



Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive

Faculty and Researcher Publications

Faculty and Researcher Publications Collection

2005-05

Comparing Appreciative Inquiry to a Problem-Centered Technique in Organizational Development: An Experiment

Sekerka, Leslie E.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10945/40263>



Calhoun is a project of the Dudley Knox Library at NPS, furthering the precepts and goals of open government and government transparency. All information contained herein has been approved for release by the NPS Public Affairs Officer.

**Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School
411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle
Monterey, California USA 93943**

<http://www.nps.edu/library>

Running head: Comparing Appreciative Inquiry

COMPARING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY TO A PROBLEM-CENTERED TECHNIQUE IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN EXPERIMENT

Leslie E. Sekerka

Naval Postgraduate School
Graduate School of Business & Public Policy
Ingersoll Hall, #316
Monterey, CA 93943
Phone: (831) 656-2811
Fax: (831) 656-3407
Email: lesekerk@nps.navy.mil

Anne M. Brumbaugh

Wake Forest University
Babcock Graduate School of Management
P. O. Box 7659 ~ 3134 Worrell Professional Center
Winston-Salem, NC 27109-7659
Phone: (336) 758-3499
Fax: (336) 758-4514
Email: anne.brumbaugh@mba.wfu.edu

José Antonio Rosa

Case Western Reserve University
Weatherhead School of Management
339 Peter B. Lewis Bldg.
10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44106-7235
Phone: (216) 368-6276
Fax: (216) 368-4785
Email: jar23@po.cwru.edu

David Cooperrider

Case Western Reserve University
Weatherhead School of Management
10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44106-7235
Phone: (216) 368-2121
Fax: (216) 368-0703
Email: david.cooperrider@weatherhead.cwru.edu

Submitted to: *International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior*

January 1, 2006

PLEASE DO NOT QUOTE WITHOUT PERMISSION OF AUTHORS

**COMPARING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY TO A PROBLEM-
CENTERED TECHNIQUE IN ORGANIZATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT: AN EXPERIMENT**

ABSTRACT

Scholars and practitioners typically view organizational development and change from two very different starting points. A diagnostic intervention begins with an examination of problems to assess and correct dysfunction. This process has a history of success, with decades of theory and practice to support its use. However, an alternative has emerged with popularity. Appreciative Inquiry targets the organization's strengths and draws upon them as a resource for change. An experiment was conducted to compare the first phase of each approach to understand how initial experiences in each process impacts employees. Results show Appreciative Inquiry leads to positive emotion, favorable views of self, and desired perceptions, but the diagnostic approach also leads to desired perceptions. Gender moderates effects in unexpected ways.

Keywords: Organizational development, organizational change, Appreciative Inquiry, gender, positive organizational scholarship

INTRODUCTION

Debate has been lively in the field of organizational development regarding what approaches are most suitable to instill workplace change. Participant engagement in organizational change programming or interventions is often broached from two very different approaches. Diagnostic or problem-centric techniques comprise one starting point and examine organizational dysfunction to assess and correct what is wrong. These techniques have a long history of success spanning several decades of research and practice. Recent research, however, has put forth compelling arguments for the idea that there are negative side effects of diagnostic approaches that prevent them from being fully effective, including distrust, power struggles, bureaucracy, and conflict (Mirvis & Berg, 1977; Quinn & Cameron, 1985). Appreciative Inquiry was developed as an alternative to the diagnostic approach. This process approach focuses on the positive core of the organization as the starting point for change, rather than on its current negative state (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999). Supporters of Appreciative Inquiry have provided generous anecdotal evidence as to the process's effectiveness in terms of enhancing creativity (Barrett, 1998), overcoming organizational inertia and stimulating team and professional development (Goldberg, 2001), creating strategy and implementation agendas (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001),

and garnering stakeholder engagement (Whitney & Cooperrider, 1998). However, little empirical evidence exists to establish its relative efficacy over diagnostic approaches (see Bushe & Coetzer, 1995; Jones, 1998).

To address this dearth of empirical work on Appreciative Inquiry and to bridge the gap between practice and theory (cf. Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001), we conducted a field experiment. The experiment compared the effects of the initial Discovery phase of Appreciative Inquiry with the initial problem identification phase of a diagnostic approach. We examined individual-level processes and perceived outcomes of organizational development and change, including emotions and workers' perceptions of their organization and themselves. Results provide fresh insight into how the two methods work. Appreciative Inquiry has some of the favorable effects on self and affect that its proponents allege. Likewise, the diagnostic approach we assessed has favorable effects on employee perceptions of organizational outcomes. Findings suggest that Appreciative Inquiry reduces negative affective consequences associated with change initiatives and that the diagnostic approach promotes more long term strategic thinking and relationship-related perceptions. We also found that participant gender and the gender construction of the dyads in which individuals participate moderate these outcomes in both predictable and unexpected ways. We

discuss the implications of our results in terms of the underlying processes and relative effectiveness of these two methods. The limitations of the current research and directions for future research are discussed.

Background

The field of organizational development has no lack of frameworks and models of change (see Weick, 1999, for a review). A common point of departure for many of these is for participants to identify problems within their organization. Once a problem is identified, participants generate alternatives to remedy the issue, select and implement a program of change, and assess its effectiveness. Despite decades of refinement to this diagnostic or problem-centric approach, resistance to change seems to remain inevitable and frequently threatens the success of change programs. This is particularly the case during the initial phases of the process (French & Bell, 1995).

We suggest that resistance arises from negativity inherent in diagnostic approaches, particularly in the early phases. These approaches emphasize, articulate, and communicate the organization's dysfunction to create dissonance intentionally among participants (Kotter, 1995). This dissonance creates a sense of urgency and exigency toward the problem at hand (Nadler & Tushman, 1989; Spector, 1989). Therefore,

people become motivated to reduce this dissonance through change. As a consequence, they are more prone to collaboration, cooperation, and participation within the change process than if this dissonance had not been created (Barczak, Smith, & Wilemon, 1987; Beer, 1980; Tichy & Ulrich, 1984).

However, this negative approach has also been shown to have detrimental effects on participants and organizational outcomes. Senge describes how the process of analyzing problems and identifying solutions in and of itself may stifle creativity and flexibility. Problems may inadvertently perpetuate problems by failing to address the antecedent conditions that caused them in the first place (Senge, 1990). Scholars have also documented that diagnostic approaches threaten individuals' self-efficacy and confidence by increasing uncertainty and emphasizing negativity (Gergen, 1990; 1994). Discomfort and fear become mechanisms to obtain employee compliance, but not necessarily internalized change (Ackerman, 1984; Dehler & Welsh, 1994). Resistance, defensiveness, and blaming may result (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Vince & Broussine, 1996). These outcomes may undermine the possibility of positive, sustainable organizational change (Bushe, 2001).

Appreciative Inquiry was developed as an alternative to overcome these negative consequences of diagnostic approaches. Rather

than concentrating on the organization's negative state, participants' early attention is focused on positive images of the organization and how they envision their ideal organization (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Participants are guided by a trained facilitator to envision a healthy, effective organization in which they take an active role in contributing to the organization's success. By focusing on an image of strength and efficacy, individuals anchor on positive outcomes (versus negative problems) in a process that Appreciative Inquiry proponents believe reduces the fear, stress, and anxiety that are commonly associated with organizational change (Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

Different Processes, Different Steps

Individual scholars and practitioners have advocated different processes and methods, each with its own different steps (e.g. Kotter's 12-step process, 1995; Jick's 10-step model, 1991; Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector's 6-step process, 1990; etc.). Many of these techniques begin with a starting point that presumes the organization is a problem to be solved. In contrast, the process of Appreciative Inquiry begins on a more positive note, avoiding the initial apprehension and tension generated by diagnostic approaches.

The Appreciative Inquiry process typically involves four phases: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny. In the first phase, participants

engage in an interview activity where they discuss the positive capacity of their organization with a co-worker. The dyads share recollections about when they felt most alive, energized, engaged, and effective within their organization. The goal of this process is not to ignore or hide problems, but rather to lay a positive foundation for change as a productive, rather than destructive, process. Next, participants are asked to envision a favorable end-state for their organization during the Dream Phase. This end-state includes, quite literally, a vision of a better world, a powerful purpose, and a compelling statement of strategic intent. This end-state provides a favorable goal toward which participants will work during the third phase. The intent of the third phase, the Design Phase, is to encourage participants to work together to form their shared positive vision, not to correct, solve, or cure a particular problem as is typical with diagnostic processes. The fundamental premise of this phase is that by recreating a more positive organization, participants will resolve the problem on which attention was initially focused as well as the antecedent causes of that problem. In many cases, the problem may no longer be relevant. Finally, in the Destiny Phase, participants work collaboratively to engage in activities to move all toward the positive shared end-state (See Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003, for a more complete description of the process). Table 1 summarizes and contrasts

the phases of Appreciative Inquiry with the steps of a diagnostic approach to instill organizational change.

TABLE 1. Appreciative Inquiry versus Diagnostic Approaches

	Appreciative Inquiry	Diagnostic
Step 1	Discovery Ground participants in positive frame of mind	Problem Identification Identify the causes of dysfunction
Step 2	Dream Generate possible favorable outcomes without regard to current dysfunction	Generate Solutions Generate possible remedies to the previously identified causes of dysfunction
Step 3	Design Identify shared end state that is more favorable than current state	Select Program of Change Select one or more activities designed to remedy dysfunction
Step 4	Destiny Identify and implement activities to achieve end state	Implement Change Implement activities to effect organizational change

Hypothesized Outcomes of Appreciative Inquiry

In the study presented, we examine the outcomes participants experience when engaging in the first phase of either an Appreciative Inquiry change exercise (the Discovery phase) or a diagnostic change exercise (the Problem Identification phase). We focus on the first phase of both change processes because as seen below, they set the emotional and attitudinal foundation on which the success of subsequent phases will be determined. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Appreciative Inquiry engenders positive emotional experiences that facilitate

organizational change. Two mechanisms related to this positive emotion are thought to underlie the effectiveness of Appreciative Inquiry: 1) an increase in positive emotions that arise during the process, and 2) the activation of a positive view of self among participants.

The Discovery phase of the Appreciative Inquiry process petitions individuals to recall a time when they felt particularly positive and effective within their organization. Case reports attest to Appreciative Inquiry's ability to generate positive emotion as an intended consequence. For example, George and McLean report that Appreciative Inquiry produced an environment of social helpfulness and pride during their work with a small business (George & McLean, 2002). Ryan and colleagues were able to transform passive negativity into excitement and interest and to create cultural reform at an urban school system (Ryan, Soven, Smither, Sullivan, & VanBuskirk 1999). Appreciative narrative was used to generate feelings of hope among community leaders of a Chicago area development project (Ludema, Wilmot, & Srivastva, 1997).

Despite the prevalence of cases demonstrating the effectiveness of Appreciative Inquiry in practice, little empirical evidence exists regarding the efficacy of the Discovery phase to generate positive affect and to facilitate change. The task that participants engage in during the

Discovery phase, however, is structured similarly to mood manipulations used in psychological research on affect and emotion (Clark & Isen, 1982) and should thus generate positive affect. Specifically, the Discovery task has participants retrieve and reactivate positively-valenced work-related memories. Prior work on schema-triggered affect has shown that the affect associated with such recollections is activated and re-experienced at the time of recall (Bower, 1981; Fiske, 1981; Palfai & Salovey, 1992). As a result, positive (negative) emotion should be higher (lower) for someone engaged in the Discovery phase of Appreciative Inquiry compared to the problem identification phase of a diagnostic approach due to the reactivation of positive affective associations. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. Compared to a diagnostic approach, Appreciative Inquiry will result in more positive and less negative emotion.

Similarly, the focus of the Appreciative Inquiry Discovery task on the self (versus on problems) is likely to activate positive aspects of the participants' self schemas as related to work within their organization (Johnson & Magaro, 1987; Kelvin, Goodyer, Teasdale, & Brechin, 1999; Sutton, Teasdale, & Broadbent, 1988). Content of one's current self-concept and salience of specific aspects of self have been shown to impact one's attitudes in a variety of contexts (Ibarra, 1999; Linnehan,

Chrobot-Mason, & Konrad, 2002) and behaviors (Aquino & Douglas, 2003; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). Again, practitioners of Appreciative Inquiry have observed similar self-related outcomes and find that employees are more proactive, take more initiative, and seek out additional ways to develop their knowledge within the context of the initial change exercise (Mohr, Smith, & Watkins, 2000; Watkins & Mohr, 2001). However, these favorable self-related outcomes have not been substantiated with empirical support. Consistent with these observations and the self schema theory underlying them, however, it is likely that Appreciative Inquiry's positive context and focus on self makes salient positive aspects of one's self concept. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2. Compared to a diagnostic approach, Appreciative Inquiry will make salient a more favorable view of self.

Importantly, Appreciative Inquiry does not purposively generate emotion and activate positive aspects of self without sound rationale. Prior research shows that positive emotion has a favorable impact on a number of desired organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), workplace attitudes (Ashkanasy, 2002; Lee & Allen, 2002; Mossholder, Settoon, Armenakis, & Harris, 2000), helping behaviors (George & Brief, 1992), social support (Staw, Sutton,

& Pellod, 1994), and task satisfaction (Kraiger, Billings, & Isen, 1989). Attention to positive aspects of self, including self-esteem and one's role in the organization, influences employees' effort exerted (Korman, 1977), attitudes toward the organization (Mone, 1994), and job satisfaction (Cote & Morgan, 2002). Thus, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3. Compared to a diagnostic approach, Appreciative Inquiry will result in more favorable organizational outcomes.

Gender and Appreciative Inquiry

Central to Appreciative Inquiry are concepts of open dialogue, relationship building, valuing strengths, sharing, and empowerment (see Anderson, Cooperrider, Gergen, Gergen, McNamee, & Whitney, 2001). With few exceptions, this approach is more consistent with what research suggests are feminine (versus masculine) management and communications styles. As a consequence, it is likely that the effects of Appreciative Inquiry will differ depending on participant gender. Prior research suggests that gender differences may be particularly marked with regard to Appreciative Inquiry's ability to empower participants in the change initiative and with regard to Appreciative Inquiry's impact on communications among participants.

Empowerment (i.e., having a sense of power, control, and self efficacy (Nelson & Quick, 2002), favorably impacts initiative,

effectiveness, and resiliency (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), effort (Gecas, 1989), employee performance (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984), job satisfaction (Bacharach, Bamberger, Conley, & Bauer, 1990), and affective commitment to the organization (Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002). Women are particularly responsive to efforts that increase their sense of power, performing better (Eylon & Bamberger, 2000), and particularly when empowerment is coupled with a sense of reciprocity (Darlington & Mulvaney, 2003). Women seem to perceive empowerment differently than men. For example, women feel more empowered in relational contexts where they have power to effect change collaboratively, while men feel more empowered in contexts where they have power over or in contrast to others (cf. Yoder & Kahn, 1992). Further, men respond more strongly to decreases (versus increases) in power, becoming less satisfied with their jobs when not empowered (Eylon & Bamberger, 2000).

Independent of gender, interactions that increase connection and engagement between and among employees and managers enhance employees' sense of empowerment (Kim, 2002). Such interactions, however, are hallmarks of female conversational styles. Females show more supportive behaviors in conversation with others (Johnson, Funk, & Clay-Warner, 1998) as exemplified by rapport talk, the goal of which is to build a bond between conversationalists (Tannen, 1990) rather than

to exchange facts or information (Grice, 1975). Such relationship building is more important among women than men (Belensky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), and interactions among women are marked by cooperation (Grant, 1988), politeness (Holmes, 1995), and emotion (Goldshmidt & Weller, 2000). Women tend to be more polite, offering more compliments (Newcombe & Arnkoff, 1979) and appreciation (Troemel-Ploetz, 1991) in an effort to reduce status inequalities and emphasize solidarity (Hannah & Murachver, 1999).

In contrast, male conversation style uses language to establish status and to convey or gain information (Aries & Johnson, 1983; Tannen, 1990). Men tend to organize around mutual activities rather than relationships (Aries & Johnson, 1983) and are more likely to brag, joust, and insult (Holmes, 1995) than women. Interestingly, when men enter into conversations with women, male-oriented patterns of dialogue predominate (Fishman, 1979). Ridgeway and colleagues suggest that differences in status between men and women influence these conversational dynamics within dyads and groups (e.g., Ridgeway, 1988; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989; Ridgeway, Johnson, & Diekema, 1994). Indeed, many studies show that dyadic conversations between females differ in a number of characteristics from conversations in which one or both participants are male (Leaper, 1998; Mulac, Studley, Wiemann, &

Bradac, 1987; Strough & Berg, 2000).

In summary, this brief literature review suggests that women may be more adept at and facile with the Appreciative Inquiry process than men because of its consistency with feminine management and conversational styles. Further, Appreciative Inquiry may have a greater impact on women compared to men because of the different impact that empowerment has on women as compared to men. However, we expect that these effects will only occur for women when they work with other women, since interactions with and among men tend to follow male conversational norms at odds with Appreciative Inquiry. Therefore, we hypothesize that the results proposed in Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 will be stronger for women, particularly when women work with other women.

Formally:

- Hypothesis 4. The favorable effects of Appreciative Inquiry on affect, view of self, and employee outcomes will be stronger for women in same-gender dyads than for men or for women in mixed-gender dyads.

METHODS

The study site was a large, government administered medical center located in a major east coast city (referred to hereafter as “the hospital”). The hospital provides acute care, routine medical service, and

nursing care to nearly 40,000 patients annually. Employees number over 1700, ranging from janitorial to highly skilled medical personnel. This government organization is particularly appropriate for a study regarding organizational change because research shows that public sector organizations such as this tend to be more hierarchical and bureaucratic (Scott & Falcone, 1998), to have less satisfied employees (Kurland & Egan 1999), and to be more resistant to change (Robertson & Seneviratne, 1995) compared to private organizations. Thus, this site provides a rigorous context in which to examine organizational change.

Two hundred and twenty-four employees participated in the study over a four-week period. One hundred eighty two were black, 24 were white, and 18 were of other ethnic groups; 124 were female. Age ranged from 25 to 70, with an average of 46.6 years. Employee positions in the sample ranged from janitorial to middle management. All participants had been with the company for at least one year, with the highest length of employment being 44 years; the average was 11.5 years. Years in their current position ranged from under one to 35, with an average of 7.0. Education ranged from 8th grade (the minimum required for participation in the study) to advanced graduate degree (PhD, MD, etc.), with a mode of some college or technical training beyond high school (45%). These sample characters are consistent with

those of the general population of employees at the hospital as well as the city in which the hospital is located. Subjects were recruited through notices in employee newsletters, flyers on bulletin boards, and an information table in the hospital lobby. Subjects were compensated \$35 for their participation in the study, which took approximately 60 minutes to complete. Due to missing data, observations from 219 participants are included in the analyses.

Experimental Manipulations

The purpose of this study was to examine empirically the outcomes commonly (and anecdotally) associated with the initial phases of a strength-based and problem-based approach to organizational change; we used Appreciative Inquiry to represent the strength-based condition and Diagnostic to represent the problem-based condition. For diagnostic approaches, the initial phase is often Problem Identification as we operationalize it in this study. For Appreciative Inquiry, it is the Discovery phase.

Two characteristics differentiate the Discovery phase of Appreciative Inquiry from the Problem Identification phase of diagnostic approaches to organizational change. One is the positive orientation of the process in which participants are asked to recall the best of their organizational experiences. In contrast, the Problem Identification phase

is oriented toward identifying problems and their negative consequences. Second is the Discovery phase's focus on self and the role the individual plays in effecting positive change for the organization, which is contrasted against a third person focus found in other approaches whereby others (including "the organization") are responsible for effecting change. To disentangle these two effects (orientation and change agent) and their respective contributions toward the success or failure of Appreciative Inquiry, two factors were used to effect the manipulation of Appreciative Inquiry versus a diagnostic approach.

The first factor, labeled "orientation," manipulates the task in which participants are asked to engage. Specifically, the *Appreciative Inquiry* condition of orientation manipulation was adapted from previous administrations of the Appreciative Inquiry process (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003) and asks participants to anchor on positive experiences they have had with the organization. In contrast, the *diagnostic* condition of the orientation manipulation reflects problem-solving goals by asking participants to think of a problem within the organization that needs to be resolved.

The second factor, labeled "change agent," manipulates the main actor(s) in the task. In the *self* condition of the change agent manipulation, the task description was worded in the first person (e.g.

“...for you”), directing participants to think of either a positive experience or problem that they themselves had experienced. In the *other* condition of the change agent manipulation, the task description was worded in the third person (e.g. “...for other employees”), directing participants to think of either a positive experience or problem that pertained to others. In this design, the Appreciative Inquiry/self cell represents the Appreciative Inquiry approach to organizational change, and the diagnostic/other cell represents the traditional diagnostic approach. The other cells are included in the design to discern the differential effects the orientation and change agent factors have on the efficacy of the Appreciative Inquiry approach. The entire manipulations are included in the Appendix.

Procedure

The study was conducted in a private area at the hospital where subjects worked. Upon arrival at the study area, subjects were paired with a randomly assigned partner (another subject) and directed to a private room to ensure their privacy and the confidentiality of their discussions. Subject pairs were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions and received materials pertaining to that condition. After completing an informed consent form, subjects proceeded to the experimental task as defined by their assigned

condition. Specifically, they read through the initial paragraph of the experimental manipulation and six association discussion questions at the same time that a trained moderator read the same materials to them. They were then directed by the moderator and the written instructions to take each discussion question in turn and talk with each other about each specific question. With the instructions completed and subjects' questions answered, the moderator left the subjects alone to conduct their discussion. After they finished their discussion, subjects completed the written study measures independently, turned in their experimental materials and received \$35.00 compensation.

Measures

After completing their initial discussion as directed in the instructions to effect the experimental manipulations, subjects completed the 20-item short form of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) to assess their affect immediately after the experimental manipulations (“Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, in the present moment”). The PANAS scale consists of 10 positive and 10 negative items, and in this administration, they loaded reliably on separate factors ($\alpha = .91$ for positive affect, $\alpha = .86$ for negative affect).

Next, they performed a sentence completion task to assess their

currently activated self concept (Forehand & Deshpande, 2001; Jackson, 1985; McGuire, McGuire, Child, and Fujioka, 1978). For this task, subjects completed up to 10 (the maximum number of spaces allotted by the protocol; McGuire et al 1978) sentences that began with “I am...” Each statement was coded as positive, negative, or neutral by two independent coders who agreed on 86% of these evaluations; discrepancies were resolved through discussion. The proportion of positive to total statements and the proportion of negative to total statements serve as two dependent variables (positive self and negative self) assessing the valence of one’s currently activated self concept.

As a final measure, subjects wrote a brief essay in response to the following probe: “Imagine the hospital now operating in the future. The year is currently 2010. When you now envision the hospital, what do you see? Please describe this vision.” The goal of this task was to assess perceived future organizational outcomes as envisioned by study participants. Based upon a review of organizational change literature in general and Appreciative Inquiry in particular, the authors identified desired outcomes associated with successful change efforts and developed items to be used to evaluate the participants’ essays for evidence of these outcomes. Three trained research assistants evaluated the essays independently on 7point scales for these items, and their

responses were averaged to yield a single measure for each. These perceived outcome measures were overall attitude toward the organization (positive/negative, 13 items, $\alpha = .98$), evidence of empathy toward others (4 items, $\alpha = .90$), descriptions of employee empowerment (3 items, $\alpha = .92$), overall creativity of the essay (low/high, 5 items, $\alpha = .75$), signs of collaboration among employees and/or patients (4 items, $\alpha = .95$), and long term strategic orientation (short term tactical/long term strategic, 3 items, $\alpha = .86$). See Table 2 for all items and loadings produced by factor analysis. The length (in words) of each essay was also recorded.

Finally, subjects provided background information including age, gender, and their level within the organization; answered one question regarding involvement with their job (adapted from MAOQ; Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983); and responded to a single manipulation check question.

Table 2. Perceived Outcome Items

Item	Factor Loadings				Long Term Strategic Orientation
	Attitude toward Org.	Collab.	Empathy	Creativity	
The author/author's...					
...attitude toward org was very unfavorable/very favorable	0.95	0.13	0.13	0.03	0.07
...attitude toward the org was very bad/very good	0.94	0.14	0.13	0.02	0.07
...overall attitude was very bad/very good	0.94	0.14	0.13	0.03	0.04
...overall attitude was very unfavorable/very favorable	0.94	0.14	0.13	0.06	0.04
...attitude toward the org was very negative/very positive	0.94	0.15	0.14	0.04	0.11
...overall attitude was very unfavorable/very favorable	0.94	0.14	0.14	0.03	0.06
...sees the org as very effective	0.79	0.16	0.10	0.34	0.08
...sees the org as providing high quality medical care	0.79	0.14	0.12	0.31	0.11
...sees the org as very efficient	0.79	0.12	0.05	0.35	0.08
...expresses a desire to see the org. grow and do well	0.79	0.15	0.28	0.25	-0.00
...wants the org to succeed in achieving its vision	0.76	0.18	0.31	0.27	-0.02
...sees the org as providing a pleasant environment	0.73	0.28	0.34	0.22	-0.09
...conveys a vision that goes beyond current boundaries	0.69	0.01	-0.00	0.37	0.19
...sees shared responsibilities	0.23	0.89	0.23	0.17	-0.06
...sees the org working in groups, cooperatives, or teams	0.22	0.88	0.25	0.09	-0.07
...shares ideas that reflect cooperation	0.30	0.87	0.29	0.09	-0.11
...sees shared responsibilities	0.30	0.79	0.12	0.26	-0.06
...expresses care and compassion about others	0.29	0.18	0.84	0.08	-0.02
...makes comments associated with emotion	0.14	0.20	0.80	0.18	-0.05
...understands other people's worldviews	0.20	0.26	0.70	0.30	0.13
...has a primary focus outside the self	0.28	0.26	0.67	0.29	0.09
...provides detailed descriptions and elaborates on ideas	0.19	0.19	0.27	0.69	0.19
...uses colorful language and imagery	0.16	0.17	0.14	0.64	-0.02
...expresses unusual or different ideas	0.20	-0.08	-0.03	0.60	0.08
...show the ability to seek deeper meaning	0.08	0.22	0.35	0.58	0.16
...asks questions	0.11	0.16	0.24	0.56	0.11
... reflects a long term perspective?	0.13	-0.03	0.05	0.19	0.94
... reflects a short term perspective?	0.02	-0.10	-0.00	0.05	0.79
... reflects a strategic focus?	0.13	-0.06	0.03	0.12	0.74

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The design of this experiment is a 2 (orientation: Appreciative Inquiry versus diagnostic) X 2 (change agent: self versus other) X 2

(subject gender: female versus male) X 2 (dyad: same versus mixed gender) fully crossed, between-subjects experimental design. In all, there were 45 female-only dyads, 33 male-only dyads, and 34 mixed-gender dyads. Initial analyses included a factor to control for pairs of subjects nested within each dyad condition. However, this factor was not significant in any analysis, and was omitted in favor of a more parsimonious model. Similarly, the 4-way interaction was not significant in any analysis, and it was also omitted from subsequent analyses. Therefore, the results of a model including main effects, all two-way, and all three-way interactions between these factors are reported. Age, salary, and job involvement were occasionally significant as main effects in some analyses, and therefore were included as covariates in all analyses. When not a dependent variable of interest, the length (in words) of the final essay is also included as a covariate controlling for task involvement. These four covariates did not systematically change the outcomes of hypothesis testing, and are omitted from further discussion.

All effects including the orientation factor focal to our hypotheses are discussed. Hypotheses are evaluated with a priori contrasts. Unless otherwise indicated, model degrees of freedom are (18,218), and contrast and effects degrees of freedom are (1,218). Means are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Cell Means

Effect	Moderator	Orientation X Change Agent			
		Diagnostic		Appreciative Inquiry	
		Other	Self	Other	Self
Positive Affect	Mixed Dyad	3.38	3.37	3.38	3.83
	Same Dyad	3.09	3.49	3.33	3.07
Positive Self		0.58	0.53	0.56	0.65
Negative Self		0.10	0.16	0.08	0.05
Collaboration	Mixed Dyad	2.32	1.64	1.55	1.64
	Same Dyad	1.54	1.69	1.58	1.56
Empathy	Mixed Dyad	2.81	2.41	1.93	2.19
	Same Dyad	2.19	2.20	2.27	2.03
Empowerment	Mixed Dyad	2.48	1.52	1.55	1.88
	Same Dyad	1.52	1.97	1.63	1.77
Creativity	Female Subject	1.87	1.90	1.86	1.68
	Male Subject	1.65	1.59	1.56	1.89

**TABLE 3. Cell Means
(continued)**

Effect	Moderator(s)	Orientation	
		Diagnostic	Appreciative Inquiry
Negative Affect	Mixed Dyad		
	Female Subject	1.22	1.37
	Male Subject	1.61	1.23
	Same Dyad		
	Female Subject	1.31	1.22
	Male Subject	1.20	1.40
# words	Female Subject	62.30	58.70

	Male Subject	46.98	53.40
Attitude toward Organization	Mixed Dyad	3.97	3.51
	Same Dyad	3.36	3.52
Long Term Strategic	Mixed Dyad	3.79	3.55
	Same Dyad	3.37	3.53

NOTE: Bold cells indicate cell driving significant effect. Minimum cell size is 12. There are no significant differences in standard deviations within an effect across cells.

To assess the success of the two manipulations, subjects were asked at the end of the study to choose one of four statements that “best captures what you were asked to think about,” each reflecting one of the four possible cells to which they had been assigned. Fully 89.1% of respondents recognized correctly their orientation manipulation ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 137.14, p < .01$), and 81.9% recognized correctly their change agent manipulation ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 90.66, p < .01$). Only 4.5% failed to recognize both correctly ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 10.09, p < .01$). Therefore, we are confident that both manipulations worked as expected.

Hypothesized Results

Hypotheses 1 and 4 predicted that the Appreciative Inquiry orientation with the self as change agent would yield more positive affect and less negative affect than other conditions, and that this effect would be stronger for women talking with other women during the study. The overall model was significant for positive affect ($F = 1.75, p < .03$), and

although the anticipated orientation by change agent interaction was not significant ($p > .20$), its three-way interaction with dyad was significant ($F = 4.36, p < .04$). Interestingly, both the highest and lowest ratings of positive affect occurred in the Appreciative Inquiry/self cells. Positive affect was highest in this cell when subjects were in a mixed dyad ($M = 3.83$) compared to a same gender dyad ($M = 3.07, F = 7.79, p < .01$). Positive affect was higher in the Appreciative Inquiry/self/mixed cell than the average of the remaining seven cells ($M = 3.49, F = 4.89, p < .03$).

Though the overall model did not reach significance for negative affect ($F = 1.34, p < .16$),ⁱ the three way interaction between orientation, subject gender, and dyad was significant ($F = 9.06, p < .01$). Examination of means shows that there were no differences in negative affect across Appreciative Inquiry cells ($ps > .20$). However, men working in a mixed dyad with women in the diagnostic condition had higher negative emotion ($M = 1.61$) than in the other three diagnostic cells ($M = 1.25, F = 8.61, p < .01$) and higher than men working with women in the Appreciative Inquiry condition ($M = 1.23, F = 5.08, p < .03$). Results partially support Hypothesis 1 in that the highest positive affect occurred in an Appreciative Inquiry cell and the highest negative affect occurred in a diagnostic orientation cell. However, gender and

dyad moderated these effects in ways that ran counter to Hypothesis 4.

Results provide support for Hypothesis 2 which proposed that Appreciative Inquiry would increase the salience of positive aspects of self. For positive self, the overall model did not reach significance ($F = 1.36, p < .16$) and the two way interaction was marginal ($F = 2.89, p < .12$).ⁱⁱ However, a priori contrasts show that as expected, subjects had a more positive view of self in the Appreciative Inquiry/self cell ($M = .65$) than in the other three cells ($M = .56, F = 3.85, p < .05$). For negative self, the overall model was significant ($F = 2.04, p < .01$) as was the anticipated two way interaction ($F = 4.20, p < .04$). As expected, subjects had a less negative view of self in the Appreciative Inquiry/self cell ($M = .05$) than in the other three cells ($M = .12, F = 6.05, p < .01$). Further, diagnostic conditions (irrespective of change agent) yielded a more negative view of self ($M = .13$) than the Appreciative Inquiry conditions combined ($M = .06, F = 8.12, p < .01$). None of these effects were moderated by subject gender or dyad, counter to Hypothesis 4.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 predicted that Appreciative Inquiry would lead to more favorable outcomes than the diagnostic approach, with gender (Hypothesis 4) moderate these effects. The results for perceived outcomes are mixed with regard to these hypotheses. The results for word count and collaboration were generally consistent with

expectations. Word count serves as an indicator of task involvement, with people who are more engaged and involved with the exercise presumed to write more than people who are not. Indeed, the overall model for word count was significant ($F_{(17,218)} = 3.49, p < .01$), with the interaction between orientation and subject gender approaching significance ($M = 62.61, F = 3.18, p < .08$). Men wrote less in the diagnostic condition ($M = 46.98$) than in the Appreciative Inquiry condition ($M = 53.40, F = 3.65, p < .06$) and less than women in the diagnostic condition ($M = 62.30, F = 6.85, p < .01$). Women wrote the same amount irrespective of whether in the diagnostic or Appreciative Inquiry conditions ($M = 58.70, p > .20$). Men in the Appreciative Inquiry condition did not differ in word count from women in the Appreciative Inquiry condition ($p > .20$). For creativity (overall model $F = 8.17, p < .01$), the three way interaction between orientation, change agent, and subject gender was significant ($F = 5.40, p < .02$). Contrasts show that men were most creative in the Appreciative Inquiry/self condition ($M = 1.89$) compared to the other three cells ($M = 1.60, F = 3.80, p < .05$), but that women were least creative in that cell ($M = 1.68$) compared to the other three cells ($M = 1.88, F = 3.94, p < .05$).

Results for collaboration, empathy, empowerment, attitude toward the organization, and long term strategic orientation ran counter

to expectations, with similar effects driven by the three way interaction between orientation, change agent, and dyad. For collaboration (overall model $F = 2.11, p < .01$), several related effects approached significance, including the main effect of orientation ($F = 3.10, p < .08$), the interaction between orientation and dyad ($F = 2.77, p < .10$), the interaction between change agent and dyad ($F = 2.87, p < .09$), and the interaction among all three ($F = 2.84, p < .09$). Contrasts show that subjects' essays revealed more collaboration in the diagnostic/other/mixed cell ($M = 2.32$) compared to the other seven cells ($M = 1.60, F = 14.57, p < .01$). Results for empathy (overall model $F = 5.56, p < .01$) show a significant interaction between orientation and dyad ($F = 10.00, p < .01$) in which empathy was higher in diagnostic/mixed cell ($M = 2.64$) than in the other three cells ($M = 2.16, F = 11.89, p < .07$). This effect was moderated by a marginally significant interaction with change agent ($F = 2.73, p < .10$) and examination of the means reveals that the two way interaction was driven by the diagnostic/other/mixed cell ($M = 2.81$), which was significantly different from the other seven cells combined ($M = 2.18, F = 18.76, p < .01$). The model for empowerment was significant (overall model $F = 3.57, p < .01$), and the significant interaction between orientation and change agent ($F = 3.65, p < .06$) was moderated by dyad ($F = 8.19, p <$

.01). Empowerment was highest in diagnostic/other/mixed cell ($M = 2.48$) compared to the other seven cells ($M = 1.74$, $F = 16.48$, $p < .01$), higher than the next highest diagnostic/self/same cell ($M = 1.97$, $F = 5.27$, $p < .02$), and higher than the remaining diagnostic cells ($M = 1.52$, $F = 14.80$, $p < .01$). There were no differences in empowerment among the four Appreciative Inquiry conditions ($ps > .20$).

For attitude toward the organization (overall model $F = 2.57$, $p < .01$), results show a significant interaction between orientation and dyad ($F = 6.75$, $p < .01$) such that attitude toward the organization was highest ($M = 3.97$) in diagnostic/mixed cell compared to the other three cells ($M = 3.45$, $F = 7.84$, $p < .01$). Results for long term strategic orientation were similar (overall model $F = 3.49$, $p < .01$), with the interaction between orientation and dyad approaching significance ($F = 3.46$, $p < .06$). Long term strategic orientation was higher in the diagnostic/mixed cell ($M = 3.79$) compared to the diagnostic/same cell ($M = 3.37$, $F = 3.33$, $p < .07$) and marginally different from the other three combined ($M = 3.46$, $F = 2.94$, $p < .09$).ⁱⁱⁱ

DISCUSSION

In general, our hypotheses received mixed support. More important, however, are the insights gleaned regarding the relative effectiveness of Appreciative Inquiry and diagnostic approaches to

organizational change. Subject gender and the gender constitution of the dyads in which subjects participated, influenced the effectiveness of each approach.

As observed by Appreciative Inquiry practitioners, higher positive affect was generated by the Appreciative Inquiry/self condition, but only for people participating with a partner of the opposite sex. Appreciative Inquiry garnered no more positive affect for people working with same gendered partners. The conversational challenge (relatively speaking) of working with an opposite gender partner may move participants out of their typical modes of conversing, allowing the Appreciative Inquiry approach to work more effectively in terms of affect. Further, results for affect show that the Appreciative Inquiry approach did not reduce negative affect per se, but that men working with women in a diagnostic problem identification task generated more negative affect than other conditions. This result represents, perhaps, a traditional instantiation of the diagnostic approach in which negative affect arises according to previous research. However, negative affect was attenuated for men working with women and taking an Appreciative Inquiry approach, suggesting that Appreciative Inquiry might avoid situations in which higher negative affect is likely to occur.

Results for salient view of self were straightforward. Consistent

with expectations, the Appreciative Inquiry/self combination led to the most positive and least negative views of self. In contrast, the diagnostic conditions led to more a negative view of self, particularly when attention was focused on the self (versus others) when identifying problems in the organization.

Results for perceived outcomes were least consistent with our hypotheses but perhaps most interesting with regard to understanding how the Discovery versus Problem Identification phases operate. Specifically, Appreciative Inquiry seemed particularly effective at encouraging men to engage with the task and to broaden their thinking as indicated by the word count and creativity measures. Because the Appreciative Inquiry task contrasts with their typical mode of communication, it may have garnered deeper thinking and engagement that will lead to better outcomes in subsequent phases of the change process. In contrast, for women, the Appreciative Inquiry task led to less creativity, perhaps because of its consistency with their typical modes of conversing. Counter to our hypotheses, the diagnostic approach in mixed dyads (typical of current organizational demography) generated more evidence of collaboration, empathy, empowerment, long term strategic orientation, and positive attitude toward the organization. In same gendered dyads, however, results for the diagnostic approach were no

different from those found with Appreciative Inquiry.

In summary, two unique insights emerge from these results. First, our findings suggest that encouraging men to think in a manner to which they are perhaps unaccustomed may cause them to engage more with the change task. Second, problem identification clearly leads to desired organizational outcomes vis-à-vis others. The diagnostic/other focus may reinforce solidarity among participants against a generic other (cf. Abrams and Hogg, 2000), which in turn heightens the more collective qualities of empathy, collaboration, and empowerment. Further, the concrete action of identifying and articulating problems as we operationalized the first step of the diagnostic approach may lead to more favorable attitude toward the organization and greater long term/strategic orientation by making salient to participants that change is on the horizon. Whether these results remain in later steps of diagnostic approach or arise in later phases of Appreciative Inquiry needs to be addressed in future research.

Summary of Findings

The primary objective in this research was to conduct a controlled assessment of Appreciative Inquiry relative to diagnostic approaches to change on organizational outcomes of interest during the Discovery and Problem Identification phases. Results provide empirical

support for the effectiveness of Appreciative Inquiry in promoting positive self-image and affect among participants, but also reveal important factors (e.g. gender composition of participant groups) that can curtail or redirect the influence of the Appreciative Inquiry process. Results further show that both Appreciative Inquiry and diagnostic methods can be beneficial and suggest that combining elements of each approach may enhance organizational outcomes more than the independent implementation of either alone.

The most pronounced influence of Appreciative Inquiry is on organizational members' view of self, whereby Appreciative Inquiry leads to a view of self as efficacious and capable while at the same time reducing employee focus on negative aspects of the self which may have detrimental effects on performance. Closely aligned with more positive views of self are changes in participant emotion. Appreciative Inquiry reduces significantly the incidence of negative affect among male employees, and leads to increases in positive affect which are particularly pronounced in mixed-gender dyads. Given the pervasiveness of mixed gender workgroups in modern organizations, the fact that Appreciative Inquiry helps to elevate positive affect and reduce negative affect (and, by implication, their attendant desirable outcomes) is an attractive characteristic..

At the same time, we find that diagnostic methods can engender several desired outcomes, particularly as the change agent focus shifts from self-improvement (under the self condition) to organizational change (under the other condition). We find that collaboration, empathy, and sense of empowerment all improve when employees are asked to focus on problems that need resolving within their organization. By utilizing a third person perspective to focus participant attention on issues that threaten organizational effectiveness, diagnostic approaches appear to cause participants to take on an “us versus them” perspective. In effect, employees may believe that they can band together to save the organization in spite of the behaviors of others. The fact that these effects are found in mixed-gender dyads is again encouraging given current organizational trends.

In addition, we find that the diagnostic approach leads to better attitudes toward the organization and to improved assimilation of a long term strategic perspective, even among employees whose jobs seldom have direct long term strategic implications. The end result of taking a diagnostic approach in mixed-gender dyads is that employees feel better about their ability to make things happen, about working with others to improve their organizations, and about their organizations and the future in general.

Implications for Change

The most obvious and important implications of this research regard the creation of hybrid approaches to organizational change. Clearly, our results suggest that the first phase of each approach has strengths that may be leveraged by those managing and overseeing change within their organizations. Appreciative Inquiry with a self focus does engender more favorable emotional responses than diagnostic approaches, does make salient positive aspects of participants self concepts, and does enhance engagement and creativity among men who might exhibit lower levels of each in a more traditional change exercise. On the other hand, the dissonance generated by the problem solving phase of diagnostic approaches, which researchers and practitioners have argued motivates people to move forward with change, does appear to mobilize participants against an unnamed other, resulting in higher relationship-related outcomes. In addition, the early focus on discrete problems under diagnostic approaches enhances participants' view of the organization and long term strategic perspectives. Consistent with literature on attribution theory (cf. Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), the approaches might be combined by leveraging Appreciative Inquiry positive focus on the self to empower individual employees in the change process and by leveraging diagnostic approaches' more negative focus

on problems away from self to give participants a common enemy around which to rally.

One way to leverage the respective contributions of these approaches may be to “spiral” between them. For example, a change initiative might begin with Appreciative Inquiry’s Discovery phase to reduce the stress associated with uncertainty of change, to activate positive efficacious self concepts among participants, and to encourage alternative forms of engagement and creativity, particularly among men. Then, a more problem-focused exercise consistent with diagnostic approaches might follow to harness the positive energy and engagement generated by Discovery into an ethnocentric sense of in-group power and efficacy mobilized against organizational dysfunction. The process could spiral back to the Dream phase to reinforce the positivity initially generated by Discovery and to complement problem identification with a more holistic and favorable view of the organization as it may become. In effect, a hybrid approach could continue to spiral between Appreciative Inquiry’s tendency to ‘build up’ the positive big picture in order to maintain positive emotions and to keep the negative side effects of diagnostic methods in check. Then the practitioner could weave in diagnostic methods, leveraging their function to ‘break down’ the change process into smaller discrete steps to ensure that modifications made to

the organization address problems that caused the organization to undertake a program of change in the first place. Clearly, thinking about such hybrid change processes provides much fodder for future research.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Limitations of our study also provide ample opportunities for future research. Clearly, the primary limitation of our experiment is that it focused solely on the first phases of the change processes (Discovery for Appreciative Inquiry and Problem Identification for diagnostic). It is highly likely that the unique characteristics of subsequent phases of each method will lead to different outcomes from those demonstrated in our study of the first phase. Therefore, further research comparing these two methods in carefully controlled experiments is warranted to identify the mechanisms by which each step of each method contributes to successful organizational change. It is reasonable to expect, for example, that similar results regarding positive affect and salient self concept will occur during the Dream phase of AI given the positivity that arises from the overall Appreciative Inquiry approach. However, the negativity of the diagnostic approach may prove more effective in terms of actionable results regarding the breadth and depth of possible solutions generated and the selection of tactics to be implemented (cf. Schwarz & Bless, 1991; Sinclair & Mark, 1995).

Another limitation of the study is the greatly abbreviated administration of the Discovery and Problem Identification phases and the absence of moderator influence. In an actual implementation of Appreciative Inquiry, the Discovery phase typically lasts for several hours during which a moderator is present and active the entire time. Our need for control and consistency across conditions in this experimental context turned the initial phase into a self-administered exercise for the participants, which is unconventional in organizational change management irrespective of the method. Though the constraints imposed to obtain comparable experimental data for both methods have allowed us to isolate the mechanisms by which each operates, they have also altered the naturalistic context in which both Appreciative Inquiry and diagnostic methods are usually implemented. Therefore, additional rigorous comparison of Appreciative Inquiry and diagnostic approaches in controlled naturalistic settings, perhaps through pseudo-experiments at similar but independent sites, would be a significant contribution to further detailing the influences and interactions that our research has uncovered.

Additional limitations stem from the complexity and dynamism of the mechanisms by which Appreciative Inquiry is thought to operate. Constructs such as empathy, collaboration, and creativity are difficult to

contextualize and measure. In this study, we looked for evidence of these constructs in the written stories of our participants. Additional research might utilize preexisting scales, look for behavioral evidence of these traits, or evaluate participants' perceptions after change has occurred. Further, the literature on Appreciative Inquiry and organizational change did not prepare us for the counterintuitive finding that showed that diagnostic methods enhanced empathy, collaboration, and empowerment. More detailed studies and finely tuned measures may yield even more powerful insights into the root causes of these relationship-based constructs. Specifically, though we offer attributional (e.g. Appreciative Inquiry/self allows participants to take credit for what is good in their organization and diagnostic/other allows them to blame dysfunction on generic others) and social psychological (e.g. in-group cohesion against out-group causes of problems) explanations for these results, other processes that we neither measured nor considered may underlie our results.

The research has taken a first step toward understanding how individual-level mechanisms driving practitioner success with the Appreciative Inquiry approach to organizational change differ from those that underlie long-standing diagnostic approaches. Insights generated by this research introduce the possibility that these approaches may be used

in a more complementary fashion than previously thought.

NOTES

ⁱ Because we are evaluating a priori contrasts, a significant omnibus F test is not required (Maxwell & Delaney, 1990, p. 130). Further, a more parsimonious model including only orientation, subject gender, dyad, and their interactions was significant ($F(11,218) = 1.95, p < .04$) with the three way interaction remaining significant ($F = 9.13, p < .01$). Tests of the contrasts remained significant under this model.

ⁱⁱ Again, a significant omnibus F test is not required to test a priori contrasts (Maxwell & Delaney, 1990, p. 130). A more parsimonious model including only orientation, change agent, and their interactions was significant ($F(8,218) = 2.38, p < .02$) with the two way interaction approaching significance ($F = 3.20, p < .08$). Tests of the contrasts remained significant under this model.

ⁱⁱⁱ A logical next step in terms of analysis is to evaluate whether affect and salient self concept mediate the impact of change approach on perceived organizational outcomes, and whether this mediation is moderated by any of our experimental factors (moderated mediation). Indeed, we performed these analyses following the instructions outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). Results showed some support for the direct impact of affect and salient self concept on organizational outcomes consistent with the premise of Appreciative Inquiry that more positivity would lead to more favorable outcomes. Though no results ran counter to this premise, support in favor of it was weak at best. Further, we found no support for mediation: significant effects of our four factor experimental design were not attenuated when affect and salient self concept were included in the models. Because some analyses were suggestive of mediation (the main effects of affect and salient self concept on outcomes) but others were not (mediation regressions), we draw no concrete conclusions from these results as to whether affect and salient self concept are mediators of the Appreciative Inquiry processes on relevant outcomes.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. A. (2000). *Social identity and social cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.
- Ackerman, L. S. (1984). The flow state: A new view of organizations and managing. In J. D. Adams (Ed.), *Transforming work: A collection of organizational transformation readings*: 114-137. Alexandria, VA: Miles River Press.
- Anderson, H., Cooperrider, D. L., Gergen, K. J., Gergen, M., McNamee, S., & Whitney, D. (2001). *The appreciative organization*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institution Publishing.
- Aquino, K., & Douglas, S. (2003). Identity threat and antisocial behavior in organizations: The moderating effects of individual differences, aggressive modeling, and hierarchical status. *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, 90 (1): 195-208.
- Aries, E. J., & Johnson, F. L. (1983). Close friendship in adulthood: Conversational content between same-sex friends. *Sex-Roles*, 9 (12): 1183-1196.
- Ashkanasy, N. M. (2002). Studies of cognition and emotion in organisations: Attribution, affective events, emotional intelligence and perception of emotion. *Australian Journal of Management*, 27: 11-20.
- Bacharach, S. B., Bamberger, P., Conley, S. C., and Bauer, S. (1990). The dimensionality of decision participation in educational organizations: The value of multi-domain educative approach. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26: 126-167.
- Barczak, G., Smith, C., & Wilemon, D. (1987). Managing large-scale

organizational change. *Organizational Dynamics*, 16 (2): 23-35.

Barge, J. K., & Oliver, C. (2003). Working with appreciation in managerial practice. *Academy of Management Review*, 28 (1): 124-142.

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51: 1173-1182.

Barrett, F. J. (1998). Creativity and improvisation in jazz and organizations: Implications for organizational learning. *Organization Science*, 9 (5): 605-622.

Beer, M. (1980). *Organization change and development: A Systems View*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman & Co.

Beer, M., Eisenstat, R. A., & Spector, B. (1990). Why change programs don't produce change. *Harvard Business Review*, November-December: 5-12.

Belensky, M. F., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N., and Tarule, J. (1986). *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Bower, G. H. (1981). Mood and memory. *American Psychologist*, 36: 129-148.

Bushe, G. R. (2001). Meaning making in teams: Appreciative inquiry with pre-identity and post-identity groups. In Fry, R., Whitney, D., Seiling, J., & Barrett, F. (Eds.). *Appreciative inquiry and organizational transformation: Reports from the field*: 39-63. Westport, CT: Quorum Books/Greenwood Pub. Group, Inc.

Bushe, G. R., & Coetzer, G. (1995). Appreciative inquiry as a team-development intervention: A controlled experiment. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 31(1): 13-30.

Cammann, C., Fichman, M., Jenkins, D., & Klesh, J. R. (1983). The Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire. In S. E. Seashore, E. E. Lawler III, P. H. Mirvis, and C. Cammann, *Assessing Organizational Change: A Guide to Methods, Measures, and Practice*: 71-138. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Clark, M. & Isen, A. M. (1982). Toward understanding the relationship between feeling states and social behavior. In A. Hastorf & A. Isen (Eds.), *Cognitive Social Psychology*: 73-108. New York: Elsevier.

Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In R. W. Woodman & W. A. Pasmore (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 1: 129-169. Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (1999). Appreciative Inquiry: A positive revolution in change. In P. Holman & T. Devane (Eds.). *The change handbook: Group methods for shaping the future*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney, D., & Stavros, J. M. (2003). *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The first in a series of AI workbooks for leaders of change*. Bedford Heights, OH: Lakeshore Publishers.

Cote, S., & Morgan, L. M. (2002). A longitudinal analysis of the association between emotion regulation, job satisfaction, and intentions to quit. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23 (8): 947-962.

Darlington, P. S. E., & Mulvaney, B. M. (2003). *Women, power, and ethnicity: Working toward reciprocal empowerment*. New York, NY: Haworth Press, Inc.

Dehler, G. E., & Welsh, M. A. (1994). Spirituality and organizational transformation: Implications for the new management paradigm. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 9 (6): 17-26.

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53 (1): 109-132.

Elsbach, K. D., & Bhattacharya, C. B. (2001). Defining who you are by what you're not: Organizational disidentification and the National Rifle Association. *Organization Science*, 12 (4): 393-413.

Eylon, D., & Bamberger, P. (2000). Empowerment cognitions and empowerment acts: Recognizing the importance of gender. *Group & Organization Management*, 25 (4): 354-373.

Fishman, P. M. (1979). Interaction: the work women do. *Social Problems*, 24: 397-406.

- Fiske, S.T. (1981). Schema-triggered affect: Application to social perception. In M.S. Clark & S.T. Fiske (Eds.), *Affect and Cognition*: 55-78. Hillsdale: Erlbaum.
- Forehand, M. R. & Deshpandé, R. (2001). What we see makes us who we are: priming ethnic self-awareness and advertising response. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38 (3): 336-348.
- French, W. L., & Bell, C. H. (1995). *Organizational Development: Behavioral science interventions for organization improvement*, 4th Ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Gecas, V. (1989). The social psychology of self-efficacy. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 15: 291-316.
- George, J. M. & Brief, A. P. (1992). Feeling good and doing good: A conceptual analysis of the mood at work and organizational-spontaneity relationship. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112 (2): 310-329.
- George, M. & McLean, A. (2001). Putting the client before the horse: Working with Appreciative inquiry in a small business. In R. Fry, F. Barrett, J. Seiling, and D. Whitney (Eds.), *Appreciative inquiry and organizational transformation reports from the field*: 27-38. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.
- Gergen, K. J. (1990). Affect and organization in postmodern society. In S. Srivastva and D. L. Cooperrider (Eds.), *Appreciative management and leadership: The power of positive thought and action in organizations*. 153-174. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gergen, K. J. (1994). *Realities and relationship: Soundings in social construction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Goldberg, R. A. (2001). Implementing a professional development system through appreciative inquiry. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 22: 56-61.
- Grant, J. (1988). Women as managers: What they can offer to organizations. *Organizational Dynamics*, 16 (3): 56-63.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics, 3, Speech Acts*, 41-58. New York: Academic Press.

Hannah, A., & Murachver, T. (1999). Gender and conversational style as predictors of conversational behavior. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 18 (2): 153-174.

Holmes, J. (1995). *Women, Men and Politeness*. London: Longman.

Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44 (4): 764-792.

Jackson, L. A. (1985). Self-conceptions and gender role: The correspondence between gender-role categorization and open-ended self-descriptions. *Sex-Roles*, 13 (9-10): 549-566.

Jick, T. (1991). *Implementing Change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Johnson, C., S. J. Funk, & J. Clay-Warner. (1998). Organizational contexts and conversation patterns. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 61 (4): 361-371.

Johnson, G. & Leavitt, W. (2001). Building on success: Transforming organizations through an appreciative inquiry. *Public Personnel Management*, 30 (1): 129-137.

Johnson, M. H., & Magaro, P. A. (1987). Effects of mood and severity on memory processes in depression and mania. *Psychological Bulletin*, 101 (1): 28-40.

Jones, D. A. (1998). A field experiment in appreciative inquiry. *Organization Development Journal*. 16 (4), 69-79.

Kelvin, R. G., Goodyer, I. M., Teasdale, J. D., & Brechin, D. (1999). Latent negative self-schema and high emotionality in well adolescents at risk for psychopathology. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 40 (6): 959-968.

Kim, S. (2002). Participative management and job satisfaction: Lessons for management leadership. *Public Administration Review*, 62 (2): 231-241.

Korman, A. K. (1977). *Organizational behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kotter, J. P. (1995). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, March-April: 59-67.

Kraiger, K., Billings, R. S., & Isen, A. M. (1989). The influence of positive affective states on task perceptions and satisfaction. *Organization Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, 44 (1): 12-25.

Kurland, N. B. & Egan, T. D. (1999). Public v. private perceptions of formalization, outcomes, and justice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 9 (3): 437-458.

Leaper, C. (1998). Decision-making processes between friends: Speaker and partner gender effects. *Sex Roles*, 39 (1-2): 125-133.

Lee, K., & Allen, N. J. (2002). Organizational citizenship behavior and workplace deviance: The role of affect and cognitions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87 (1): 131-142.

Linnehan, F., Chrobot-Mason, D., & Konrad, A. M. (2002). The importance of ethnic identity to attitudes, norms, and behavioral intentions toward diversity. *Academy of Management Proceedings*: D1-D6.

Locke, E.A., Frederick, E., Lee, C., & Bobko, P. (1984). Effect of self-efficacy, goals, and task strategies on task performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69 (2): 241-251.

Ludema, J. D. Wilmot, T. B., & Srivastva, S. (1997). Organizational hope: Reaffirming the constructive task of social and organizational inquiry. *Human Relations*, 50 (8): 1015-1052.

Magruder-Watkins, W. J., & Mohr, B. J. (2001). *Appreciative inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Maxwell, S. E. & Delaney, H. D. (1990). *Designing Experiments and Analyzing Data*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.

McGuire, J., McGuire, C. V., Child, P., and Fujioka, T. (1978). Salience of ethnicity in the spontaneous self-concept as a function of one's ethnic distinctiveness in the social environment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36 (5): 511-20.

- Mirvis, P. H. & Berg, D. N. (1977). *Failures in organization development and change: Cases and essays for leaning*. NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Mossholder, K. W., Settoon, R. P, Armenakis, A. A., & Harris, S. G. (2000). Emotion during organizational transformations: An interactive model of survivor reactions. *Group & Organization Management*, 25 (3): 220-243.
- Mohr, B. J., Smith, E., and Watkins, J. M. (2000). Appreciative Inquiry and learning assessment. *OD Practitioner*, 32(1): 36-52.
- Mone, M. A. (1994). Relationships between self-concepts, aspirations, emotional responses, and intent to leave a downsizing organization. *Human Resource Management*, 33 (2): 281-298.
- Mulac, A., L. B. Studley, J. M. Weimann, & J. J. Bradac. (1987). Male/female gaze in same-sex and mixed-sex dyads: Gender-linked differences and mutual influence. *Human Communication Research*, 13 (3): 323-343.
- Nadler, D. A., & Tushman, M. L. (1989). Organization frame bending: Principles for managing reorientation. *Academy of Management Executive*, 3 (3): 194-204.
- Nelson, D. L., & J. C. Quick. (2002). *Organizational Behavior, Third Edition*. Cincinnati, OH: South- Western College Publishing.
- Newcombe, N., & Arnkoff, D. B. (1979). Effects of speech style and sex of speaker on person perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37 (8): 1293-1303.
- Palfai, T. P., & Salovey, P. (1992). The influence of affect on self-focus attention: Conceptual and methodological issues. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 1 (4): 306-339.
- Pettigrew, A. M., R. W. Woodman, & K. S. Cameron. (2001). Studying organizational change and development: Challenges for future research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44 (4): 697-713.
- Quinn, R. E. & Cameron, K. S. (1985). *Paradox and Transformation: Toward a theory of change in organization and management*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Rainey, M. A. (1996). An appreciative inquiry into the factors of culture continuity during leadership transitions. *OD Practitioner*, 28(1): 34-41.

Ridgeway, C. L. (1988). Gender differences in task groups: A status and legitimacy account. In M Webster, Jr., and M. Foschi (Eds.), *Status Generalization: New Theory and Research*: 188-206. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Ridgeway, C. L., & Diekema, D.. (1989). Dominance and collective hierarchy formation in male and female task groups. *American Sociological Review*, 54: 79-93.

Ridgeway, C.L., C. Johnson, & Diekema, D. (1994). External status, legitimacy, and compliance in male and female groups. *Social Forces*, 72: 1051-1077.

Robertson, P.J., & Seneviratne, S.J. (1995). Outcomes of Planned Organizational Change in the Public Sector: A Meta-Analytic Comparison to the Private Sector. *Public Administration Review*, 55 (6): 547-58.

Ryan, F. J. Soven, M., Smither, J. Sullivan, W. M., and VanBuskirk, W. R. (1999). Appreciative Inquiry: Using Personal Narratives for Initiation School Reform. *The Clearing House*, 72 (3): 164-167.

Schwarz, N., & Bless, H. (1991). Happy and mindless, but sad and smart? The impact of affective states on analytic reasoning. In J.P. Forgas (Ed.), *Emotion and Social Judgments*: 55-72. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Scott, P. G, & Falcone, S. (1998). Comparing public and private organizations: An exploratory analysis of three frameworks. *American Review of Public Administration*, 28 (2): 126-145.

Sinclair, R. C., & Mark, M. M. (1995). The effects of mood state on judgmental accuracy: Processing strategy as a mechanism. *Cognition and Emotion*, 9 (5): 417-438.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. NY: Doubleday.

Spector, B. A. (1989). From Bogged Down To Fired Up: Inspiring Organizational Change. *Sloan Management Review*, 30 (4): 29-34.

- Spreitzer, G. M., & Mishra, A. K. (2002). To stay or to go: Voluntary survivor turnover following an organizational downsizing. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23 (6): 707.
- Staw, B. M., Sutton, R. I., & Pelled, L. H. (1994). Employee positive emotion and favorable outcomes at the workplace. *Organization Science*, 5 (1): 51-71.
- Goldshmidt, O. T. & Weller, L. (2000). "Talking emotions": Gender differences in a variety of conversational contexts. *Symbolic Interaction*, 23 (2): 117-134.
- Strough, J., & Berg, C. A. (2000). Goals as a mediator of gender differences in high-affiliation dyadic conversations. *Developmental Psychology*, 36 (1): 117-125.
- Sutton, L. J., J. D. Teasdale, & D. E. Broadbent. (1988). Negative self-schema: The effects of induced depressed mood. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 27 (2): 188-190.
- Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand: Men and women in conversation*. New York: Morrow.
- Thomas, K.W., & Velthouse, B.A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An "interpretive" model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 15 (4): 666-681.
- Tichy, N. M. and Ulrich, D.O. (1984). SMR Forum: The leadership challenge - A call for the transformational leader. *Sloan Management Review*, 26 (1): 59-68.
- Troemel Ploetz, S. (1991). Review Essay: Selling the Apolitical. *Discourse & Society*, 2(4): 489-502.
- Vince, R. & Broussine, M. (1996). Paradox, defense, and attachment: Accessing and working with emotions and relations underlying organizational change. *Organization Studies*, 17 (1): 1-21.
- Watkins, J. M. and Mohr, B. J. (2001). *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.
- Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS

scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54 (6): 1063-1070.

Weick, K. E. (1999). Organizational change and development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50: 361-386.

Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective Events Theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior: An annual series of analytical essays and critical reviews*, 18: 1-74. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, Inc.

Whitney, D., & Cooperrider, D. L. (1998). The appreciative inquiry summit: Overview and applications. *Employment Relations Today*, 25 (2): 17-28.

Whitney, D., & Cooperrider, D. L. (2000). The appreciative inquiry summit: An emerging methodology for whole system positive change. *OD Practitioner*, 32 (1): 13-26.

Yoder, J. D., & Kahn, A. S. (1992). Toward a feminist understanding of women and power. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 16 (4): 381-388.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Yellow-Roadway Corporation.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Leslie E. Sekerka, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in Organizational Behavior and Ethics at the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy, Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. Her teaching and research interests focus on organizational behavior, organizational development and change, and ethics in the workplace.

APPENDIX: EXPERIMENTAL MANIPULATIONS

		Orientation	
		Appreciative Inquiry	Diagnostic
Change Agent	Self	<p>We are interested in discovering when <u>you</u> have been at <u>your</u> best. Reflect back, from the moment you first joined <u>this organization</u> until right now. Obviously, <u>you</u> have experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, high points and low points. For now, think about a moment that stands out as a high point for <u>you</u>. This was a time when <u>you</u> felt the most engaged, <u>you</u> were the most successful, <u>you</u> felt alive or energized and <u>you</u> were the most effective – <u>you</u> were at <u>your</u> best. While <u>you</u> may have experienced a couple of high points, please share a story of just one. What happened?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What was it about this situation that made it a high point for <u>you</u>? -Can you remember some of the feelings <u>you</u> experienced during that moment? -What were those feelings? -What was going on that allowed <u>you</u> to do <u>your</u> job so well? -What opportunities helped <u>you</u> to do <u>your</u> job the way <u>you</u> wanted to? -What are 3 or 4 things <u>you</u> do really well at <u>your</u> job? 	<p>We are interested in understanding the major problems <u>you</u> have encountered at <u>your</u> job and to identify some of the causes of those problems. Reflect back, from the moment <u>you</u> first joined <u>this organization</u> until right now. Obviously, <u>you</u> have experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, high points and low points. For now, think about a situation that stands out as one where <u>you</u> have felt the most blocked and <u>you</u> were the most frustrated – <u>you</u> were the least effective. This was a time when <u>you</u> faced problems on <u>your</u> job, things got in <u>your</u> way that kept <u>you</u> from being at <u>your</u> best. While <u>you</u> may have experienced a couple of problematic situations, please share an example of just one. What happened?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What was it about this situation that raised the most concern for <u>you</u>? -Can you remember some of the feelings <u>you</u> experienced as <u>you</u> encountered this situation? -What were those feelings? -What was going on that did not allow <u>you</u> to do <u>your</u> job well? -What got in the way, so <u>you</u> could not do <u>your</u> job the way <u>you</u> wanted to? -What are 3 or 4 things that cause problems for <u>you</u> at <u>your</u> job?
	Other	<p>We are interested in discovering when <u>the hospital</u> has been at <u>its</u> best. Reflect back, from the moment of first joining <u>the hospital</u>, until right now. Obviously, <u>the hospital</u> has experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, high points and some low points. For now, think about a moment that stands out as a high point for <u>the hospital</u>. This was a time when <u>the hospital</u> was the most engaged, the most successful, alive or energized, and <u>the hospital</u> was the most effective – <u>the hospital</u> was at <u>its</u> best. While <u>the hospital</u> may have experienced a couple of high points, please share the story of just one. What happened?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What was it about this situation that made it a high point for <u>the hospital</u>? -Can you remember some of the feelings <u>others</u> expressed during that moment? -What were those feelings? -What was going on that allowed <u>the hospital</u> to work so well? -What opportunities helped <u>other employees at the hospital</u> to do <u>their jobs</u> the way <u>they</u> wanted to? -What are 3 or 4 things the <u>hospital</u> does really well? 	<p>We are interested in understanding the major problems at <u>the hospital</u> and to identify some of the causes of those problems. Reflect back, from the moment of <u>first joining the hospital</u>, until right now. Obviously, <u>the hospital</u> has experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, high points and some low points. For now, think about a situation that stands out as one where <u>the hospital</u> was the most blocked, the most obstructed – <u>the hospital</u> was the least effective. This was a time when <u>the hospital</u> faced problems, things got in <u>the way</u> that kept <u>the hospital</u> from being at <u>its</u> best. While <u>the hospital</u> may have experienced a couple of problematic situations, please share an example of just one. What happened?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What was it about this situation that raised the most concern for <u>the hospital</u>? -Can you remember some of the feelings <u>others</u> expressed as <u>they</u> encountered this situation? -What were those feelings? -What was going on that did not allow <u>the hospital</u> to work well? -What got in the way, so <u>other employees at the hospital</u> could not do <u>their jobs</u> the way <u>they</u> wanted to? -What are 3 or 4 things that cause problems for <u>the hospital</u>?

NOTE: Bold denotes wording for the orientation manipulation; underlining denotes wording for the change agent manipulation.

