discussion section included an explanation of unanticipated findings in addition to making connections from the study to prior research. A table showcases the meta-inferences that were derived from quantitative and qualitative inferences with connections to the literature. The findings were then related to the theoretical basis of the study, the visioning process model (VPM). The SOAR model: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results, and VPM were determined to be integral to the findings and conclusions of the study. Recommendations for practice and future research were

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explained. Research insights were also provided as a summary of learned experiences as a result of the study.

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APPENDIX A

Copy of the Pre-test that was Administered Online via Qualtrics

Opening Prompt

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, which investigates the effects of different strategies for organizational development. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and does not impact your position in any form. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. This survey is expected to take less than 5 minutes from start to finish. Please be honest and truthful in your responses.

If questions arise about research subjects' rights or any concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. David Moore, at 540-231-4991 or moored@vt.edu.

If the questions relate to content and findings of this particular study, please contact one of the project investigators:

- Ms. Kelsey C. Brunton: 540-820-2571, church87@vt.edu
- Dr. Eric K. Kaufman: 540-231-6258, ekaufman@vt.edu
- Dr. Curtis R. Friedel: 540-231-8177, cfriedel@vt.edu
- Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd: 540-231-5717, mooredm@vt.edu

Part 1 Organizational Commitment

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about Career Services at Virginia Tech for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the seven alternatives beside each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really care about the fate of this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 2 Vision Clarity

Listed below are a series of statements related to the [vision for Career Services at Virginia Tech](#). Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the descriptors beside each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The vision guiding VT Career Services has been clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The purpose of VT Career Services has been well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The purpose of VT Career Services has been well communicated.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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The VT Career Services team has a clear understanding of the University community's needs and wants.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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The vision of VT Career Services has been well executed.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Please share any additional comments related to this study here.

Pretest Questions for Grouping

On July 16th and 17th, the Career Services staff will work in small groups to discuss strategies for fulfilling the vision for Career Services at Virginia Tech. We plan to assign groups in advance, so we need to know your availability. What days are you available to participate in a break out group?

- Monday afternoon, July 16
- Tuesday morning, July 17
- Either Monday or Tuesday

When we break into groups we want to have diverse representation in each group. To achieve this, it will be helpful to know a little about everyone's tenure with Career Services. How many years have you worked in Career Services at Virginia Tech?

APPENDIX B

Copy of the Post-test Administered via Paper and Pen

Vision Fulfillment Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, which investigates the effects of different strategies for organizational development. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and does not impact your position in any form. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. This survey is expected to take less than 5 minutes from start to finish. Please be honest and truthful in your responses.

If questions arise about research subjects' rights or any concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. David Moore, at 540-231-4991 or moored@vt.edu. If the questions relate to content and findings of this particular study, please contact one of the project investigators:

- Ms. Kelsey C. Brunton: 540-820-2571, church87@vt.edu
- Dr. Eric K. Kaufman: 540-231-6258, ekaufman@vt.edu
- Dr. Curtis R. Friedel: 540-231-8177, cfriedel@vt.edu
- Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd: 540-231-5717, mooredm@vt.edu

So that we may connect your responses to those you submitted in the online survey, please enter your email address here:

Email Address: _____

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about Your department at Virginia Tech for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the seven alternatives beside each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really care about the fate of this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

Listed below are a series of statements related to the vision for Your department at Virginia Tech. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the descriptors beside each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The vision guiding VT [department] has been clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The purpose of VT [department] has been well communicated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The VT [department] team has a clear understanding of the University community's needs and wants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The vision of VT [department] has been well executed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share any additional comments related to this study here.

APPENDIX C

Department Vision and Mission (as stated on their website)

Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Vision

Career Services at Virginia Tech will be recognized by the university community as the premier resource for actively engaging students in exploring and pursuing their career aspirations leading to meaningful and purposeful contributions to our global society.

Mission

The mission of Career Services is to provide advice, services, programs, resources, and opportunities to prepare Virginia Tech students to make optimal use of their knowledge, skills and abilities in order to successfully

- Explore and choose academic majors and career options,
- Obtain career-related experience, and
- Develop and pursue post-graduation career plans, including graduate/professional school and employment.

Core Values

- We are committed to educating students and alumni through the use of personalized and innovative services, resources and technology, empowering them to make successful academic and purposeful career-related decisions to become talented professionals and positive contributors to society.
- We are committed to maintaining and fostering partnerships with employers, the academic community, and other university constituents, through providing information, programs, and outreach opportunities.
- We value and serve the needs of a diverse community seeking career-related information and experience, and are committed to providing exceptional service in a welcoming, respectful environment.
- We recognize the importance of systematic assessment to guide continuous improvement efforts and evidence-based decision making.
- We pursue healthy and productive working relationships with our co-workers through open communication, mutual respect and consideration, and teamwork.

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN
ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

APPENDIX D

Department Director Study Announcement and Letter of Support

Dear Staff,

We are about to begin some focused discussions about how to fulfill our vision: “be recognized by the university community as the premier resource for actively engaging students in exploring and pursuing their career aspirations leading to meaningful and purposeful contributions to our global society.” As we go through this process, there is an opportunity to participate in some related research that is investigating the effects of different strategies for organizational development. My desired outcome for this study and this staff experience is that we will move closer to accomplishing our office vision.

Within the next day or two, you will receive an email from Kelsey Church Brunton, inviting you to complete an online survey about organizational commitment and vision clarity. The data collected in the survey is important, because it will help us determine the effects of the focused conversations over the next few weeks.

This mixed methods study will be conducted by 1) utilizing an online and paper questionnaire format, 2) facilitating staff discussions on July 16 and 17, and 3) a follow up questionnaire and focus group interviews. Data collection is planned for July and August 2012. On July 18 the staff will come together to debrief the results of our work and the processes used. I believe that this study will directly benefit the department at Virginia Tech, and I encourage your full participation.

If you have any questions or concerns about the discussions we are about to have or this research, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for all of your contributions to the success of [department]!

Sincerely,

Donna Cassell Ratcliffe
Director
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
540-231-8077
cassell.ratcliffe@vt.edu

APPENDIX E

Initial Email Inviting Staff Members to Participate in the Study

Subject: Vision Fulfillment Survey

Dear [First_Name]:

I am writing to ask your help in a study to evaluate the effects of organizational development strategies on organizational commitment and vision clarity. This is the same study that Donna Ratcliff recently contacted you about. All employees are being encouraged to participate; though your participation in this study is completely voluntary and does not impact your position in any form. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. The survey is available at [survey link]

This study is important because organizations invest countless hours and resources in strategic planning efforts, and we need to know more about which strategies actually achieve the desired effects. By understanding your organizational commitment and vision clarity now and in the future, we will be able to assess the impact of the focused discussions that will be occurring in the coming weeks. As a result, we hope to make future organizational development efforts more efficient and effective.

The full study is going to involve the survey now, another survey in mid-July, and a third survey in August. In addition, I will be observing the staff meetings scheduled for July 16th, 17th, and 18th and will invite some participations to join a focus group session in late August or early September. The surveys are short and will likely take less than five minutes. I plan to share details of other aspects of the study during a meeting on July 16th. Staff members who do not wish to participate in the study can still be involved in the meetings however their dialogue will not be noted in the field observations and their individual work will not be collected for document analysis. Audio recordings for the sessions will not be transcribed, further protecting the staff members who chose not to participate in the study.

In the meantime, though, if you have any questions or concerns about the study, I would be glad to talk with you. You may reply to this email or call me at (540) 820-2571. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Eric Kaufman, at ekaufman@vt.edu or (540) 231-6258.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this important study. I look forward to receiving your responses to the survey, available at [survey link]

Sincerely,

Kelsey Brunton, Graduate Assistant
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education
Virginia Tech
church87@vt.edu

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN
ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

APPENDIX F

Initial Letter to Participants Inviting them to take the Pre-test

Please send to [department] Employees:

[Dear First_Name:]

You have been selected for participation in a survey of [department] employees. As a masters student, I am asking for your assistance with my current research on the analysis of methodologies used in organizational development. The survey is available at [survey link].

My research focuses on how two techniques of strategic planning affect organizational commitment and vision clarity. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and does not impact your position in any form. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. By completing the survey your consent to participate is implied. The study will take less than 5 minutes from start to finish.

Thank you in advance for your time and efforts with this important study. Please let me know if you have any additional questions regarding my research at church87@vt.edu or (540) 820-2571. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Eric Kaufman, at ekaufman@vt.edu or (540) 231-6258. I look forward to receiving your responses to the survey, available at [survey link].

Sincerely,

Kelsey Brunton
Masters Student
Agricultural and Extension Education
Virginia Tech

Eric Kaufman
Asst. Professor & Extension Specialist
Agricultural and Extension Education
Virginia Tech

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Reminder Email to Participants Inviting them to take the Pre-test

Subject: RE: Vision Fulfillment Survey

Dear [First_Name]:

A few days ago, I invited you to participate in a study to evaluate the effects of organizational development strategies on organizational commitment and vision clarity. All [department] employees are being encouraged to participate, and many have already completed the online survey. However, we are still waiting on your response. We think the findings are going to be very useful, but we need to know your perceptions to maximize the value of the study. The survey is available at [survey link]

In order to connect the data and monitor changes over time, we are keeping track of who completes each survey. However, protecting confidentiality of people's answers is very important to us. All participants have been assigned a code and the findings will be shared only in summary form. It is only by protecting the individual participants that we can be confident in the findings of our study.

The online survey is short and will likely take less than five minutes. I hope you will complete the study. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, I would be glad to talk with you. You may reply to this email or call me at (540) 820-2571. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Eric Kaufman, at ekaufman@vt.edu or (540) 231-6258.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this important study. I look forward to receiving your responses to the survey, available at [survey link]

Sincerely,

Kelsey Brunton, Graduate Assistant
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education
Virginia Tech
church87@vt.edu
(540) 820-2571

APPENDIX G

Observation Protocol

The purpose of observing the strategic planning interventions is to learn how participants' vision clarity and organizational commitment is affected by group dialogs regarding implementation of [department]' vision statement. Through observation, the researcher will also learn about each intervention (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats and Appreciative Inquiry) process as well as the resulting product.

During the meetings the following constructs will be used to guide/focus the research observer(s).

- I. **How are employees discussing the vision?**
 - a. Do all employees have an understanding of Career Service's vision? (Cole, Harris, & Bernerth, 2006).
 - b. How does the dialogue affect employee's understanding of the vision and it's execution?
 - c. How does the dialogue about the vision affect the support of the vision? (Foster & Akdere, 2007).
 - d. What tone of voice, word choice, or body language is used as an individual participates in the discussion about the vision?
- II. **How is the organizational commitment of the participants being affected by the intervention?**
 - a. How are employees discussing individual commitments they have made or plan on making that align with the vision? (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979).
 - b. Does the dialogue of employees discuss personal values that relate to the values expressed in the vision? (Posner, Kouzes, & Schmidt, 1985).
 - c. How are employees embracing the ideas generated? (Allen & Meyer, 1996).
 - d. How does the dialogue and ideas generated for the intervention reflect the "best" of the organization? (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979).
- III. **What are the areas employees address during the intervention?**
 - a. How does the group identify these issues?
 - b. What are the products and outcomes of the intervention?
- IV. **What are the employees' responses to the intervention?**
 - a. What is the overall feel of the group? What is the overall tone and body language of employees? How are participants engaging in the intervention?
- V. **Draw a diagram of the meeting room and label the location of each person during the meeting.**

References:

Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1996). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: An examination of construct validity. *Journal of vocational behavior*.

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Cole, M. S., Harris, S. G., & Bernerth, J. B. (2006). Exploring the implications of vision, appropriateness, and execution of organizational change. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 27(5), 352-367.

Foster, R. D., & Akdere, M. (2007). Effective organizational vision: implications for human resource development. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 31(2), 100-111.

Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 14(2), 224-247.

Posner, B. Z., Kouzes, J. M., & Schmidt, W. H. (1985). Shared values make a difference: An empirical test of corporate culture. *Human Resource Management*, 24(3), 293-309.

APPENDIX H

Researcher Observations of Ai Intervention Following the Established Protocol

1a. Many staff members had a clear understanding of the vision. It was noted that many of the staff members who helped craft the vision statement were in the room. These participants seemed to have a much deeper understanding of the vision.

One participant posed a question in the wording of the vision statement, which was echoed by another participant. This was understood to be a good and critical reflection of the vision. The details and the wording were closely evaluated by the group.

The group focused on the recognition piece of the vision statement. Many shared that they wanted to be viewed as the best by others as a premier resource for [department]. They discussed the need for [department] to be kept in the loop about career related discussions.

It was also shared that the [department] would provide leadership around the career field and be a resource that was on the leading edge within this community.

*The director noted a deeper dialogue and engagement by this group than the previous group

1b. It seemed that many of the participants had a full understanding of the vision. A support staff participant shared that it was very helpful to discuss the big picture because much of her work is often very focused on the details. Through the dialogue about the meaning of the vision the participant had a greater understanding of the vision.

Execution – through the interviews many of the “best experiences” shared related to the ways in which [department] staff and living out the vision. This was not discussed directly but noted by the observer.

1c. The AI session in its entirety used many activities to generate support for the vision –that was a key underlying element of the session. Especially in the picture exercise, the dot exercise, and the narrative exercise, much of the support for the vision was generated through these exercises specifically. And through these exercises participants were able to develop a much deeper understanding of the vision, how they can live that out, and an understanding of what the vision looks like to them.

1d. Overall the tone was very upbeat, futuristic, and positive. Much of the dialogue was very forward looking and abstract –they discussed the big picture and big ideas.

A large percentage of the dialogue was devoted to the strengths of the organization and the themes that resonated. Positive and best experiences were shared which resulted in a very open and energized dialogue. Participants were very engaged with one another in the interview

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process. Staff members were able to be very reflective in their thoughts and statements about their work.

Many hand gestures were being used in the interview session to tell their stories. Participants were facing each other showing full engagement. The staff was intently listening and taking notes on the meaning and strengths of the other.

Positive, complimentary, and appreciative vocabulary were used throughout the session by the participants and the facilitator.

2a. Through the interview process and sharing of storied many of the day to day activities and experiences were shared that aligned with the vision of CS –this was an observation by the researcher (the facilitator did not make a direct connection to this). The staff discussed the experiences that made them come alive.

The group spoke abstractly about what [department] would be doing if they were living out the vision.

2b. A very deep and meaningful dialogue took place during the interview which allowed employees to discuss values and experiences of personal gratification. Their best experiences also showcased the best of the organization.

2c. Employees worked together in groups to discuss what the vision would look like in a narrative form. Employees embraced the vision in this way and in this exercise.

2d. “What works” was a huge focus of this session. Participants spent half of the session discussing personal bests as well as the best of [department].

The themes that arose were communication, freedom, trust, individuality, teamwork, collaboration, etc. SEE POST IT Poster.

3a. The issues were identified through the grounding in staff member’s personal best experiences in the department. Themes were then generated from the sharing of strengths and commonalities of all participants.

Participants also focused on envisioning the future and the vision statement through narrative and pictures.

3b. The facilitator shared that with these strengths in mind and with the new found understanding and deeper knowledge of the vision – the staff will be able to use this as a basis to execute the vision.

4a. (Mainly drawn from the reflection process) participants found the process to be reassuring of their excellent experiences and were able to have an understanding for how they WERE living out the vision

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Another participant noted the connection that was made in connecting CS strengths to what the constituents need in order to achieve our vision.

They were appreciative of the reflection piece and felt fulfilled in the strengths identified.

One participant noted the strength in listening to others and hearing their story before we tell them. The process of inquiry proved to be a very valuable framework, which would be applicable to their work.

Another noted that CS is executing the vision, and doing it well

Proud of the wall of accomplishments

FLIP

Participants were curious about the outcome of this process

Some participants asked, “what have we accomplished?”

*Participants seemed to need some practical and more grounded discuss about how to get to the vision and move down from the abstract thinking.

Discovery Phase – Interviewing participants to surface your ideas and feelings about the organization

Dream Phase – What you would like the organization to be

APPENDIX I

Researcher Observations of SWOT Intervention Following the Established Protocol

1a. While many staff members responded to the question prompted by Jim, “what does the vision mean?” many of them had a hard time understanding all of the statement. Many staff members needed help in understanding that the vision was an aspirational statement. The vision was not something that could be shared with parents or students on a day-to-day basis.

Many staff members also focused on the first half of the vision statement that related to being a premier resource –that seemed to resonate with them the most.

1b. Through dialogue about the vision statement staff members seemed to have a better idea of the difference between the mission and vision statement.

The new hires learned a lot about CS from participating in this process, they learned a lot about the organization.

As the questions about what the vision was/meant persisted, many staff members continued to chime in their understanding of the vision. More and more responses were shared as time went on. It seemed that the staff was more willing to share and perhaps this was based on the fact that a greater understanding of the vision was being produced as dialogue continued.

Execution of the vision was discussed by asking “how do we make our vision a reality”, and “what is the problem we are trying to solve?” what’s holding us back from achieving this vision.

The ways in which CS is already executing this vision were not explicitly discussed. The efforts they are currently making were mentioned throughout the session as examples were shared to support the SWOT activities.

Many hurdles were identified in the execution process.

1c. Support for the vision statement seemed to be generated as the meaning of the vision statement was discussed. Support was also generated as the staff shared their many ideas in how they could execute the vision through the brainstorming process. Support for the vision was also generated as the staff discussed their strengths and opportunities as well as their passion for their job and their expertise in the field.

One participant, through reflection shared that this process helped *them to connect the vision to every day work.*

1d. The staff had great energy throughout the session. They were very willing to dialogue and share ideas. Many staff members sat with open and engaging body language.

Word choice – it was mentioned that a lot of negative language was used in this session as far as framing things as a “problem” and focusing on the weaknesses and threats of the idea. While the

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responses were generally very positive and thoughtful. The responses given to address any weaknesses or threats were very thoughtful and were not spoken with any negative emotion.

2a. Many employees discussed previous relationships and experiences that support the ideas being generated and in turn that supported the vision. Through the brainstorming process many staff members discussed ideas/thoughts that would contribute to the vision. These ideas were discussed but not put into plan or execution in this session.

2b. One specific statement was made in the first exercise about “what the vision meant” in which someone shared that the vision really speaks to who we are, as a group and individually. A lot of times work is just work and I don’t think we view it this way. –this statement speaks to the values and commitment of the individual as well as the group to the vision. I believe this statement also address the values of the individual and group.

Another statement was made about the staff being very passionate about their work and that they had enough enthusiasm and energy to not be burnt out. This statement indirectly relates to their values.

2c. Many participants showed enthusiasm for many of the ideas shared. Many participants stated that, “that was a great idea” or that they hadn’t thought of that idea before. The participants we asking about what’s next –showing their interest in seeing these ideas through. Participants would continue to dialogue about these ideas even after a particular exercise was over –showing their continued interest in the ideas.

2d. Participants had the opportunity to discuss their strengths as an organization and the opportunities that surrounded a particular idea. Throughout the session many participants spoke to the strengths of CS and the expertise of CS.

Many of the ideas generated were in response to filling a deficit and addressing a problem and through this strengths and best practices were discussed. However, strengths and best practiced were not a direct focus nor the root of this session.

It was shared by a participant that it seemed like the WT outweighed the SO. The participant wanted an oppportunity (or maybe more of an oppportunity) to talk about what the organization did well.

3a. Ideas were often shared and grounded in their day to day experiences. The ideas were identified through the creation of solutions to the problem “they just don’t get it”.

3b. See documents.

Through reflection of the session and in asking “what feels valuable?” many participants shared that the brainstorming was helpful, that they learned about the other staff members, individual staff members expertise was shared, they enjoyed the structured process in an otherwise overwhelming process, it was good to connect the vision to every day work, an observation was made that CS had many more strengths and opportunities than they had WT, this process helped

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to plant seeds of ideas for the future, many ideas were generated that the group was proud of, many felt accomplished, this process helped to reaffirm strengths and opportunities.

One participant shared that this SWOT generated made her feel overwhelmed and unsure if she would continue with the idea now that the analysis had been completed. –this was viewed as a benefit to the process and the added value of the analysis. The weight and value of the idea itself could then be evaluated later.

4. One participant spoke specifically to the “negative” language that was used. However, overall the group was grateful for the intervention and felt the process was helpful. Many participants shared statements of excitement and enthusiasm as well as accomplishment.

There was a noticeable difference in the tone and mood of the group when they were discussing the SO versus the TW. Participants were much more hesitant to share TWs and they were much more quiet. Far less participants contributed to the discussion of TWs than they did to the discussion about SOs. Many participants were excited about discussing the SOs and the overall mood of the group was better and more positive.

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APPENDIX J

Copy of the Delayed post test

Opening Prompt

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, which investigates the effects of different strategies for organizational development. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and does not impact your position in any form. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. This survey is expected to take less than 5 minutes from start to finish. Please be honest and truthful in your responses.

If questions arise about research subjects' rights or any concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. David Moore, at 540-231-4991 or moored@vt.edu.

If the questions relate to content and findings of this particular study, please contact one of the project investigators:

- Ms. Kelsey C. Brunton: 540-820-2571, church87@vt.edu
- Dr. Eric K. Kaufman: 540-231-6258, ekaufman@vt.edu
- Dr. Curtis R. Friedel: 540-231-8177, cfriedel@vt.edu
- Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd: 540-231-5717, mooredm@vt.edu

Part 1 Organizational Commitment

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about Career Services at Virginia Tech for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the seven alternatives beside each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really care about the fate of this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 2 Vision Clarity

Listed below are a series of statements related to the [vision for Career Services at Virginia Tech](#). Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the descriptors beside each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The vision guiding VT Career Services has been clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The purpose of VT Career Services has been well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The purpose of VT Career Services has been well communicated.

	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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The VT Career Services team has a clear understanding of the University community's needs and wants.

	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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The vision of VT Career Services has been well executed.

	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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APPENDIX K

Email Invitation to Participants for Delayed Post-test

Subject: Vision Fulfillment Survey

Dear [First_Name]:

I am writing to ask for your continued support in this survey to evaluate the effects of organizational development strategies on organizational commitment and vision clarity. All [department] employees are being encouraged to participate; though your participation in this study is completely voluntary and does not impact your position in any form. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. The survey is available at [survey link]

Thank you in advance for your time and your participation is valued.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Brunton, Graduate Assistant
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education
Virginia Tech
church87@vt.edu
(540) 820-2571

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APPENDIX L

Email Reminder to Participants for Delayed Post-test

Subject: Vision Fulfillment Survey

Dear [First_Name]:

A few days ago, I invited you to participate in a survey to evaluate the effects of organizational development strategies on organizational commitment and vision clarity. You are being contacted again because the opinion of every staff member is important. All [department] employees are being encouraged to participate; though your participation in this study is completely voluntary and does not impact your position in any form. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. The survey is available at [survey link]

Thank you in advance for your time and your participation is valued.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Brunton, Graduate Assistant
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education
Virginia Tech
church87@vt.edu
(540) 820-2571

APPENDIX M

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Type of group: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Participants (in code): _____

The interview questions have been tentatively constructed and could be changed to reflect the findings of the pre and post-tests as is reflective of a mixed methods explanatory sequential design.

Pre-Session Activities

- *Before recording and beginning the session, all participants must sign and return the consent form if they haven't already. All copies of the signed consent will be present at the interview.*

Introduction:

- The leader summarizes the purpose of the group, confidentiality, length of the interview, the fact that there are no right answers, and that it is ok to disagree.

Experience with Interventions:

- Describe your experience in the “break out groups” with the organizational development consultant.
 - What did you like best about the experience?
 - What was most frustrating or disappointing?
- Describe your experience in the combined session with the consultant and the director?
 - What was the focus of these efforts?
 - What were the outcomes?

Experience since Interventions and Combined Session:

- Please describe your experience since the combined session, as it relates to the information discussed during that time.
 - Has further action been taken?
 - What are the anticipated outcomes?

Vision Clarity:

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- How did this experience affect your understanding of the ways in which Career Services “lives out” its vision statement?
 - Are the steps you are taking to achieve the vision more or less clear? Why?
 - What specifically has been made clearer?
 - Has this experience added confusion in any way to your role or to your understanding of the vision?

Organizational Commitment:

- How has your involvement in the strategic planning affected your commitment to the vision for Career Services at Virginia Tech?
 - Do you feel more or less committed to Career Services at Virginia Tech because of this experience? Why?
 - How has this experience affected your willingness to work towards the vision of Career Services?

Summary and Closing Questions:

- Now I would like to summarize the main points you presented. First, you mentioned...
(*present summary of main points here*)
 - Does this capture what we have discussed?
- Is there anything we haven't talked about that you believe is important to add?

APPENDIX N

a priori Propositions

Proposition	Supporting Literature	Research Question
<p>SWOT and Ai interventions are used for similar purposes and to achieve similar goals.</p>	<p>SWOT analysis is a very useful tool for organizational visioning, (O'Brien & Meadows, 2000) community visioning (Singh & Kosi-Katarmal, 2009), and strategic planning (Leigh, 2010)</p> <p>Ai serves as a method of facilitating organizational visioning (Levin, 2000), community visioning (Haines & Green, 2011), and strategic planning (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2007).</p>	<p>What were the process and products of each intervention?</p>
<p>Ai and SWOT use different methods and techniques in an intervention.</p>	<p>SWOT is used as a rigorous analytical tool (Hill & Westbrook, 1997). SWOTs are generated using a two by two matrix (Leigh, 2010).</p> <p>Ai upholds the positive principle, that humans respond best to positive thought and knowledge, therefore the organizational system should also operate-in this fashion Kakabadse et al. (2005). Ai focuses on the “big picture” and systems thinking while using a 4-D model (Ludema et al., 2003).</p>	<p>What were the process and products of each intervention?</p>
<p>A structured strategic visioning process influences organizational commitment and vision clarity.</p>	<p>(Cooperrider et al., 2008) suggested that there are three components of an effective organizational vision: 1) vision clarity, 2) vision support, and 3) stability; moreover, vision is essential to organizational success.</p>	<p>What are the levels of organizational commitment and vision clarity before and after interventions among staff?</p> <p>What were the differences in organizational commitment and vision clarity within and between treatment groups?</p>
<p>Stakeholders actively contribute to the visioning process in both intervention treatments.</p>	<p>Participants generate SWOTs for a specific strategy, which are then categorized and deliberated (Leigh, 2010).</p> <p>The constructionist principle of Ai emphasizes the connection between socially constructed knowledge and organizational destiny Denison (1990).</p>	<p>How did participants’ perceive the visioning process and resulting effects?</p> <p>What similarities and differences</p>

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	The four phase cycle is completed through interviews, focus groups, artwork, and group dialogue (Cooperrider et al., 2008).	are there between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group?
Quantitative and qualitative data mixing provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.	Multiple sources of data are used to develop and inform research methods; in addition to, elaborating and clarifying results with the intent to increase meaningfulness and validity of constructs and inquiry results (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).	Are there significant differences in pre/post test results between intervention groups based on their visioning process?

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APPENDIX O

Alignment of Research Questions, Propositions, Interview Questions, and Supporting Literature

Research Question	Proposition	Interview Question	Supporting Literature
What were the process and products of each intervention?	SWOT and Ai interventions are used for similar purposes and to achieve similar goals.	Describe your experience in meeting with the organizational development consultant. Since meeting with the consultant, please describe any activity related to the organization's vision.	SWOT analysis is a very useful tool for organizational visioning, (O'Brien & Meadows, 2000) community visioning (Singh & Kosi-Katarmal, 2009), and strategic planning (Leigh, 2010) Ai serves as a method of facilitating organizational visioning (Levin, 2000), community visioning (Haines & Green, 2011), and strategic planning (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2007).
What were the process and products of each intervention?	Ai and SWOT use different methods and techniques in an intervention.	Since meeting with the consultant, please describe any activity related to the organization's vision. Describe your experience in meeting with the organizational development consultant.	SWOT is used as a rigorous analytical tool (Hill & Westbrook, 1997). SWOTs are generated using a two by two matrix (Leigh, 2010). Ai upholds the positive principle, that humans respond best to positive thought and knowledge, therefore the organizational system should also operate-in this fashion (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Ai focuses on the "big picture" and systems thinking while using a 4-D model (Ludema et al., 2003).

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Alignment of Research Questions, Propositions, Interview Questions, and Supporting Literature

Research Question	Proposition	Interview Question	Supporting Literature
<p>What are the level of organizational commitment and vision clarity before and after interventions among staff?</p> <p>What were the differences in organizational commitment and vision clarity within and between treatment groups?</p>	<p>Organizational commitment and vision clarity are key measures in the health of an organization OR A structured strategic visioning process influences organizational commitment and vision clarity.</p>	<p>How has your work with the consultant affected your commitment to Career Services at Virginia Tech?</p> <p>How did this experience affect your perception of the Career Services vision statement?</p> <p>Did this experience have any affect on your motivation to perform at your best? Please explain.</p>	<p>(Cooperrider et al., 2008) suggested that there are three components of an effective organizational vision: 1) vision clarity, 2) vision support, and 3) stability; moreover, vision is essential to organizational success.</p>
<p>How did participants' perceive the visioning process and resulting effects?</p> <p>What similarities and differences are there between perceptions expressed by each intervention treatment group?</p>	<p>Stakeholders actively contribute to the visioning process in both intervention treatments.</p>	<p>Describe your experience in meeting with the organizational development consultant.</p> <p>Since meeting with the consultant, please describe any activity related to the organization's vision.</p>	<p>Participants generate SWOTs for a specific strategy, which are then categorized and deliberated (Leigh, 2010).</p> <p>The constructionist principle of Ai emphasizes the connection between socially constructed knowledge and organizational destiny Denison (1990). The four phase cycle is completed through interviews, focus groups, artwork, and group dialogue (Cooperrider et al., 2008).</p>

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN
ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

APPENDIX P

IRB approval

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 2, 2012
TO: Eric K Kaufman, Kelsey Church Brunton, Donna Westfall-Rudd, Curtis Robert Friedel
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)
PROTOCOL TITLE: SWOT & AI Thesis Research
IRB NUMBER: 12-316

Effective July 2, 2012, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**
Protocol Approval Date: **July 2, 2012**
Protocol Expiration Date: **July 1, 2013**
Continuing Review Due Date*: **June 17, 2013**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

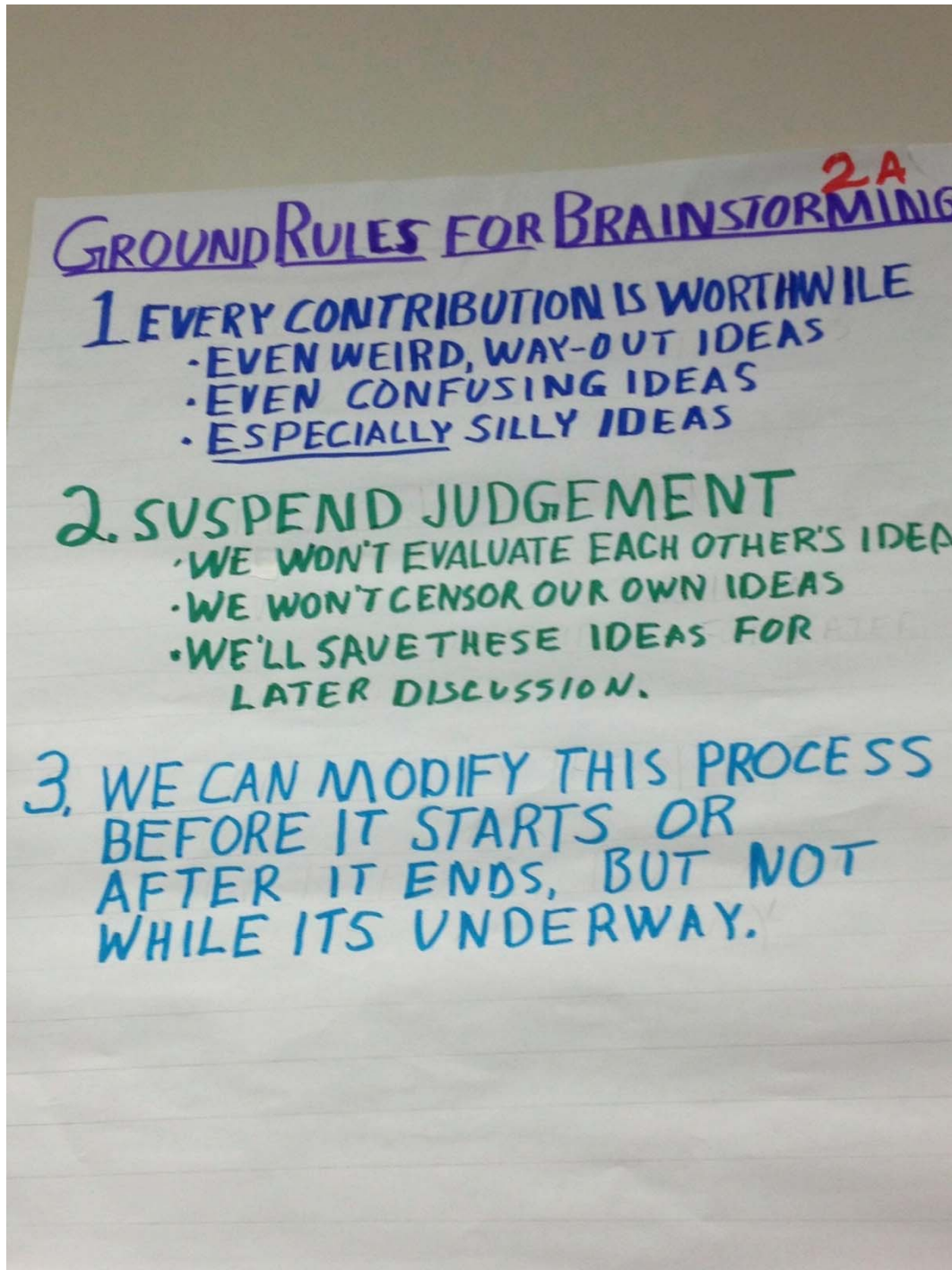
Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

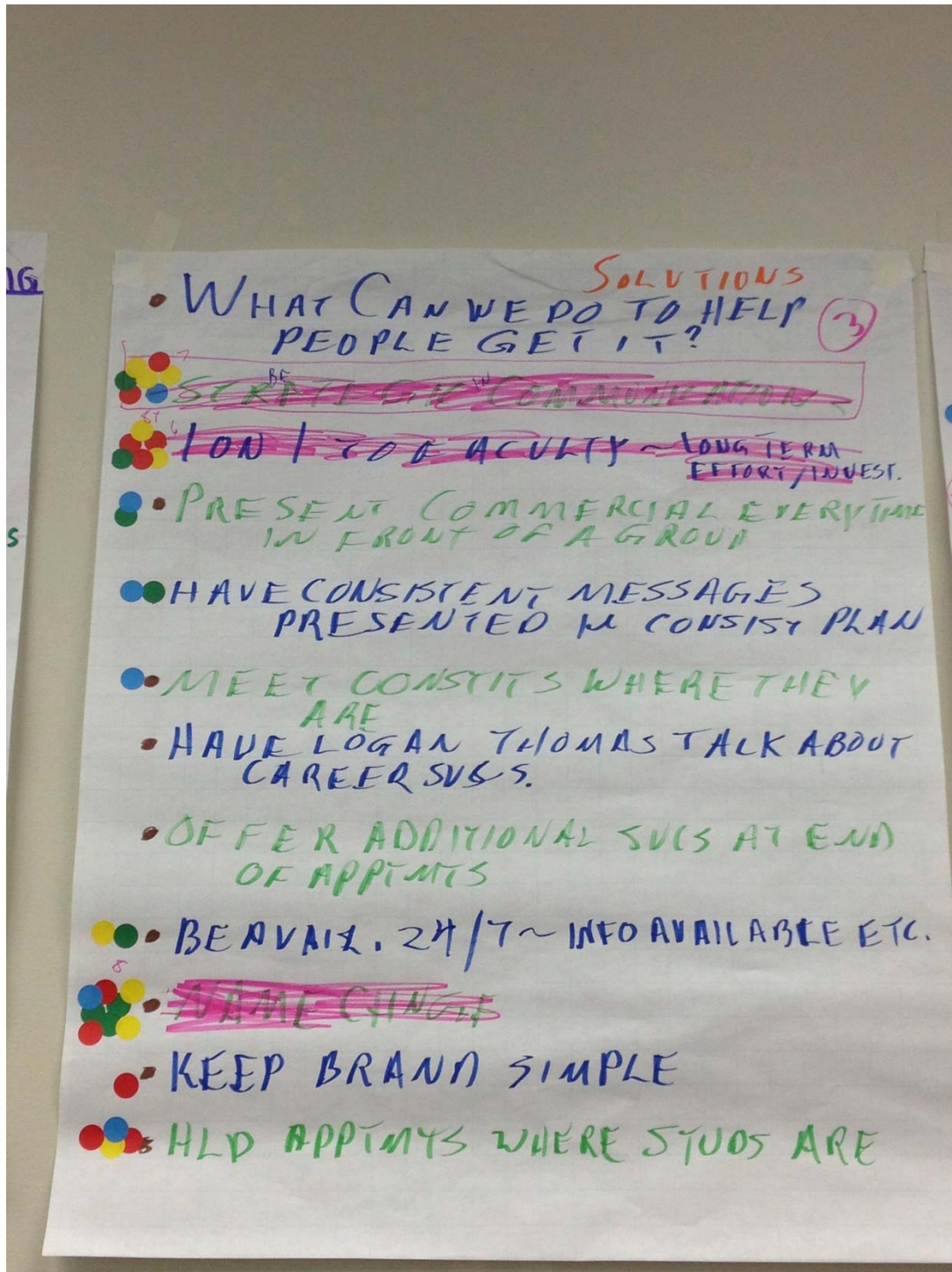
APPENDIX Q

The Framework for the Brainstorming Activity

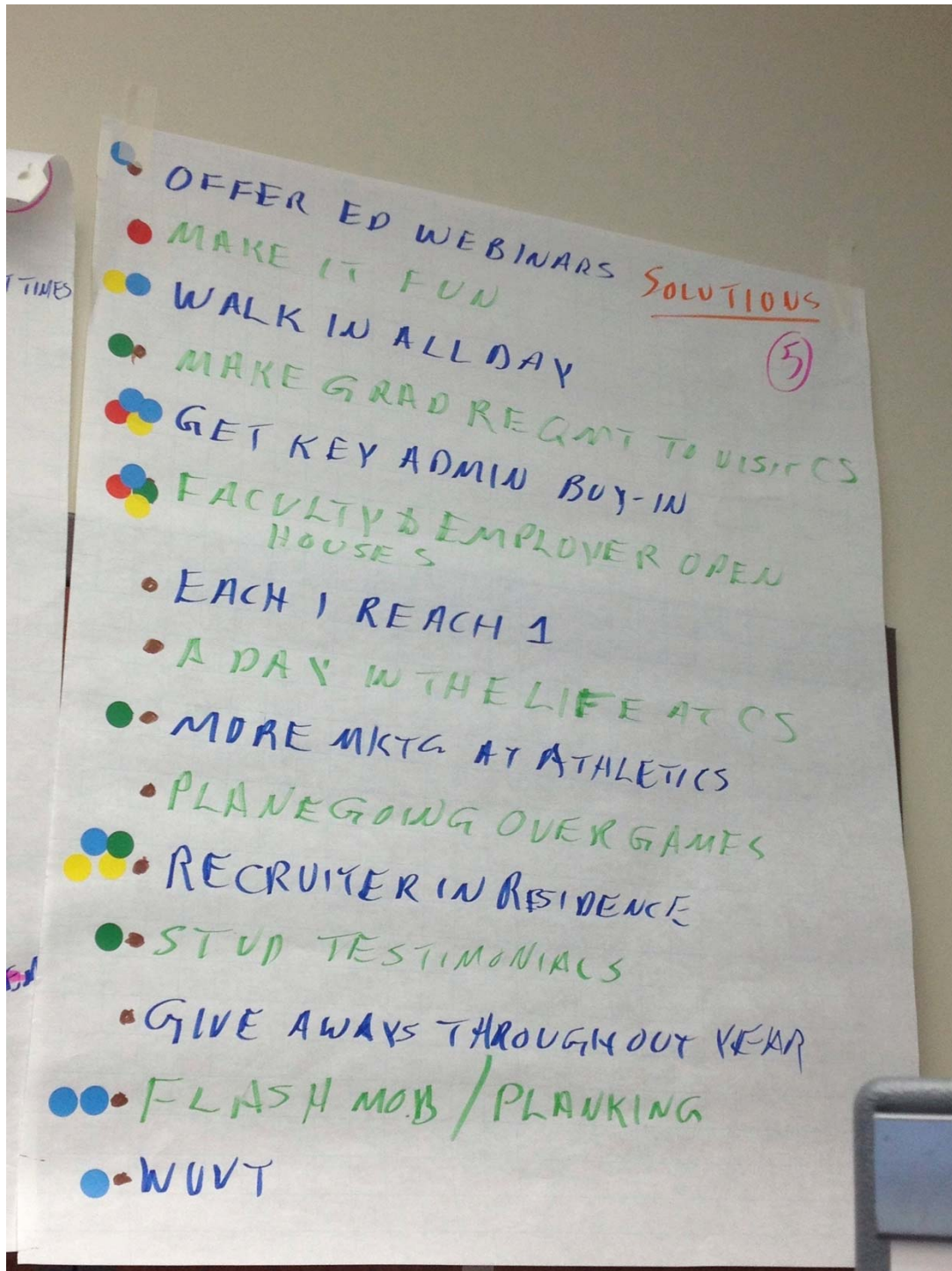


APPENDIX R

Solutions Brainstorming Activity

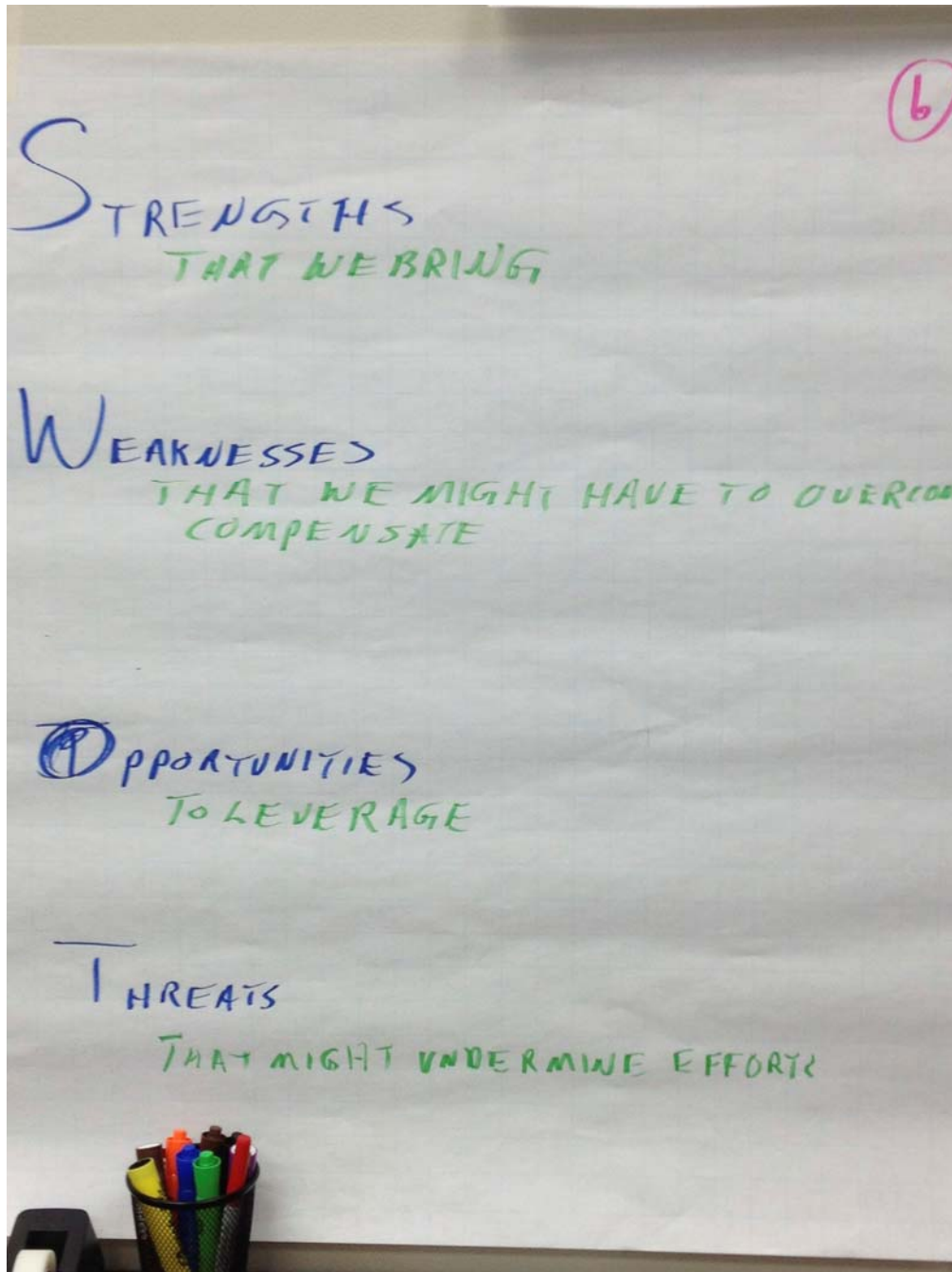


A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

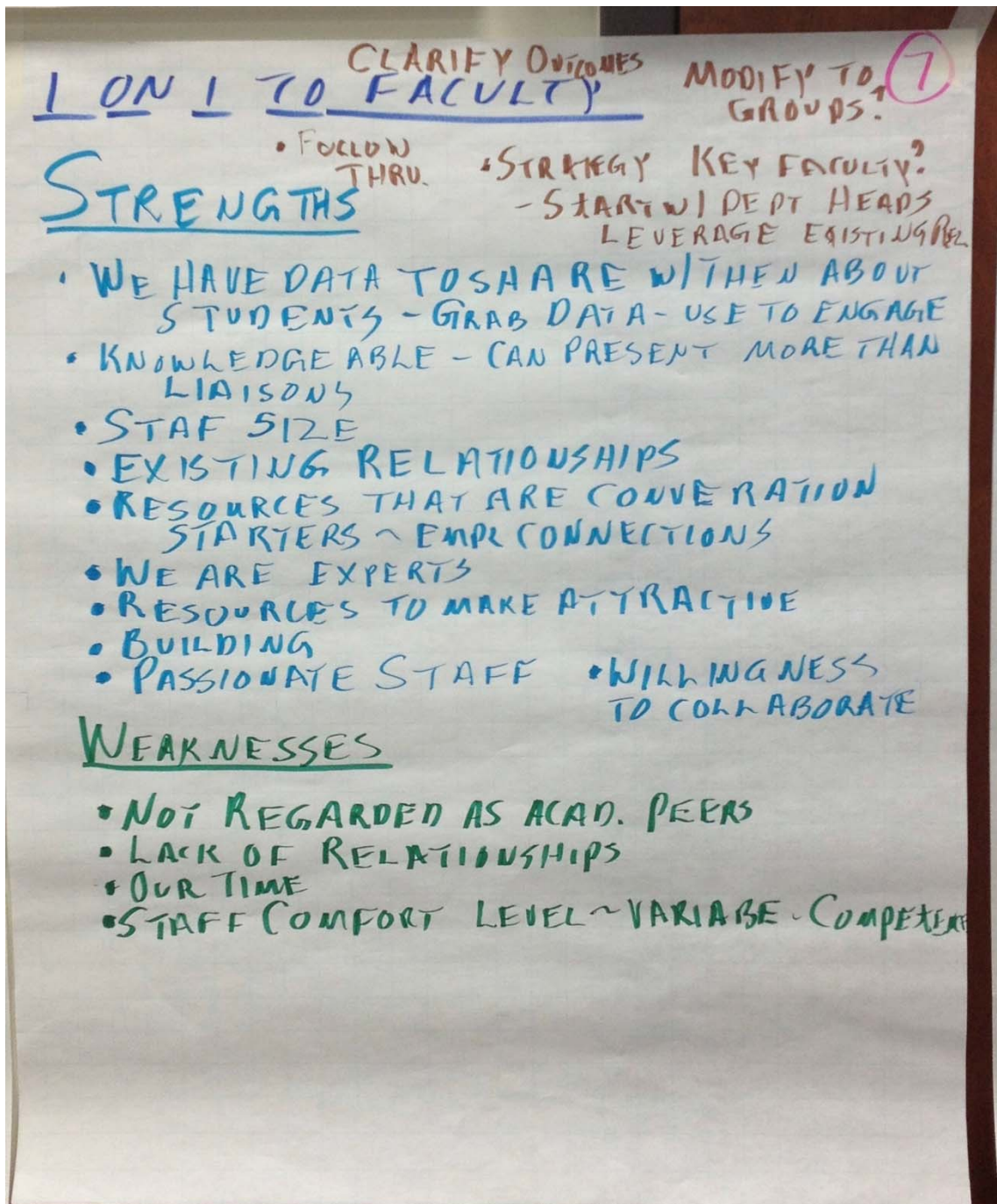


APPENDIX S

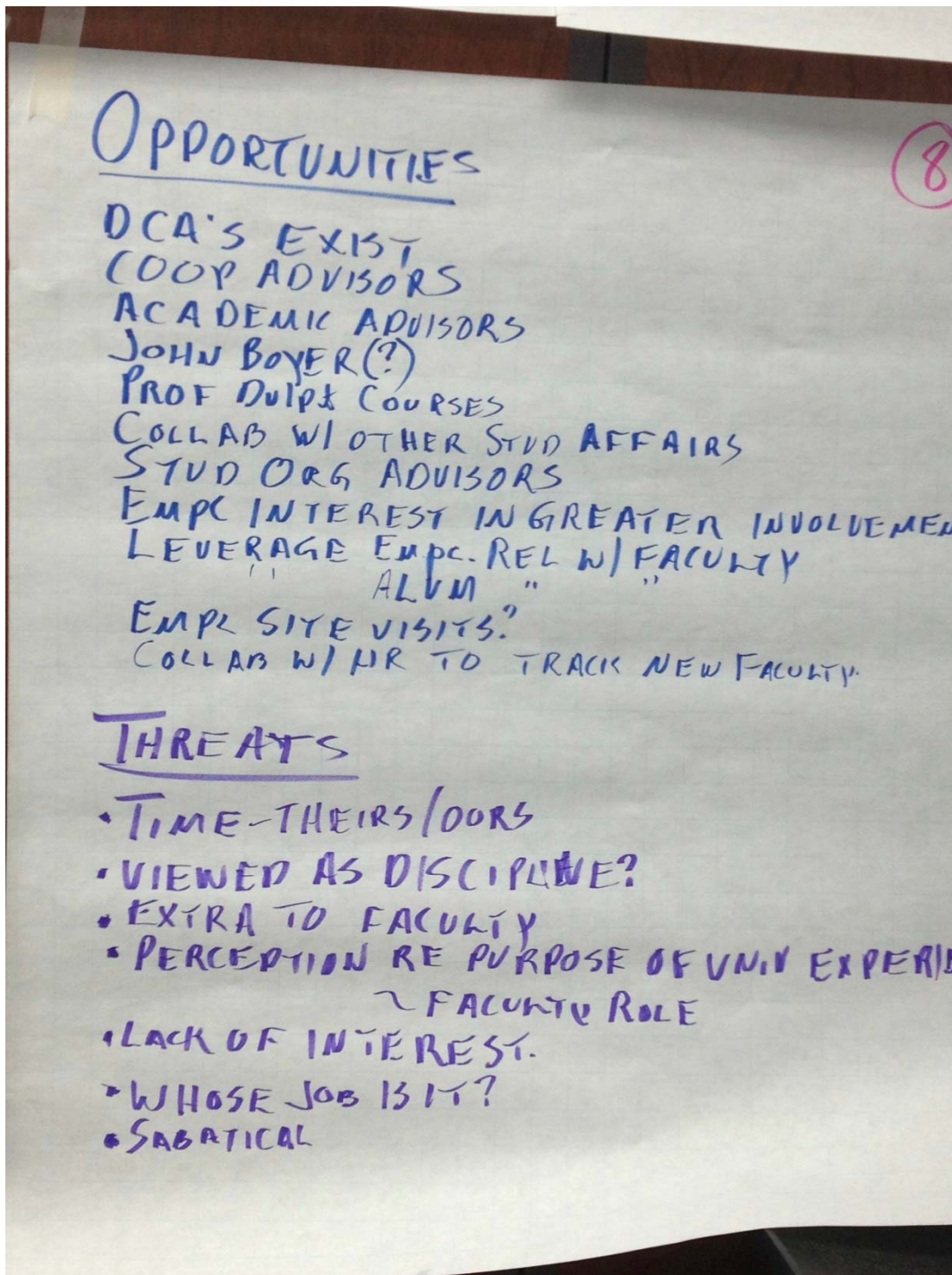
SWOT for One-on-One with Faculty



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A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING



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APPENDIX T

Ai Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

CAREER SERVICES VISIONING/PLANNING

July 17, 2012

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ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

Questions

Tell me about one or more “peak experiences” or a “high points” in Career Services during which you felt really alive. What was going on? What was your role?

What were you feeling at these times? Why?

What do these experiences tell you about the organization? (For example, what are its strengths? What makes it special?)

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Making Meaning of the Interview

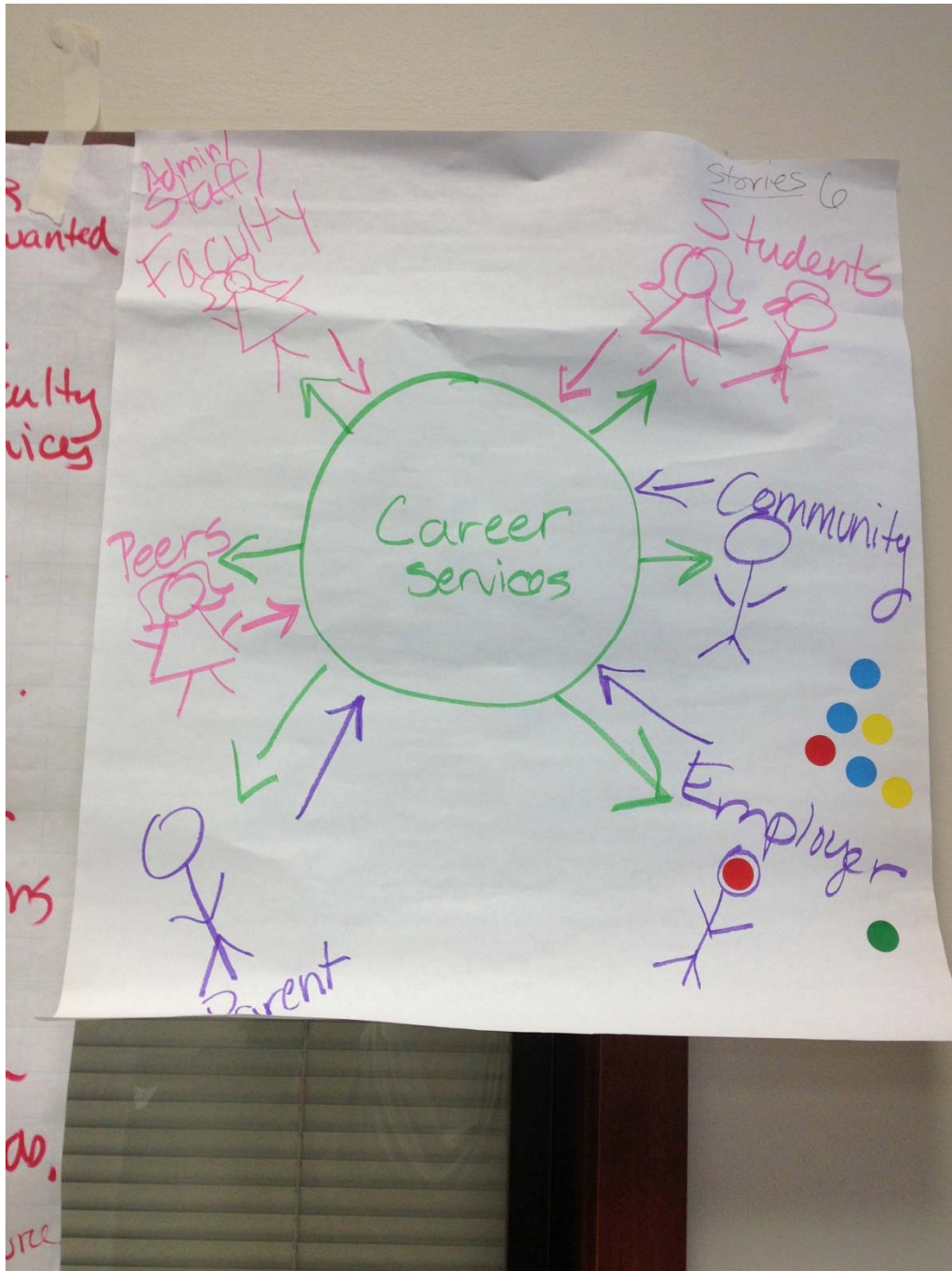
What was the most compelling/exciting/interesting thing you heard in the interview?

What strengths of the organization were identified in the interview?

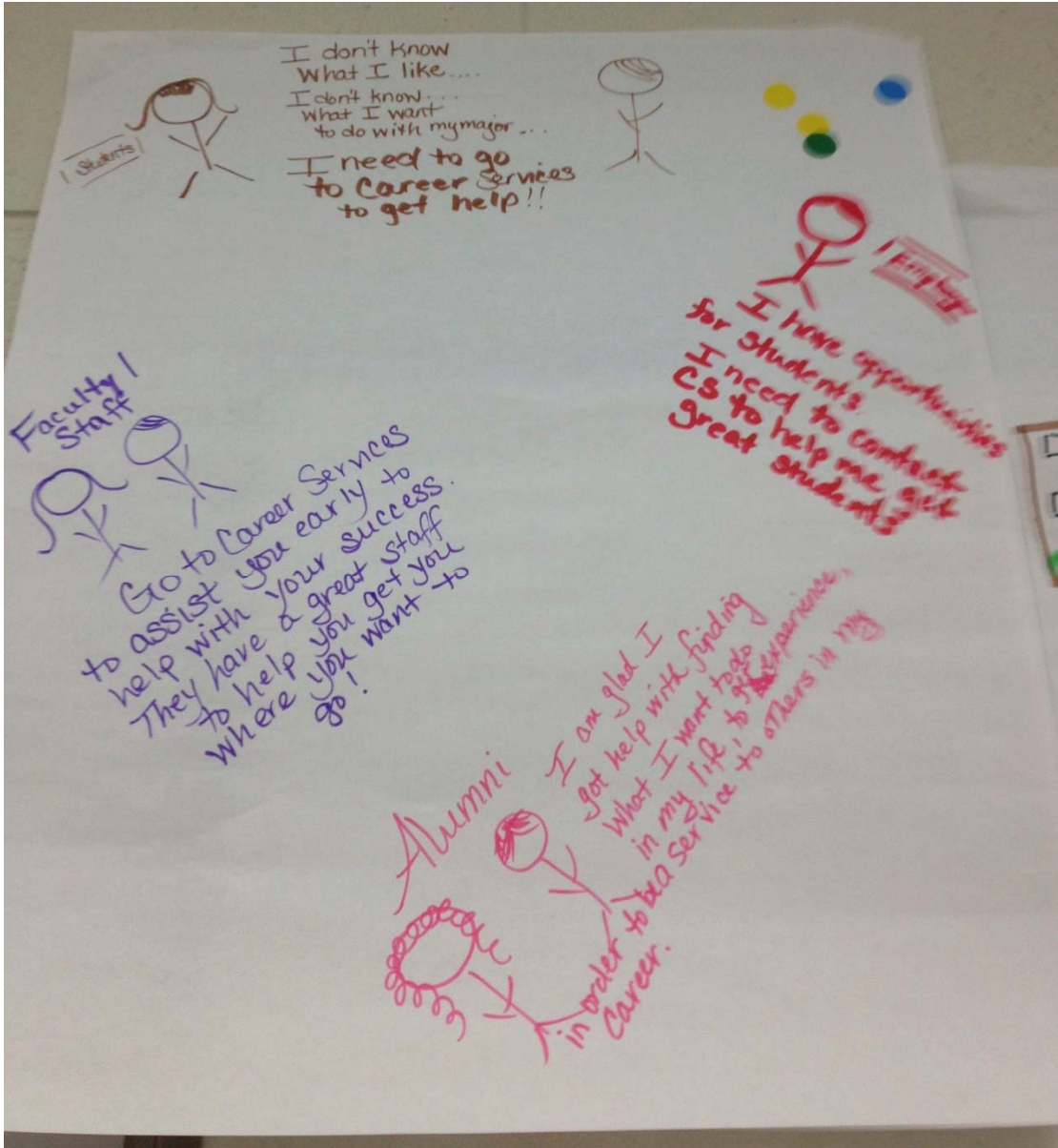
What positive themes can you identify from the interview

APPENDIX U

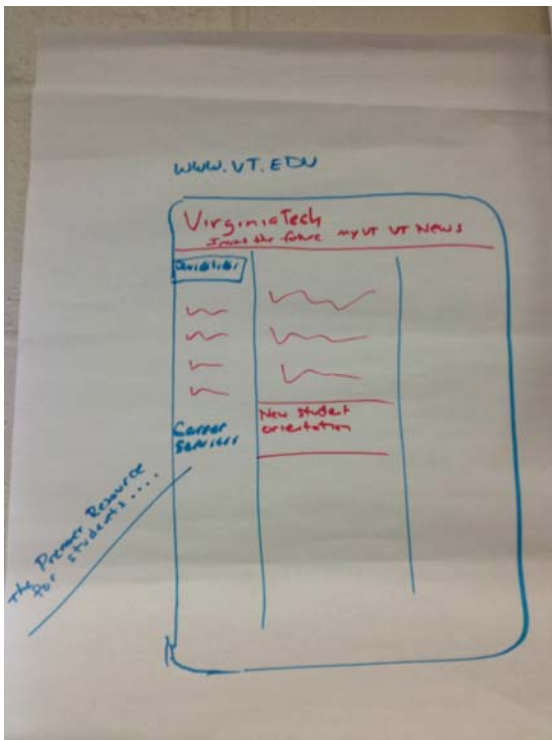
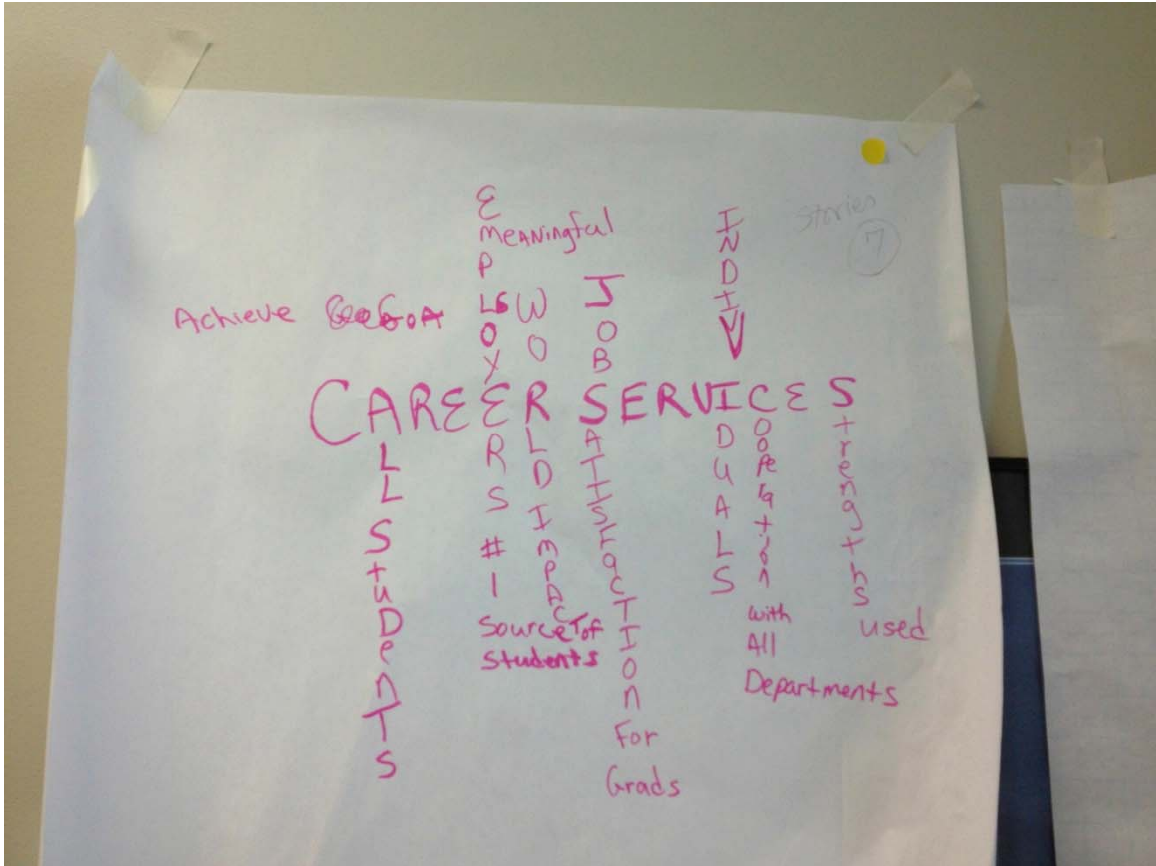
Photocopies of the Images Drawn During the Dream Phase



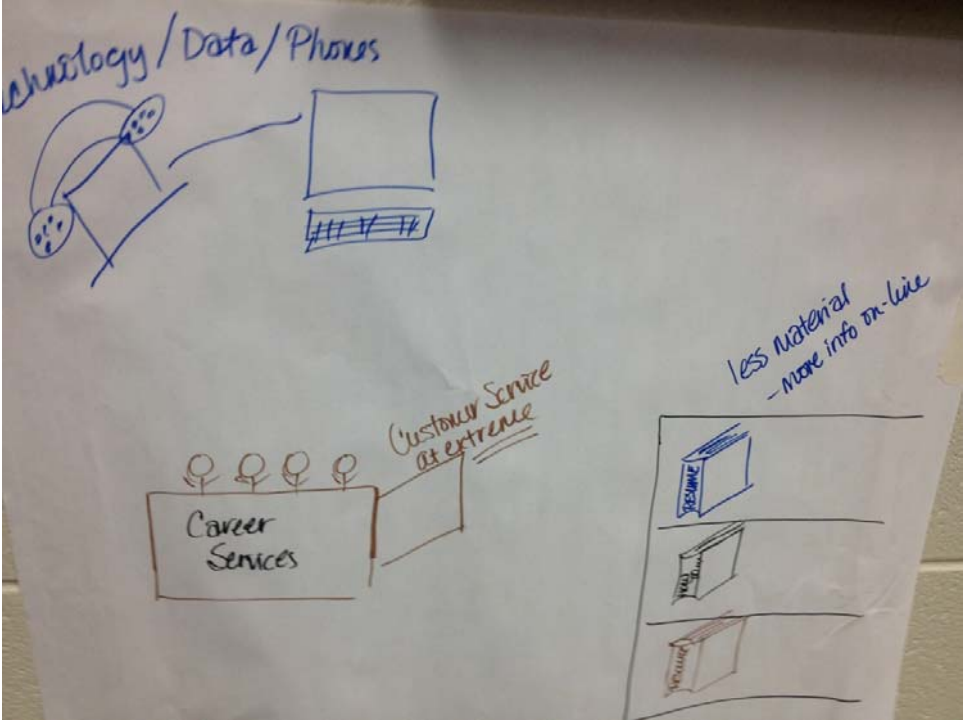
A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING



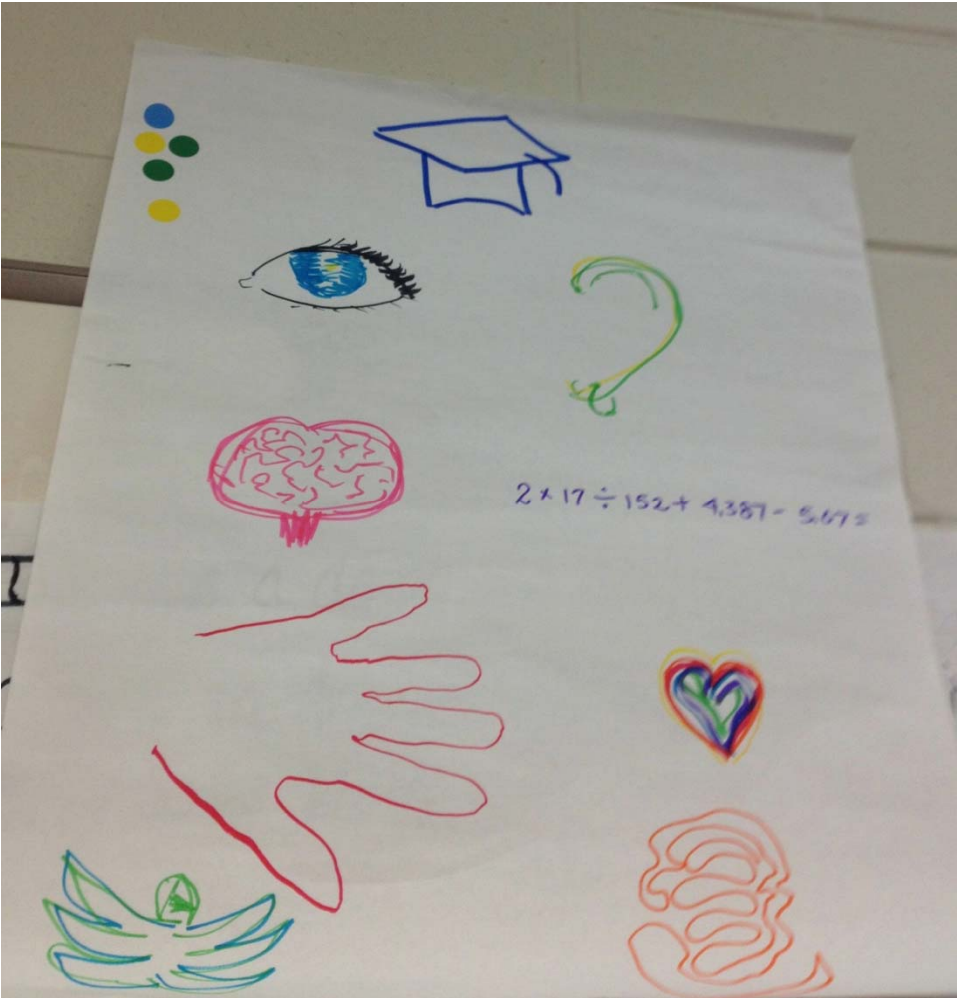
A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING



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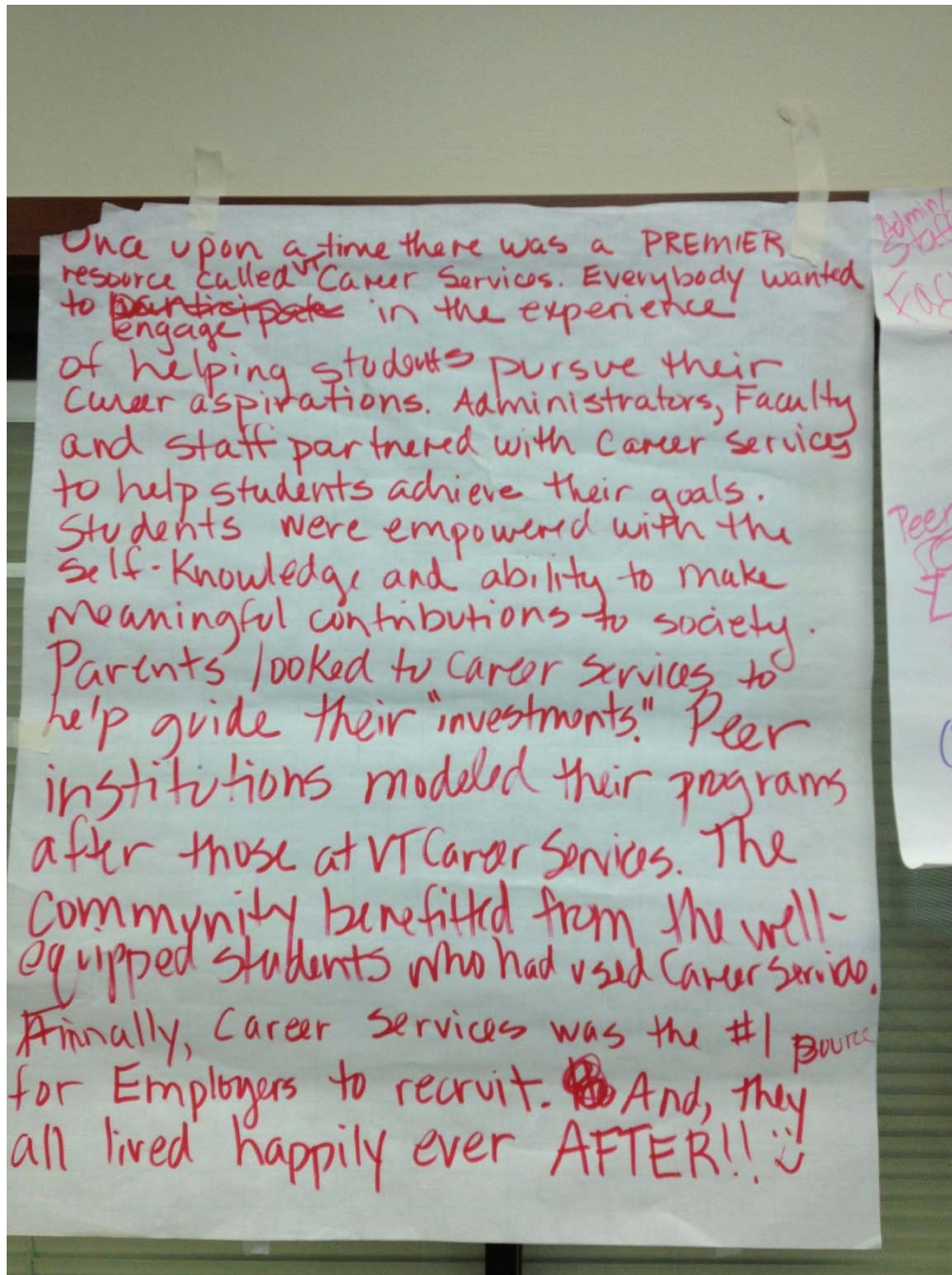


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APPENDIX V

Photocopies of the Ai narratives Written by Staff



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Career Services has interconnections of connection with students, faculty, staff, ~~and~~ employers, and other constituents in the university community, ~~and~~ ~~pa~~ through a wide variety of means. We are not all things to everyone, but we offer something for everyone.

It was a dark and stormy night...
a lull in direction had descended on Smith Career Center. ~~After~~ After intensive observation and listening to our ~~community's~~ ^{community's} needs, we processed massive terabytes of data and reached out to everyone. We combined our knowledge and instincts to become wiser. Our Community was then equipped with the tools to soar.
THE
END

APPENDIX W

Compilation of Themes and Codes

The visioning process lead to positive reactions

- The creativity and envisioning involved in Ai was fun and insightful
- Enlightening experience to listen to others
- Enjoyed interview process because it allowed her to learn more about fellow colleagues
- Intervention made her feel excited about upcoming work
- Ai helped to re-energize
- The drawing activity was unique and interesting
- Initially the drawing activity was challenging and uncomfortable. In the end, seeing all the pictures proved to be an enjoyable activity.
- Overcoming our perceived W and T was a beneficial activity
- The brainstorming activity was exciting and creative
- Great opportunity to learn more about fellow colleagues as a new staff member
- The brainstorming activity was enjoyable
- She found the brainstorming activity to be energizing
- The dot activity was enjoyable and helpful in narrowing ideas after brainstorming
- Envisioning the future of CS was a positive and re-energizing process
- Ai helped her to reflect and appreciate her work environment
- The intervention was re-energizing and provided an appreciation of CS
- Staff could build on what was discussed at intervention at a later date – discussions were beneficial
- It was a good experience to have the whole staff experience Ai
- Process was viewed as beneficial to CS
- Like the positive process
- Good focus and enjoyable experience to be together
- Overall Ai was a positive process
- Positive and energizing to start the process with strengths
- Benefits to understanding limitations and boundaries when considering an idea – missing in Ai
- She would like to continue with some of the ideas generated in the SWOT discussion
- Takeaway from Ai session was to build on enjoyable events and learn from those experiences
- SWOT was a good experience that built consensus
- Ai was a positive experience
- Great opportunity to focus on ideas and brainstorming
- SWOT was an energizing experience

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

In some ways the intervention was a frustrating and negative experience

- Mishaps in timing and structure of intervention was frustrating
- Initially the drawing activity was challenging and uncomfortable. In the end, seeing all the pictures proved to be an enjoyable activity.
- The focus on T and W created a negative environment than the perceived AI environment
- Frustrated that there wasn't enough time to expand or elaborate on ideas during brainstorming activity
- The purpose of the SWOT intervention seemed unclear
- Intervention was unclear and frustrating
- Confused about forward progress related to the discussions during SWOT intervention
- Confusing process
- Did not enjoy the SWOT process
- Frustrating process because he wanted more time to be creative
- Details of the process were time consuming and there wasn't a substantial outcome
- Frustrating that there was little outcome because there was not enough time to develop ideas
- Frustrated because she hoped for more tangible outcomes and action steps
- Drained by the detailed SWOT process
- Challenging and uncomfortable drawing activity
- Benefits to understanding limitations and boundaries when considering an idea – missing in Ai
- Frustrated by SWOT process because it did not build off of strengths or established successes
- Frustrated with Ai process because the outcome did not yield action steps
- SWOT had a negative undertone to the process
- Frustrated by slow forward progress
- Confusion as to whether or not the vision could be discussed individually because of study
- SWOT was a frustrating process for an intuitive personality type

Vision previously understood by staff

- As a member of the leadership team she helped craft the VS – familiar with the VS
- Overall, she is content with the current status of the VS
- Previous experience in crafting the vision resulted in continued clarity of the VS
- Did not need feedback on vision because it is clear that they are serving the students well – vision attainment
- SE understood the meaning of a VS
- Prior to the intervention, she had a clear understanding of the vision.
- Perceived the staff to have understood the vision as well
- Content with current VS which represented

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

- Employees Agree that the wording doesn't have to be perfect
- Staff had a clear understanding of the VS
- VS is clear and easy to understand
- Staff has a similar interpretation of the VS
- The staff is working towards fulfilling the vision and accepting that to be a journey - general statement about CS culture
- Confused about the purpose of the VS
- Session reiterated the purpose of CS
- The purpose of CS is innately understood by staff

Positive impact on vision clarity

- Developing a Deeper and Broader Understanding of the Vision Statement
- Alignment of Daily Tasks with the Vision Statement
- Meaning Behind the Vision Statement was Made Clear
- Opportunities for Critical Reflection of the Vision Statement
- The intervention made the vision and goals slightly more clear
- As a new employee it was a great opportunity to learn about the vision on a deeper level
- Intervention helped her to better understand the goals of CS and fellow colleagues' perceptions' of the vision
- The vision was discussed at staff meetings and retreat
- previously, there had not been a staff wide discussion about the VS
- Process served as a way for new employees to be well educated about the vision of CS (beyond reading the VS)
- Session provided insight into how to promote the vision and areas to focus
- The SWOT process helped to clarify deeply rooted barriers to the Vision
- Broadened sense of vision
- Ai session aided in vision clarity
- The process helped to provide consensus on the VS
- In his current role he does not actively dialogue about the vision, so it was helpful to attend the session and learn what others thought about the
- Vision clarity
- Invoked a desire to participate further in similar discussions about the vision
- Discovered that many coworkers had a similar understanding of the vision
- Learned the individual meanings behind the VS - Enjoyable to hear perspective of co-workers who did not craft the VS
- Dialogue about the VS statement revealed varied interpretations of meaning
- VS has been communicated however the underlying meaning of the VS was not communicated previously
- Enjoyable to hear the many employee perspectives about the vision
- The AI process helped to add meaning to the VS as opposed to it being just words
- SWOT allowed the new employee to learn about individual purpose of each staff member

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

- Intervention generated discussion about the deeper meaning behind the VS in hopes of providing clarity
- Session helped to focus on the meaning of the VS and not be distracted by the words
- The SWOT session helped to understand the meaning of the words in the VS
- The dialogue about the VS made her re-think or think more critically about the VS
- After the intervention she realized that some components of the VS could be revised
- She does not believe that the VS needs to be completely recrafted after the intervention; however, revising certain words in the VS would allow for enhancement
- Questions the large scope of the VS and how that impacts her work with students at VT
- Uses the VS to guide her day to day decisions
- SWOT helped her to align ideas and actions to the VS
- She subconsciously takes action in fulfilling the vision – this is innately a part of her work
- Formal alignment of daily tasks with the vision is not taking place. Vision alignment happens naturally as employees work hard.
- The intervention provided insight into the delineation between mission and vision
- Aligned tasks with vision
- Process helped her to align ideas and tasks with vision fulfillment
- Align personal strengths with Vision
- Despite the differing opinions about VS wording, LL believes that the underlying purpose of the vision is clear which can be seen through the actions of the staff
- Process made her question the vision statement
- Ai process helped her clarify how CS could better reach their vision
- The staff is working towards fulfilling the vision and accepting that to be a journey - general statement about CS culture
- Believes that action steps, as a result of intervention, were not needed because actions are already being taken to achieve the vision
- Realized the importance of teamwork and commitment to others to succeed

Pre-existing high levels of commitment and performance.

- Because job motivation is already very high, the Intervention did not spark new motivations
- Dedicated to high performance so motivation was not phased by intervention
- Intervention had not affect on motivation to perform
- The intervention did not have a positive or negative affect (=no affect) on personal commitment to job or CS
- No change in commitment but she did feel very proud to work at CS as a result of Ai
- The general consensus is that the staff as a whole is very committed to their work
- No affect of OC
- No affect OC – excited to do anything that pursues the vision
- No affect of OC – shown in years of employment

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

- High regard for CS
- Believes that the entire CS staff is committed to serving students
- Affirmed many of the great aspects of the office
- Acknowledges that CS is doing well in fulfilling their vision
- Admitted her established high level of OC
- CS is already working towards VS – did not need extra time to discuss it. Highly committed group
- “We do it well”
- CS staff enjoy their jobs
- We are doing it! We are currently established in working towards the vision through everyday actions
- Already at a high level of commitment and motivation to succeed
- High performance is a norm at CS
- Affirmed many of the great aspects of the office
- The interview reinforced my pre-established commitment to CS
- CS values teamwork and organizational performance over individual performance
- At CS there is an established culture of customer service
- At VT and CS there is an established and expected culture of excellence
- Going the extra mile to help others (students, staff, employers) is a norm at CS and VT. Excellence is engrained in the culture.
- Confirmed previously held beliefs and values of the department

Confirmed previously held beliefs and values of the department

- The Ai process confirmed pre-existing organizational beliefs and values
- It was reaffirming to visualize organizational values and the Ai process helped to confirm established beliefs
- Confirmed many of her initial thoughts about CS established while interviewing for the job
- The interview reinforced my pre-established commitment to CS
- At the retreat the staff participated in a coworker affirmation activity
- Personal commitment and purpose in work was confirmed
- It was noted that Personal values aligned with work values - confirming
- Affirmed many of the great aspects of the office
- Affirming to hear about co-workers values and connectedness to CS
- Reaffirming to hear from staff that they were committed and excited about their jobs.
- Grateful to be included in process which solidified her commitment to CS
- No change in commitment but she did feel very proud to work at CS as a result of Ai
- The one on one interviews uncovered shared values between unfamiliar coworkers
- CS hires individuals with similar values and work ethic as current employees
- Acknowledges that her values align with CS
- Common themes were observed between individual and organizational values

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

- It was reaffirming to visualize organizational values and the Ai process helped to confirm established beliefs

Core values create strong organizational culture

- Balanced power dynamic between leadership and staff contributes to the culture at CS
- Notes the importance of hiring in creating and maintaining culture
- In the hiring process organizational fit is important
- CS hires individuals with similar values and work ethic as current employees
- Important to hire new employees with values that are aligned the vision/culture
- There is a notable difference of values and standards in other offices
- Values of CS were highlighted within Ai session
- Engrained values establish an accepted culture
- High performance is a norm at CS
- Culture of passion for their work
- Grateful to be included in process which solidified her commitment to CS
- The staff feels valued and empowered
- Established culture of building success
- Culture of openness and honesty
- Staff has an understanding of CS vision
- CS supports organizational learning and personal development
- Professional development helps the staff to work together
- Director is responsible for instilling values
- Focus of personal strengths to build towards vision fulfillment
- The staff is working towards fulfilling the vision and accepting that to be a journey - general statement about CS culture
- CS encourages learning and professional development, which contributes to the positive and rewarding work environment.
- Enjoys her work because of the variety of responsibilities.
- Long working relationship has lead to shared values and like experiences
- Many long time staff members at CS because of the culture
- Worked at CS for many years because she really enjoys the people she works with. Good people = good culture
- Supportive of new employees
- Retreat exercise showcased the importance of valuing a great workforce
- Spirit team exemplified CS supportive nature
- Supportive culture at CS
- Inclusive and supportive culture
- Established culture and standards
- Content code – culture of CS is built on communication and support of staff
- Supportive/family culture
- CS values teamwork and organizational performance over individual performance
- Annual Event showcases CS Values for teamwork and colleagues

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

- Realized the importance of teamwork and commitment to others to succeed
- Teamwork is required of the CS staff to serve students
- Staff enjoys working together as a team on events
- Value teamwork and staff support
- Special Culture- feelings of togetherness and support (family)
- The staff at CS values student development
- Believes that the entire CS staff is committed to serving students
- Staff members at CS are personally responsible to their customers
- Great value is placed on service to students at CS
- CS staff treats students professionally
- CS staff is also supportive of students through student development
- At CS there is an established culture of customer service

Appendix V

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Analysis of Methodologies Used in Organizational Development: SWOT Analysis and Appreciative Inquiry

Investigators: Ms. Kelsey C. Brunton, Dr. Eric K. Kaufman, Dr. Curtis R. Friedel, Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd

I. Purpose of this Research/Project

Researchers from Virginia Tech want to know how two techniques of strategic planning, Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and Appreciative Inquiry (AI), affect participant's organizational commitment and vision clarity. We would appreciate your help in this study by agreeing to participate in a focus group and assessment where you share your opinions and thought processes.

II. Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be included in the researcher's observations of the processes that take place during each session. The documents generated from your participation will be incorporated into the analysis and findings of the study. Each session will be audio-recorded. Your name will not be recorded or attached to any use of the recording, and only the research team will have access to the audio files. You may be selected to participate in a focus group interview along with six to eight other Career Services employees. The focus group should take about 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded; however, your name will not be recorded or attached to any report of the findings. Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate and/or stop participating at any time.

III. Risks

The risks associated with participation in the study are no more than minimal.

IV. Benefits

No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate. However, you may have the satisfaction of knowing that you have contributed important information to a study of how to improve community involvement in environmental improvement efforts. Participants may contact the researcher for a summary of the research results.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

The information concerning your participation in the study will be kept entirely confidential by using codes for each person instead of names (i.e. 1:1= focus group 1:participant 1). Social

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

security numbers or other personal information will NOT be used. At no time will the researchers release the data from the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. Your focus group participation and responses will not affect your participation in any future Virginia Tech program.

Each session and focus group will be audio recorded to accurately record your statements. The audio files will be kept on a password-protected computer. Only the researchers will have access to the files. The audio files will be erased at the conclusion of this research project.

It is possible that the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

You will receive no compensation for your participation in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You are free to not answer any questions or to participate beyond a level that is comfortable for you.

VIII. Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

- Participate in a session facilitated by a Virginia Tech consultant;
- Complete a post-test immediately after the first session and a delayed post-test 4 weeks after the session;
- Potentially participate in a 60 minute focus group with other career services employees; and
- Ask questions of the researcher about the study at any time.

IX. Subject's Permission

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I am not a minor and give my voluntary consent to participate in this study:

_____ Date _____
Subject signature

If questions arise about research subjects' rights or any concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. David Moore, at 540-231-4991 or moored@vt.edu.

If the questions relate to content and findings of this particular study, please contact one of the project investigators:

- Masters student Kelsey C. Brunton: 540-820-2571, church87@vt.edu

A MIXED METHODS STUDY EVALUATING STRATEGIES USED IN
ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONING

- Dr. Eric K. Kaufman: 540-231-6258, ekaufman@vt.edu
- Dr. Curtis R. Friedel: 540-231-8177, cfriedel@vt.edu
- Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd: 540-231-5717, mooredm@vt.edu