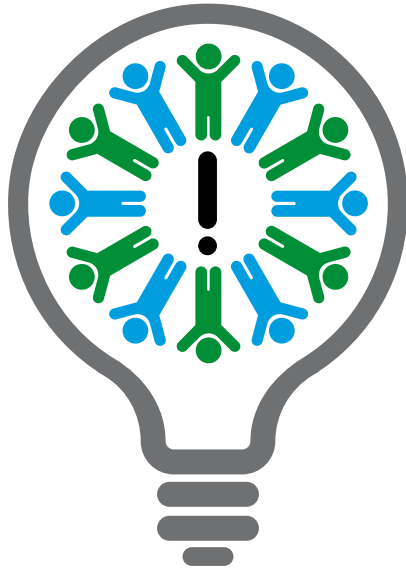


Conference Schedule and Proceedings of the 2023 KAI Symposium

Online - February 22-23, 2023

Big Problems – Big Teams – Big Ideas

Recognizing the need to incorporate diversity and new thinking to address
the challenging problems of today



kai 
Symposium 2023

Big Problems
Big Teams
Big Ideas

kai 
foundation



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES
CENTER FOR COOPERATIVE
PROBLEM SOLVING
VIRGINIA TECH.

2023 KAI Symposium Schedule

February 22, Wednesday, 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM (EST) [or 5:30 to 9:30 PM (GMT)]

February 23, Thursday, 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM (EST) [or 2:30 to 9:00 PM (GMT)]

Wednesday, February 22

12:00 PM (Noon, EST) – Pre-Symposium Session

Questions and Answers with the Advisory Council for the KAI Foundation and Center for Cooperative Problem Solving, at Virginia Tech

12:30 PM (EST) – Symposium Begins

Meet and Greet with Networking

12:45 PM (EST)

Welcome and announcements from the KAI Foundation, and Center for Cooperative Problem Solving, at Virginia Tech

1:00 PM (EST)

Session A, Presentation 1

Case Study: How One Leadership Team Up-Leveled Its Performance with KAI and Coaching

By Anne Collier and Cynthia Shaffer, Arudia

Session B, Presentation 2

The use of KAI in supporting Healthcare Team Effectiveness Post-pandemic

By Fiona Peart, MedStar Health

1:35 PM (EST)

Break

1:45 PM (EST)

Session A, Roundtable Discussion 3

Round Table Discussion: “Do our learning programs assume people think alike? Probably!”

By Ed Bernacki, Brant Idea Factory

Session B, Roundtable Discussion 4

Using Theory of Mind to Better Understand Individuals Who May Think Differently

By Jonathan Jewell, CC Studio, and Curt Friedel, Virginia Tech

2:20 PM (EST)

Break

2:30 PM (EST)

Keynote Speaker – Dr. Anika Davis, CEO, Winning Results. United States. **Unlocking Teacher Effectiveness: Optimizing Learning Outcomes by Harnessing the Power of the Learning Sciences and the KAI**

3:00 PM (EST)

Breakout rooms to discuss Dr. Anika Davis’s keynote address.

3:30 PM (EST)

Break

3:45 PM (EST)

Panel Discussion led by Megan Seibel, with panelists: Robert Samuel, Cynthia Lawrence, Fiona Peart, and John Bryant. **Organizational Complexity: Addressing Big Issues with both Human and Systems Aspects of Healthcare**

4:30 PM (EST)

Adjourn for the day.

Thursday, February 23

9:30 AM (EST)

Welcome Back! Announcements for the Day.

9:45 AM (EST)

Keynote Speaker – Simon Brown, Partner at Positive Momentum. United Kingdom. **How Organizations can Grow while Maintaining Social Responsibility**

10:15 AM (EST)

Breakout rooms to discuss Simon Brown’s keynote address.

10:45 AM (EST)

Break

10:55 AM (EST)

Session A, Presentation 5

Considering Diversity and Inclusion in the Promotion Process

By Jessica Player, USAF, and Iwan Jenkins, The Riot Point

Session B, Presentation 6

Examining the Cognitive Climate of Graduate Students Enrolled in a Creativity Course

By Tony Cevoli, Divergent Design

11:30 AM (EST)

Break

11:40 AM (EST)

Session A, Roundtable Discussion 7

Deviance or Diversity? An Exploration of How to Differentiate Cognitive Diversity from Organizational Deviance

By Emily Roe-Brown, University of Kentucky, and Megan Seibel, Virginia Tech

Session B, Roundtable Discussion 8

Use of Statistical Charts in Presenting KAI

By Jamil Scott, The MITRE Corporation

12:15 PM to 1:15 PM (EST)

Lunch on Your Own

1:15 PM (EST)

Roundtable Discussion led by Jessica Prater and Anika Davis

Creating a KAI Circle of Practice

2:00 PM (EST)

Break

2:10 PM (EST)

Session A, Presentation 9

KAI and Wardley Strategic Maps

By Matt Niermann, Schnabel, and Iwan Jenkins, The Riot Point

Session B, Presentation 10

KAI: A Tool of Understanding in Faith-Based Organizations

By Dave Close and Jerald Walz, Virginia Tech

2:45 PM (EST)

Break

2:55 PM (EST)

Session A, Presentation 11

Using KAI and Cynefin Decision Making Framework to Solve Big Problems in a K-12 Public School District in New Jersey

By Gary Snyder, Virginia Tech

Session B, Presentation 12

KAI and Coping Skills as a Talent Retention Tool in The Life Sciences Industry – Early Experiences

By Nick Hicks and Jennifer Chase, Chase Partners

3:30 PM (EST)

Moving KAI forward in 2023

By Nicola Kirton Ryall, Curt Friedel, and Megan Seibel

4:00 PM (EST)

Adjourn for the day and end of KAI Symposium.

Index of Published Abstracts

Listed in order of presentation

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Note that not all abstracts are included in the KAI Symposium Proceedings, either because the author wishes to seek another publication outlet for the presented research, or due to the presentation including proprietary information.

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Case Study: How One Leadership Team Up-Leveled Its Performance with Coaching

By Anne Collier & Cynthia Shaffer,
Arudia

Introduction and Background

This case study chronicles the journey of a leadership team of a community behavioral health organization navigating its way through enormous change. By way of background, the US Government has provided funding to support community behavioral health centers transforming into Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (“CCBHC”). The funds are granted and administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (“SAMHA”).

The grants goals are:

Goal 1: Expand access to the organization’s existing behavioral health continuum of care through increased evening and weekend hours, increased referral and care coordination with local hospitals and criminal justice entities, and increased staffing in outpatient programs.

Goal 2: Establish an integrated primary care program that includes co-located primary health screening and monitoring, health education, and vaccine administration while simultaneously expanding coordinated care model through established referral relationships and care coordination activities.

Goal 3: Improve veteran engagement and experience of care by providing organization-wide training on military culture and implementing evidence-based practices tailored to veterans and their families.

Goal 4: Establish a comprehensive trauma-informed care environment by providing staff training on trauma, integrating TIC practices into client-facing processes and procedures, and implementing trauma-focused treatments within the organization’s existing continuum of care.

Goal 5: Elevate standards of care through implementation of an outcomes-based treatment model that includes staff training on population health and outcomes management, use and integration of client-level outcome measures into ongoing treatment, establishing key treatment outcomes for clinical programs, and developing dashboards and analytics for ongoing tracking of performance indicators.

How It Works

As with this and other such organizations, the staff tend towards more adaptive and even those who are more innovative must cope by working in a highly regulated environment. Our assessment of the culture and challenges that accompany administration of the CCBHC grant is that the more innovative are “raring to go” and are frustrated by the more adaptive who point out all the problems – lots of Problem Bs to deal with.

The upshot is that these changes are innovative - the whole system is changing – but at the same time require exactness in application. While this seems like a paradox, the boots-on-the-ground (or therapist in the room) experience is often one of overwhelm and colleagues struggle to change perfectly to the new system. The field has been under-resourced for decades, which exacerbates the more adaptive tendency to have to ensure success perfection and success at the outset.

The team leading this transformation consists of eight executives. Their KAI scores range from 74 to 108, have a median of 97, and mean of 94.5. The CEO is the most innovative as are the three other clinical members of the team. The more adaptive members include the COO, CFO, Chief Strategy Office, and Chief Human Resources Officer.

The CEO's chief complaint is that her team is not functioning at the chief level. She also expressed concerns that her team isn't bringing problems, discussion, and solutions to the Chief meeting. They discuss issues with each other one-on-one, but not as a group. They are reluctant to challenge each other ostensibly due to deep respect and not wanting to "embarrass" a colleague. Several of the chiefs complained that the CEO didn't share what she expected and seemed to "hide the ball."

Results to Date

Our first meeting Chief meeting followed a 12-hour training that include KAI, the Actualized Leader Profile, and our proprietary Win-Win Conversation Model and Coaching Skills. During that four-hour meeting we debriefed team members results with a view towards working together more effectively. We also debrief a tool called the Group Culture Profile which revealed numerous challenges, including a lack of candor, detachment, and a failure to implement effective collaboration processes.

After this first facilitated Chief meeting, the team agreed to intentionally use coaching skills with each other. Coaching is the process of asking open-ended questions to foster colleague's best thinking and exploit other creativity styles. We note that other than the CEO, the chiefs were quiet. So much so that we broke them into groups to discuss topics and then share their insights, conclusions, and questions jointly.

In the six months between this first facilitated meeting and the second, I coached each of the executives at least four times for thirty minutes. In addition to deepening their understanding of their own and each other's creativity styles (and leadership styles), I worked with each chief on utilizing the Win-Win Conversation Model and Coaching Skills to improve communication with each other and subordinates.

In the second facilitated Chief meeting, the consultant reviewed the team's results. The difference was that the Chiefs were openly sharing ideas and insights, asking questions. They discussed how the tools helped them. The Chief Strategy Officer, who is both relatively new, young, and less educated, had greatly improved his confidence and capacity to stay engaged with the question and work with innovators.

The Chiefs asked how to truly exploit each other's knowledge and creativity style. They wanted to make the KAI insights "their own." I recommended that they follow our coaching model to guide their discussion and drive results. I advised them to be mindful of the questions at each of the five steps:

- Step 1: Establish the Focus
- Step 2: Brainstorm Options
- Step 3: Create Action Plan
- Step 4: Remove Obstacles and Identify Resource Needs
- Step 5: Review and Commit

The Chiefs were quite enthusiastic about having a structure to guide them through the problem-solving process. Stay tuned for a report out on how it's going and next steps!

Future Plans and Advice to Colleagues

Future plans include continuing to consult with the CEO to identify key intervention points. I am also coaching VPs for four thirty-minute sessions each. This coaching will help the Chiefs lead their own teams more effectively and reinforces the understanding of cognitive diversity and how to best exploit different styles.

Advice includes:

- Get to know the client's landscape and challenges;
- Conduct pre-program interviews;
- Obtain consent to disclose scores;
- Coach individuals post-program;
- Work with other teams if possible; and
- Keep in touch.

We will likely have more to report in a couple of months.

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Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC). SAMHSA. (n.d.). Retrieved December 28, 2022, from <https://www.samhsa.gov/certified-community-behavioral-health-clinic>

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Do our learning programs assume people think alike? Probably!

By Ed Bernacki

The Idea Factory

Introduction

The key to change is developing staff skills and the capacity to contribute effectively to their organizations. Kirton found that all people solve problems, make decisions and deal with change but do so in different ways. Armstrong, Cools, Sadler-Smith (2011) in the 'Role of Cognitive Styles in Business and Managing. Reviewing 40 Years of Research' suggests, "Cognitive style refers to consistent individual differences in how individuals perceive, think, solve problems, learn, take decisions and relate to others". If we know that there are consistent individual differences, should we not ensure our training programs and all management strategies recognize these differences?

How it Works

Observations of hundreds of speakers while speaking at 250 conferences led to an observation: few presenters understand or consider cognitive diversity. For example, many teach, "SMART Goal Setting" (Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Time-bound). A-I Theory suggests this structure may appeal to those with an adaptive style, perhaps half of any group. What about the other half? Do we fail the "others" if we give them no options to fit their style of thinking? Some issues include:

1. A change or training program creator has a specific thinking style. Their style of thinking shapes the program, making it useful for people who think like the program creator.
2. A presenter (if not the creator) brings their cognitive bias to a program in terms of presenting what they see as important.
3. The presenter creates a cognitive climate in the way they present ideas, engage people, and respond to questions in a way that makes sense to their style of thinking.

We must notice our preferred style and design content for people who think like us... and then design content for the "other". Our programs must blend both while not showing bias. The foundation of training and change programs should start with cognitive diversity. Most management tools appear to be designed from an adaptive perspective; essentially for use by adaptive thinkers. There are too few tools for an innovative style of thinkers.

Results and Implications to Date

I used KAI with 4,000 public servants in 200 workshops. As a high innovator, I showed my bias in providing a more conceptual view of KAI and A-I. I noticed the more adaptive struggled with the lack of structure and a formal agenda. I then printed an agenda to help them feel comfortable. In essence, I now present content (stories, examples, and details) twice to support how adaptive thinkers and innovative thinkers likely hear the presentation.

Future plans / advice to others

The same concern applies to the design of many services and produces. There is great potential to shape our program to improve learning, retention, and use of learning. This could become a marketable asset when our content includes such a statement:

“This training program has been certified as ‘FCB’ (Free of Cognitive Bias). All models and tools have been tested by people from a diversity of thinking styles. We encourage you to use the perspective and tools most useful to your style of thinking.”

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Using Theory of Mind to Better Understand Individuals Who May Think Differently

By Jonathan Jewell, CC Studio CIC, and
Curtis Friedel, Virginia Tech

Introduction

KAI practitioner training offers insights into the nature of cognitive style and the use of such styles in practice, as individuals and as teams. These differences of thinking style, to the KAI practitioner, run along the adaption-innovation continuum and, combining that with their prior education and experience, they come to recognize the separation of problem-solving style, intelligence, motivation, learned skills, and a particular situation (see Kirton, 2011).

‘Theory of Mind’ (ToM), first conceptualized by Premack & Woodruff (1978), was originally captured as a cognitive ability to understand the minds of others, and to recognize one’s own mindset to help describe, explain and predict interactive behavior. Early work saw the achievement of ‘theory of mind’ a point on the developmental trajectory, alongside things like object permanence and the development of intellectual reasoning and emotional regulation. But the ToM is not a ‘theory’ in the sense that the term is commonly used, but rather our own theorizing about minds of self and others, trying to make sense of an experience of living in a world, full of sometimes isolated and other times interacting minds, with attention, memory, perspectives and all the eclectic diversity of it.

There are many questions, still, in exploring aspects of ToM. For example, can having a more developed theory of mind help KAI practitioners improve their work in reducing conflict and improving collaboration in teams? Can learning from ToM bring about a heightened awareness of ourselves and others, helping practitioners to be more effective in their own innovation and adaptive styles? And do ‘Innovators’ and ‘Adaptors’ attribute mental states - “read minds” - differently, and if so...what are the implications of that?

How Theory of Mind Works

‘We learn things about people from what they do and say, and what others say about them’
~ Agatha Christie

The session will begin by having a look at a famous psychological illusion, the Heider and Simmel (1944) animation to move us out of the developmental and autism context. We will discuss the concept, the interplay between theory and practice, and consider some of the implications for KAI practitioners, your work and the theory and pragmatics of the KAI itself within a system of ‘systems and theories’ of minds. Through the course of the discussion, the question of ‘how and what’ KAI will also be uncovered, including some interesting potential connections to the genetic, lifespan and anthropological work that Dr. Michael Kirton worked in bringing about KAI.

Implications

There are range of possible things that might covered roundtable session (audience-preferring):

- ToM is inherently about reflection, self, intuition, failure, empathy and how to describe, explain and predict the multiplying villainies of program management and organizational strategy. Not only will it help you as a KAI practitioner, but it is applicable to work and life, both in and beyond the workplace
- Different Theories of ToM might be in particular interesting for what insights it might give us some of which might lead us to recognize that more adaptive and more innovative individuals might find different opportunities and challenges when applying it
- Early ToM was about cognition. Now we embrace conation and emotion fully; we are not just talking about knowledge and skills
- Other approaches might open up opportunities for tooling us, and spotting vulnerabilities in applying theory, effecting change, or influencing organizations, and the perhaps the potential to ‘grow your intuition’ about teams
- The debate is ‘hot’ at the moment, with already signs that ‘Departments of Humans and Things’ are becoming ‘a thing’

Recommendations to KAI Practitioners

It could be assumed that KAI practitioners have a greater ToM by understanding the independence of problem-solving style from intelligence, motivation, learned skills, and process. Helping others develop a theory of mind which separates these constructs is part of the process of improving collaboration and reducing conflict in a team. Current ToM tests focus on what one may know about another’s knowledge, beliefs, and capability; however, there are not any specific false belief tasks associated with how someone might prefer to solve problems, more adaptively or more innovatively. A measure of this nature could be valuable to helping improve ToM among KAI respondents.

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Examining the Cognitive Climate of Graduate Students Enrolled in a Creativity Course

By Tony Cevoli

Divergent Design

Introduction

Creativity is a term that has dominated literature since the COVID pandemic. With the multitude of problems brought on by the pandemic, creativity was relied upon to help resolve these problems (Cohen & Cromwell, 2021). Problems that touched just about every aspect of life, from work, school, and overall well-being. This spotlight on creativity brought to light many areas of creative research that included team or group creativity, and the diversity and conflict associated with a group approach to creative problem-solving (Kurtzberg & Amabile, 2010).

With this need for creative problem-solving came the question, “can we improve and enhance creativity to meet this creative need during these unprecedented times?”. A fair amount of research has noted that creativity can be improved with training (Kleibeuker et al., 2014; Reiter-Palmon et al., 2019). Research on creativity has also demonstrated the role that intrinsic motivation plays in creativity (Amabile, 1997). An understanding of the role motivation and problem-solving style impact the desire to enhance one’s creativity is lacking.

Connection to Adaption-Innovation Theory

Kirton (2011) discussed that creativity is a subset of problem-solving, and that we have preferences for how we solve problems. These preferences are a dimension of personality, and several personality traits have been linked to creativity (Feist et al., 2017). These characteristics cover both adaptive and innovative styles. The need for diverse problem-solving and creative approaches is necessary to deal with today’s complex issues. Assembling a group or team is a way to recruit diverse thinking that will be applied to the problem at hand, Problem A. The motivation behind which the member of the group or team became part of the group, whether volunteering (intrinsic) or being told (extrinsic), can have an impact on the team. The group can also be impacted by the amount of cognitive diversity which can be harder to manage, Problem B (Kirton, 2003). These diverse groups or teams tend to have a consensus group, and where one falls in relation to that group can affect the impact that individual has within the group. This study will examine the cognitive climate of a graduate class studying creativity to understand if a preferred style is more likely to pursue the field of creativity.

Methods/Data Analysis

This quantitative study examined the KAI scores of 13 graduate students in a required course to qualify for a concentration in creativity and innovation. An offer to take the KAI was presented to all 20 students in the course, with 13 students (four male and nine female) completing the KAI. The course professor, as well as another professor who is the founder of the concentration program, both took the KAI. No unreliable scores were identified. Descriptive statistics were derived using IBM SPSS to understand the cognitive climate of the class. Table 1 depicts the scores and sub-scores of all students. Table 2 depicts the descriptive statistics of both the scores and sub-scores of the student KAI results. Figure 1 depicts a histogram to identify and visualize the cognitive gaps in the student group. The average total score for the class was 114, which is approximately one standard deviation more innovative than the average KAI score, with respect

to the general population. Vast differences existed between male and female scores; however, the low number of male participants did not allow for adequate statistical comparison, which is a limitation in this study. The course professor and concentration program founder scored 137 and 121, respectively.

Table 1

KAI Score and Sub-scores of Students

Total	SO	E	RG
80	37	10	33
80	23	19	38
85	33	16	36
114	54	19	41
114	43	26	45
117	53	27	37
119	55	14	50
122	49	23	50
123	56	17	50
126	49	29	49
127	49	32	46
136	56	31	50
140	61	28	51

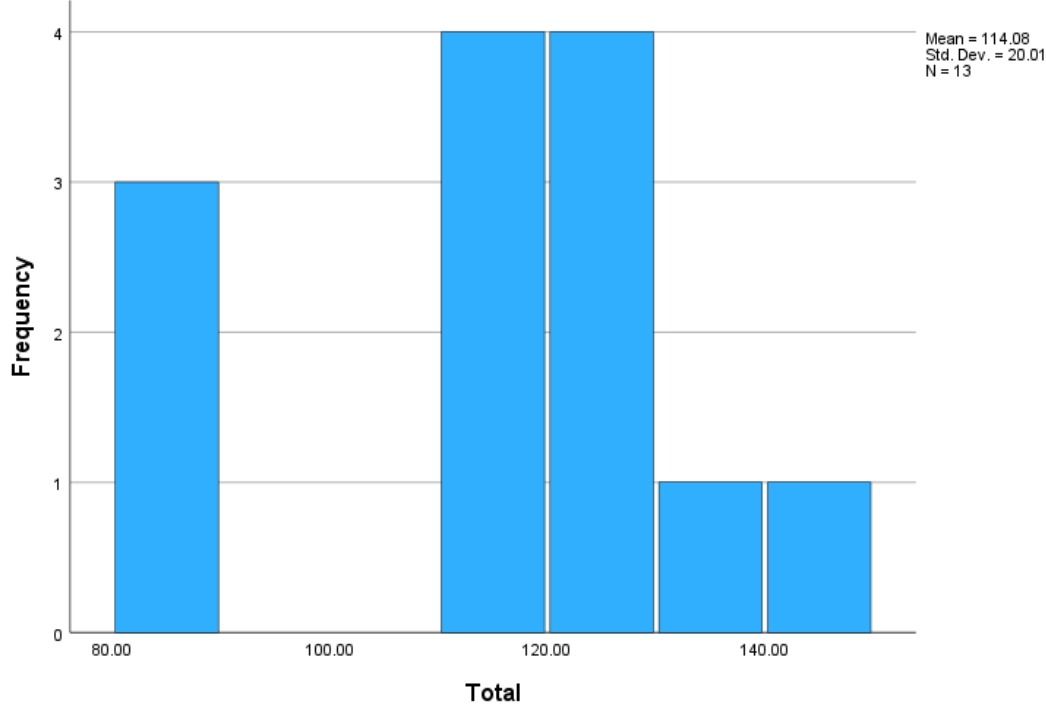
Table 2

KAI Descriptive Statistics of Students

Score	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Total	60	80	140	114	20
SO	38	23	61	48	11
E	22	10	32	22	7
RG	18	33	51	44	6

Figure 1

KAI Score Histogram



Findings and Conclusions

This limited study demonstrates that a more innovative style is likely to seek out creative enhancement than a more adaptive style. This said, there were seven (35% of total class) classmates who did not complete the KAI, and we don't know their KAI results. With the data collected, the average KAI score of the participants being one standard deviation more innovative than the normal average KAI score of 95. It can also be seen from only three of the scores being more adaptive than the normal KAI average and falling within one standard deviation of the average being a reinforcing factor. The cognitive climate is more innovative (mean = 114), with a cognitive gap of 34 points noted between the most adaptive score and the mean of this more innovative consensus group. The course professor scored more innovative than the class average and was found to be more than one standard deviation more innovative than the consensus group of the class. The concentration program founder was also more innovative than the average class score but fell within the consensus group of the class. With the more innovative consensus group, as well as the more innovative professor, the more adaptive students may have exhibited more coping behavior during the course. Research and understanding of creativity continue to mount, but the "mystique" of creativity seems to persist. It is possible that the more innovative style, which tends to be more tolerant of ambiguity, is willing to pursue creativity while the more adaptive shy away from creativity due to the inaccurate notion of its vagueness? More research is needed to better understand this topic.

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KAI: A Tool of Understanding Within Faith-Based Organizations

By David Close & Jerald Walz

Virginia Tech

Introduction

Research, literature, and case studies all demonstrate the stability of the KAI measure across gender, culture, and several other demographic identities. But what about worldview? Do the principles and claims of adaption-innovation (A-I) theory hold up across varying worldview contexts? More specifically, how well do the assumptions and key tenets of A-I theory and measure hold up within communities of faith? Does the added variable of faith-focused values work contrary to what we know and understand about adaptation-innovation theory or the implications of applying A-I informed decisions in a faith-based environment?

Implementing strategies informed by A-I data implies self-awareness and understanding the other members of your team are fundamental. If so, introspection on the following questions (We! Connect 2021) could be helpful as you apply what you know and understand about yourself and others:

- How well would you get along with your clone?
- What is something you do differently than most people?
- What is one personality trait you admire in others?

Asking team members to reflect on and answer these questions honestly leads to greater insight of team dynamics.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines wisdom as “the ability to use your knowledge and experience to make good decisions and judgments.” Or “the ability to make good judgments based on what you have learned from your experience, or the knowledge and understanding that gives you this ability.” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/wisdom> at 1:33pm on 1/27/23) I like many of the synonyms that Merriam-Webster includes in their explanation of wisdom: “discernment, insight, perception, perceptiveness, sapience” and others. (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wisdom> at 1:33pm on 1/27/23). Our understanding of wisdom and its connection to the application of A-I theory is further supported in the ancient writings of many religious cultures. For example, in Jewish and Christian traditions, there is an extensive amount of writing on the topic of wisdom in what is often referred to as wisdom literature. And even in the writings often cited and referenced in Christian faiths, readers are encouraged to be of the same mind, working for the same purpose, to avoid selfishness, and to put others’ needs and interests first. The same writer goes on to say that his readers should think about things that are true, right, and excellent. Regardless of worldview or perspective, these treatments of wisdom, discernment, and focusing on the needs of others while working toward a shared purpose or goal leads to success, more often than not.

Experience from two case studies will form the basis of a discussion on how A-I theory and a measurement of preference or style can be exercised as a means of understanding of team dynamics specifically within a faith-based organization.

How It Works

In preparation for a short KAI workshop during a pastoral staff retreat, the KAI inventory was administered to the pastoral staff of a local church. The five-member pastoral staff team is comprised of the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Worship Pastor, Youth Pastor (middle school through college), Children's Pastor (preschool through elementary school). The approach to administering the instrument and interpreting the results and coaching were no different than any other context. Since the workshop was specifically for a Christian church, time was spent framing the theory and application of the theory into the context of their ministry or work.

Concepts covered included:

- Sharing responsibility
- Having the same mind, being united, centering on one purpose, taking each other seriously, and looking out for others' interests above personal interests
- Seeing the tests and trials of life as potentially wicked problems
- Being dedicated to serve
- Sharing the load
- Doing good to everyone

Once again, regardless of worldview or the context of faith, the above concepts play out within effective teams who successfully solve problems.

Result/Implications To Date

KAI results of the five pastors ranged from 65 (more adaptive) to 116 (more innovative). The individual scores were 65, 73, 86, 103, 116. Why is that important or is it? A 51-point gap exists between the polar ends of scores, but there were no gaps in excess of 20 points between any two adjacent scores. The gaps were such that you would anticipate some communication challenges and approaches to addressing problems being different, but the gaps between adjacent scores indicates it would not be impossible for team members to get along and work through tough decisions. The greatest source of potential conflict and Problem B management would come between the two team members at each end of the spectrum within the group. From the perspective of team diversity, one would expect great success overall since a wide range of perspectives and ways of seeing solutions to Problem A should be optimal.

Going through the KAI workshop and seeing the results of the team's scores and what that potentially means offered an opportunity for the pastoral staff to see another practical application to a shared value of the team: unity over uniformity. They were confronted with the reality that they could, in fact, practice valuing the differences of others without having to compromise their mission or ministry work. The pastoral team is free to identify and reflect on individual member's personality traits that drive team success. Team members were challenged to pause and see their work with their fellow pastors through a different lens and appreciate differences that may have historically created strife or conflict within the team. Revealing scores and discussing the implications of those scores helped all of the pastors understand internal conflicts in a new way and gave them new awareness of what could driving resistance to change in how they do ministry moving forward. The application of 'what's next' or 'how does this impact our work/ministry' is no different for this pastoral team than it would be in a secular setting with a secular team.

Are there any differences then in how A-I theory and the KAI measure works or is applied in a faith-based setting? Overall, and quite simply, no. While the underlying motivation or drive for success is potentially focused differently (ministry-driven, guided by principles and values inherent to faith, following guidance from the respective faith writings, etc.), conceptually, it is the same: cognitively diverse teams are more likely to be successful working together when focus remains on Problem A and Problems B are effectively managed and do not distract from the agreed upon goal. Some context-specific implications may be slightly different in faith-based organizations, but the basic principles are still the same:

- Organizationally and as a team, how are we responding to change?
- In light of the present crisis, how do we deploy a solution or response?
- Do we need ‘evolution’ or ‘revolution’ within the team or organization based on our current challenge or opportunity?
- Who is best suited to lead the team through the change at hand? The more innovative or the more adaptive member of the team?

Future Plans/Advice

Efforts are underway for conducting a workshop with a second faith-based nonprofit this spring. Based on what I am learning about this organization, many of the exposed challenges being described from within the organization sound like differences in problem solving approaches, communication breakdowns, and struggling to identify, agree, and focus on Problem A. As a practitioner, I am anxious to administer the KAI instrument to the organization’s executive leadership team of directors to see the range of scores and anticipated cognitive gaps that I propose are driving much of the internal conflict.

In way of advice here are a few thoughts:

- Understanding why a team is running into resistance to change does not give excuse for obstinance or justify being an obstructionist to change or progress.
- Even if an organization’s structure is autocratic, space must be allowed to talk through differences in ideas, approaches, solutions to dilemmas and opportunities.
- “. . . *so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people.*” Isn’t this part of what we strive for even in our secular contexts?
- Let’s revisit the introspective questions from the beginning and ask them differently
 - How well do you get along with others not like you (or that do not think like you)?
 - What do you appreciate about how someone else does something differently than you?
 - What is one personality trait that drives success within a team setting?

We are learning, at least by experience if not yet by research, that A-I theory and KAI measures are just as robust, reliable, and stable when applied within a faith-based organization.

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Using KAI and Cynefin Decision Making Framework to Solve Big Problems in a K – 12 Public School District in New Jersey

By Gary Snyder
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Introduction

I was recently (January 2023) invited back to work with a team of school district administrators after I had previously worked with a smaller subset of the larger group in 2021. The superintendent was interested in the administrative team engaging in a mid-year reflection using KAI as a means for team members to gain an understanding of their own preferred problem-solving style and how they could leverage the understanding to improve collaboration among the cognitively diverse administrative team that was facing the challenges of public education in 2023 America. In addition to KAI, I incorporated the Cynefin Framework for decision-making into the discussion as we moved from theoretical to practical in discussing actual problems facing the district and schools in 2023.

How it Works

The school district's administrative team totaled thirty-eight ($N = 38$) members ranging from the Superintendent of Schools and other district office administrators, such as the Business Administrator and directors of elementary education, secondary education, student services, transportation, and facilities, to curriculum supervisors of the various content areas, and building level principals and assistant principals. The group gathered together for the presentation and discussions related to KAI and then broke out into pre-determined teams based on roles/titles to discuss the problems they expected to be facing in the second half of the school year.

The first part of the session included the review of KAI. Each individual had completed the KAI inventory prior to the workshop and had received their eight-page score report. The scores of the whole team ranged from 70 to 132 with a mean of 97. They were sprinkled across the continuum with a nearly equal number of individuals scoring as more adaptive and more innovative. The scores placed on the continuum visually illustrated a team with the strengths and challenges of a cognitively diverse team.

The next part of the workshop was to examine the Cynefin Framework (Snowden and Boone, 2007). The Cynefin Framework for decision-making is described in a 2007 Harvard Business Review article that draws from the work of complexity science. The framework classifies problems/issues as being either simple, complicated, complex, or chaotic. The fifth classification is disorder. Kirton (2011) recognized the relationship between problem-solving and decision making and therefore it appears fitting to bring the concepts together in an effort to have the group take the next practical steps to apply KAI to their actual problems/issues (p. 136).

The groups began to identify and clarify the problems that they were facing or expecting to face in the second half of the academic year. Though problem identification and clarification was not complete due to time limitations, some of the groups began to consider how to classify the problems/issues into one of the types described in the Cynefin Framework.

Time limitations again cut short the groups discussions to apply their initial understanding of KAI by considering how contributions by both those who are more adaptive and more innovative might contribute to the problem-solving process of the cognitively diverse group. Groups were provided an emerging and evolving graphic organizer (below) to begin to guide their discussions.

Problem (Description)	Cynefin Type	Characteristics of More Adaptive Approach	Characteristics of More Innovative Approach	Possible Next Action Steps	Outcome & Reflections
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

Results/Implications to Date

The group members completed the KAI Inventory prior to the workshop. As mentioned above, the individual scores were spread rather evenly across the spectrum resulting in a range of 70 – 132 and a mean score of 97. The group participated in activities, discussions, and Q & A to better understand the key concepts of KAI.

The group recognized the diversity of problem-solving styles and some were curious about the differences in sub-groups (ex: Assistant Principals with scores reflective of being more adaptive, while Principals with scores reflective of being more innovative). Others in small group discussions reflected in a similar manner about the relationship between role and preferred problem-solving style, while some commented on the perceived overarching culture of the district in comparison to experiences in other districts.

The work with the Cynefin Framework was initiated and groups were beginning to engage in the work as time elapsed for the day’s workshop. Some of the initial discussions listed problems being faced such as; funding shortfalls, staffing shortages, student behaviors, student wellness, impact of polarized politics, and the impact of artificial intelligences (ChatGPT).

Future Plans

There is a tentative plan for follow up meeting(s) with the large group and/or with the smaller breakout groups. This work would delve into the actual problems that the administrators are facing and their efforts to classify the problem using the Cynefin Framework and consider the contributions of a cognitively diverse set of team members in seeking solutions to the problems. The next steps would be to continue along the processes of problem solving and decision-making to implement solutions and to ultimately reflect on the outcomes.

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KAI And Coping Skills As A Talent Retention Tool In The Life Sciences Industry - Early Experiences

*By Nick Hicks & Jennifer Chase
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Introduction

Talent retention has become a key metric for assessing a company's health, measurement of this trend though is not straightforward and life science companies (as do other industries) go about it in different ways (Talanian, Lawrence, & Haubenstock, 2019, November 1). In addition to the general economic restraints which all companies face to find and hold good talent, the life science industry is based around ground-breaking scientific discovery and cutting-edge technologies of so called "new frontier medicine" further reemphasizing the value of identification and retention. The innovation driven life science environment supposes that KAI would be a widely used instrument within the industry due to its appropriateness, simplicity, elegance and scientific robustness.

In addition, life sciences face very specific challenges such as drug pricing, access to medicines/services and in the case of medicines, often decade-long development times. To address these unique requirements, talent acquisition teams need to sieve through the life sciences talent pool for "hard skills" based around experience of achieved milestones and possessing advanced business/scientific or medical degrees (Talanian, Lawrence, & Haubenstock). The overarching economic pressures on talent retention forces the industry to move towards needing key soft skills in the talent mix. With little to no standard definition of what these soft skills are and how they can be measured (Talanian, Lawrence, & Haubenstock), it can be very challenging for talent acquisition leaders to launch search requirements around these required soft skills. Therefore, often soft skills are overlooked or neglected as companies make an offer to their preferred candidate.

To address this talent shortage, many retention strategies are now being investigated to improve retaining talent within all industries (Rhyne, 2022, August 14). To the best of our knowledge none use KAI, or discuss aspects of cognitive diversity. We have integrated a working hypothesis which involves an understanding and application of coping behaviour and cognitive alignment as an important selection and retention strategy (we see coping behaviours as a "soft skill"). If the cognitive fit (or alignment of soft skills of incoming candidate with the current leadership team) are considered as part of a company's leadership hiring strategy and retention programme, the innovation climate is enhanced, and retention is increased. We believe that making the right cognitive fit is sometimes as, or more important, than finding all the required hard skills which a candidate might be able to learn in the role.

How it works

Adaption-Innovation (A-I) theory states there is a range in which individuals feel comfortable when working with people scoring like themselves on the KAI continuum; the greater difference between individual's scores the more tension and conflict is likely to result without appropriate coping behaviour. Talented workers tend to leave when they become demotivated, or the

company fails to engage or support them. If a person's KAI score is different (10 points plus) to the average of the working environment within the company, then that person may become demotivated/conflict occurs over a long period.

A-I theory uses a theoretical construct that the cognitive climate of a company is defined as $N^P \times S^P$ (power of number times power of status). This suggests the problem-solving style of the CEO may be the most influential in determining the cognitive climate. Traditionally, KAI is not recommended to be used as part of an interview selection procedure as this raises potential ethical and validation concerns. But what is the most effective way to use KAI within an executive recruitment environment?

Results

We present the learnings from taking 15 KAIs amongst C Suite or other senior leaders within the life science industry over the past 12 months. The range was 101 – 139 with a median of 110. All had higher medical/scientific or business degrees and were working at a senior level (VP +) in either commercial or research or similar functions within the life science industries. All were offered to people who we had interviewed during our standard profile assessment interviews. None was being considered for a current assignment. All feedback was undertaken by Zoom. Total session length was approximately 2.5 hours.

- Nobody was aware of KAI or the concept of coping skills or cognitive climate. The application was immediately obvious upon debriefing, and all had real life examples from their current careers. More information on the innovation climate was often requested. Several mentioned that they would use the KAI in a future role.
- The KAI should not be used amongst “distressed” executives (i.e. those who are experiencing career difficulties in their current role) as we saw a tendency to mark responses leading to non-valid results.
- The online process of questionnaire completion can sometimes be awkward (complicated often when there are language options to select at the very start) as this means there must be someone from the company on hand to answer questions and navigate the process. Executives are very used to these types of assessments, and many want to fill it out by themselves at their own leisure.

Implications to date

- We recognise that this is observational and interpretive research with a small sample number but the findings provide useful insights into further areas for investigation.
- Coping behaviour can be seen as an important soft skill but requires context of a cognitive climate and cognitive diversity.
- The cognitive climate/requirement of a company and a position can be assumed from asking key questions designed to elicit innovative or adaptive tendencies of individuals and talent acquisition teams.
- A-I theory can provide important insights for job descriptions and candidate selection; KAI results should be used as a single but important data point amongst other considerations.

- At present, the KAI is best used as a form of personal development tool for interested leaders outside of a selection process, to provide insight when creating job descriptions and interview questions. There is potential for use as a Board development tool.

Future Plans And Advice To Others

Consider the following questions:

- How relevant is the cognitive climate within a company?
- What is the best way to measure the cognitive climate of a company?
- Identify practitioner experience of using KAI as an on boarding coaching tool for new executive hires?
- Can Dr Kirton's original research on the mis match between KAI scores and coping behaviour be accessed and republished with a contemporary focus?
- How best to use the constructs of the cognitive climate and coping behaviour in executive business practice?
- Case histories with a clear business deliverable?

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