The Initial Impact of an Organizational Development Intervention on Appreciative Leadership Development: A Case Study of Thailand Appreciative Inquiry Network

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Abstract

This research finds its origin in the researcher's inner inspiration and desire to expand leadership development knowledge in the Thai society; which was achieved by combining Appreciative Inquiry (AI) with leadership principles and sharing this combination with AI Thailand's members. Appreciative Leadership (AL) development was selected to create positive changes among AI Thailand's members. This research aimed at exploring the initial impact of ODI on the Reaction, Learning, and Behavioral levels of AI Thailand's members. This was measured in terms of Disposition, Attitude of openness, Defined continuous learning skills, and Connection to other people, the latter being assessed in terms of cooperation, collaboration, and complementation. Post-ODI surveys found that the changes had positive impacts on the participants. Regarding the Reaction level, the participants were satisfied with the AL development. As to the Learning level, the participants' knowledge and skills increased significantly while, in terms of Behavioral level, the participants' AL Qualities mostly increased.

Keywords: Organization Development, Action Research, Leadership Development, Appreciative Inquiry, Appreciative Leadership.

Introduction

Nowadays, it is difficult to separate a business operation from the impact that the process of globalization is having upon it. Today, more than ever, people are the focus of an organization's adaptability and are the ones who actually execute all the tasks in a dynamic environment (Smith & Dickson 2003). For these reasons, all organizational members need to increase their generative motivation, interactive employee engagement, and functional teamwork. And to achieve this, organizational leaders must implement development programs through their organization's staff (Mannix & Reterson 2003).

Therefore, regardless of the type of organization, the development of human capital will help to enhance the adaptability of the organization and enable it to cope better with globalization and change. One area that can enhance people's capability for greater performance is leadership.

Developing a strong leadership will spur employees to guide themselves to a higher level of competency in terms of improvement in their thinking, action, and behavior. In other words, what is suggested here is that there is a need for leaders with a new paradigm; leaders suited to today's changing world or, put differently, leaders for positive change.

The inner inspiration for this study is a desire to enhance Thai human capital. Moreover, the Buddhist faith, with its mandate to *behave and think in good ways - and not in bad ones*, has also been a source of inspiration for the researcher to study leadership development as a way to ameliorate Thai human capital.

This study focuses on Thailand Appreciative Inquiry Network (AI Thailand), a non-profit organization that was established as a community of AI practice on October 16, 2007 by Dr. Pinyo Rattanaphan. (Rattanaphan 2009). AI Thailand started with a total of 32 members, all of whom MBA students at the College of Graduate Study in Management (CGSM), at Khon Kaen University, Thailand. The membership has steadily gone up and presently,

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there are approximately 160 members; current MBA and ex-MBA students who are private employees, government officers, and business owners.

AI Thailand sees itself as an international community of practice in AI and Appreciative Leadership (AL), which will help everyone gain self-knowledge and will also provide solutions for one's organization in positive, cheap, easy and workable ways.

A SOAR analysis of AI Thailand was conducted (Table 1.1)

Table 1.1: SOAR Analysis of AI Thailand

Strengths
- The first AI community of practice in Thailand
- Expertise in AI knowledge and training
- Richness of professional resources of AI- based and AL development
Opportunities
- Develop an AL training program for the Thai community
- Strengthen Thai human capability
- Provide AI and AL paradigms to the Thai educational sector
Aspirations
- To create versions of the pioneering Thai AI and AL training center abroad
- To make local knowledge available to the global OD community
- To create a Thai research center in AI and AL for academic purposes
Results
- Sustainable growth of AI Thailand
- Enhanced human capital for Thai society

1. Problem Statement

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the extent of the initial impact of the AL training program on the members of AI Thailand with regard to their Reaction, Learning level, and Behavior (Kirkpatick 1998, 2009). This impact is measured by four criteria: (i) disposition; (ii) attitude of openness; (iii) defined skills of continuous learning; and (iv) connection to other people (itself assessed in terms of cooperation, collaboration, and complementation).

The training program applied action learning for both group workshops and each individual learning process over a period of six months. All participants were tested at the beginning and the end of the training program. Individual project reports and observations from the researcher were processed in order to evaluate the participants' Reaction, Learning, and Behavior levels.

2. Research Objectives

To assess the participants' AL quality level as measured in terms of disposition, attitude of openness, defined skills of continuous learning, and connection to other people and as indicated by their level of cooperation, collaboration, and complementation.

3. Literature Review
- Leadership Definition

The topic of leadership has been studied since ancient times. Researchers have tried to study, define and explain key elements of leadership from different perspectives. However, it seems that leadership definitions are still found to be incomplete. Some researchers, for example, Lussier & Achua (2007) have stated that "There is no universal definition of leadership because leadership is complex and because leadership is studied in different ways that require different definitions." Gill (2006) reviewed and critiqued the topic of leadership, stating that "no theory or model of leadership so far has provided a satisfactory explanation of leadership. Indeed, there are many definitions of leadership that vary widely." This statement is in keeping with Daniels & Daniels' (2007) who, with regard to the definition of leadership argued that there is "no consensus" or that "little agreement exists" (p. 2).

Still, leadership definitions abound. Bratton et al. (2005), for instance, explained that

"leadership is socially constructed through the interaction of leaders and followers within a specific context and is equated with power."

Parry (1998) stated that "leadership is one of the processes of change." This is because a leader is the person who designs, sets objectives, inspires followers, and makes decisions for the organization.

Yukl (2006) broadly defined leadership in terms of influences, arguing that "leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives."

These two examples of leadership definitions demonstrate that leadership has a high impact on the level of organizational performance. In other words, leadership effectiveness has a direct impact on organizational prosperity.

- Leadership Development

Leadership development is a relevant topic in the development of today's organizations as it is based on the assumption that an effective leader can be made, taught, and developed (Zimmerman et al. 1999). As times change, new business conditions come into play, so organizations must acquire new capabilities in anticipation of the changes. Organizational leaders are required to establish new leadership paradigms to lead their organizations. Because they cannot rely only on their own innate personalities, they need to develop their new leadership skills.

- *AL Definition*

AL is a relatively new leadership concept and terminology which is derived from the AI concept. As Bushe (2001) explained, Appreciative Leaders "are continually looking for instances where things are going right; where quality is increasing, where customers are being satisfied, where internal processes are being managed seamlessly and where wealth is being created."

To define AL, Srivastva, Fry and Cooperrider (1990) referred to an appreciative executive as "a scholar, colleague and sculptor of conversation that seeks to give new voice to the mystery, not mastery and wonder, not problems, of organizational life."

After interviewing Appreciative Leaders, Riley, Holland, & Schiller (2002) concluded that AL is a combination of the competencies and attributes of a leader's characteristics which they expressed in terms of 'strongly relational' and 'participative style and beliefs'.

Keefe & Pesut (2004) for their part defined AL in those terms: "This style of leadership involves appreciation, creativity, and awareness [so] that there is a difference between problems to be solved and aspirations that need specification."

According to Mantel and Ludema (2004), an appreciative leader is a person who is able "to see the best in people and leverage their strengths to achieve significant and mutually valued goals".

Lewis, et al. (2006) stated that "Appreciative leaders are self-aware and incorporate new learning and they are willing to change the way they look at and define things."

For Diana Whitney (2007) AL refers to "the capacity to engage others in discovering, magnifying, and connecting all that is good and healthy in people and the world around them---in such a way that deepens relatedness, inspires transformational conversations, and mobilizes cooperative action toward life-affirming social innovations."

She also identified five characteristics that make AL successful in terms of driving positive change. AL (i) is Inclusive; (ii) and Inquiry based; (iii) it Illuminates the Best of People, Processes, Organizations and Communities: (iv) Inspires Hope; and (v) Exemplifies Relational Integrity (*Ibid).*

In this study, the researcher will define AL as the ability to discover, gather, and amplify the existing strengths and successes of members, organizations and their communities in order to

create positive and sustainable change for the organization and the world.

AL has also been characterized in terms of *Disposition, Attitude of Openness,* and *Defined Skills of Continuous Learning,* meaning that, when in an organizational context, individuals participate in some activities with other people they respond with positive thoughts instead of deficient ones (Senge et al. 2007). It also refers to building a shared vision attitude rather than adherence to a leader's vision only (*Ibid*).

Defined Skills of Continuous Learning refers to the process of knowing the value of reflection and action and the capability of reflection, action, and then reflection again with new or beneficial insight which can inform Appreciative Leaders of the next action in daily life (Stavors & Torres 2006).

Another term connected with Al is *Connection to Others*, a reference to a form of interaction with other people and the influence and positive momentum that contribute to achieving the group's and organization's objectives together (Reed 2007). This quality includes three sub-components: *Cooperation*, which refers to the contributive positive energy of AI with others people as a team in order to achieve the goals; *Collaboration,* which has to do with the development of partnerships for change across and within groups and *Complementation,* which means integrating the whole organization and its people.

AL is different from other leadership paradigms such as transactional and transformational leaderships in that it focuses on the organization and people's strengths and what is working well in the organization. Moreover, AL creates self-positive thinking and emphasizes taking action when interacting with other people and always integrating other people when working and making changes.

Transactional leadership, on the other hand is an exchange process (Bass 1985). A transactional leader motivates other people to achieve the desired outcomes by exchanging rewards and promising tangible rewards, whereas AL focuses on intrinsic rewards such as pride in being part of the organization. A transactional leader also uses a directive style particularly when setting organizational objectives and performance standards (Gill 2006). It is a top-down management style whereas AL is both a vertical and horizontal management style. While a transactional leader will focus on short-term goals rather than long-term changes by maintaining stability and efficiency within the organization (Gill 2006; Lim & Daft 2004) AL will create positive changes rather than maintaining the stability of the current organizational circumstances.

Still, transformational leadership and AL do have some similarities. Bass (1995) identified transformational leadership characteristics that are the same as AL's; transformational leaders need to be able to "honor the past," i.e., they need "to recapture those past events of consequence to the organization's future" (*Ibid*).

One transformational leadership component, *Idealized Influence*, suggests that a leader gains a follower's trust, respect, admiration, and confidence by showing extraordinary leadership ability to the followers (Gill 2006). AL, however, makes no reference to this element.
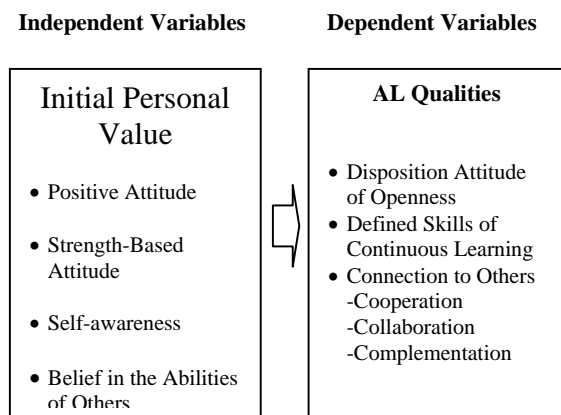
- *AL Development*

Ring et al. (2009) defined the concept of AL development in terms of "five ways to widen your lens:" "(i) see people through an Appreciative Lens; (ii) envision what you want; (iii) adopt the "what is" approach; (iv) nurture the power of creativity; and (v) ask questions from diverse points of view."

And Mantel et al. (2004) articulated four principles serving as guidelines to develop individual AL: (i) believe in the possible; (ii) approach others with unconditional positive regard; (iii) radically include others; and (v) continuously move toward others.

4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is shown in Figure 1.1:

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables

Initial Personal Value	AL Qualities

• Positive Attitude
 	
• Strength-Based Attitude
 	
• Self-awareness
 	
• Belief in the Abilities of Others
	• Disposition Attitude of Openness
	• Defined Skills of Continuous Learning
	• Connection to Others
	  -Cooperation
	  -Collaboration
	  -Complementation

Created by the author for this study

The research hypotheses were developed as follows:

H_0: *The AI-based training workshop cannot be used as a vehicle to develop AL qualities.*

H_a: *The AI-based training workshop can be used as a vehicle to develop AL qualities.*

5. Research Methodology

This research is a "one-group pre-test-post-test design" (Field & Hole 2003; Sekaran 2003; Walliman 2006). Participants were selected from a group of volunteers, all of whom held various occupations and came from different provinces. All the participants were members of AI Thailand. Out of a total of twenty participants, all volunteers, eighteen were MBA and Ex-MBA students from Khon Kaen University and 14 were males and 6 females.

There were three age groups: 8 of the 20 participants were just under 30, another 9, between 30 and 40 years of age, and 3 were over 40. 14 of the 20 participants worked as employees, whereas 6 of the 20 participants were business owners.

Action research was the main methodology of the study. It employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches for deeper inquiry to study the positive changes within the participants and their organizations.

Regarding the qualitative methods, two techniques were used for data collection: participants' interviews and observations of each of the participant's behavioral changes. These two techniques aimed at checking the reactions, attitudes, and behavioral levels of participants in the Pre-ODI, ODI, and Post-ODI phases.

As to the quantitative methods, two questionnaires were used to conduct this study. The first one was for the participants and the second one for people around the participants. For each participant, six people (family members or co-workers) were queried. The respondents totaled 120.

The action research framework for this study is divided into three parts: Pre-ODI, ODI, and Post-ODI.

The pre-ODI stage explains the current attitude level and behavior of participants in terms of AL mindset. It focuses on four criteria: (i) problem solving; (ii) AL practical experience; (iii) AL skills; and (iv) AL qualities.

The ODI stage shows implementation activities. Its objective was to increase AL skills and mindsets. It consisted of three group workshops: (i) Appreciative Coaching, (ii) consulting, dialogues, and (iii) implementation of the AI project (for 5 months) within each participant's organization.

The first group-training session was an AI-workshop, to which the founder of AI Thailand, Dr. Pinyo, was invited to teach the concepts of AI, give some real case studies, and share his experiences with AI with the participants

The second one aimed at having participants experience the Discovery stage of AI 4-D cycle. The participants were asked a particular question about going shopping and were let to recall a specifically impressive experience.

The third one had as its goal to teach AL concepts to the participants. In the wake of the previous workshops, coaching and consultation sessions were implemented for AL development purposes. Both coaching and consultations were conducted as one intervention.

To help participants share their experiential learning, an AL Network was created to enhance communication among participants. Participants were able to access the network via the internet website: "www.aithialand.org" and then could go to the "Appreciative Leadership Network" page.

The final stage, the post-ODI stage, used criteria similar to the Pre-ODI stage, with but the expectation, however, that those criteria will point to some improvement.

Since, at the time of the research, there was no standard test for assessing AL qualities, the researcher had to develop a new interview record system (see Appendix A), an AL questionnaire for participants, and a questionnaire for other people around the participants (Appendix B).

The questionnaires mostly used the 5-point Likert Scale (where 5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree). Kirkpatrick Four Levels of Evaluations concept (Kirkpatrick 1998; 2009) was adapted to measure the changes in the participants. The questionnaires were written in AL style.

As aforementioned, this research focused primarily on three elements: the Reaction or Satisfaction level; Learning level; and Behavioral level with the expectation that there would be a change therein at the Implementation stage. Data was collected from three sources: participants, the researcher's log book, and people working with the participants.

All questionnaires used arithmetic means ($\bar{x}$), percentiles, and Paired t-Test Analysis. The data from the interviews was transcribed to a recording system in terms of numbers and was plotted in AL's diagrams (see Appendix A). Information from the logbooks or research's diaries was analyzed according to Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Coghlan 1993a; McMullan et al. 1979, both cited in Coghlan & Brannick 2002). Moreover, the data from the interviews was analyzed by a method for coding interview data.

6. *Analysis of Findings and Interpretation*

- *Reaction Level: Participants Satisfied*

A post-program survey found that at least 80% of the participants were satisfied with the AL development. Overall, participants averaged quite a high score ($\bar{x}$) of 4.34 out of 5. Moreover, as the qualitative analysis shows, there was also some supporting evidence in the form of the appreciative comments made (see Appendix C).

- *Increased Learning Level*

Participants rated ($\bar{x}$) 4.40 out of 5 when asked about learning new knowledge and skills from the AL training program. When asked about confidence in the participant's ability to apply the knowledge and skills which they had learned from this program, the average score was 3.95 out of 5. And when probed about their level of improvement regarding their newly-acquired expertise, they assessed the level at 81.5%.

The paired-samples statistics and a t-test conducted to compare the mean scores of the AL concept in respect of learning level before and after the AL development, reveal that there was statistically a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, t (19) = 5.345, p<0.01. The post-ODI AL concept mean (M=4.14, SD=.57) was higher than the pre-ODI one by 0.73 (M=3.40, SD=.32), indicating that the ODI process had a significant effect on the participants in terms of AL learning.

The qualitative data, used to support the quantitative results, came in the form of questions asked before and during the ODI process. For example, before the ODI process began, participants were asked "What are the fundamentals of AL?" and "What is the meaning of Disposition of Openness?" and could not answer either of them. However, after the ODI process, they could formulate the right answers – albeit in their own wording. Though not using the proper terminology, they replied correctly,

showing that they had understood the AL concept and not simply memorized it. In Kolb's experiential learning cycle parlance, the participants showed that they had improved their knowledge and skills through their experiential learning cycle by implementing the AI projects. As their experiential learning cycle increased, new knowledge and skills were acquired; In short, the participants' learning levels had increased.

Put in terms of Adult Learning Theory (Knowles 1984, 1990), participants had 'learned through practice'. The more they practiced, the more knowledge and skills they acquired. The participants, who had high intrinsic motivation, were more likely to gain from AL development as they had specific goals to improve themselves and their organizations. At the end of the AL development, participants gave some feedback, which confirmed their improved learning (for comments, see Appendix D).

Thus, as an ODI process, AL development increased the Learning level of the participants although not homogeneously.

- Increased Behavioral level

The AL development impact on the participants' AL qualities or behavior, assessed in terms of Disposition, Attitude of Openness, Defined Skills of Continuous Learning, and Connection to Other (i.e., Cooperation, Collaboration, and Complementation), was positive.

In the quantitative analyses two sources of data were used. The first one came from the participants' pre- and post-ODI questionnaire surveys and the second one from people involved the participants' pre-ODI and post-ODI questionnaire surveys.

As to the qualitative analyses, they were based on the researcher's observations and logbooks and calculations of the results of the pre- and post-ODI interviews. The change level with respect to each criterion and each participant was divided into four groups as shown below:

Improvement Scales	Interpretation as
2 scales up	Significant Increase
1 to 2	Increase
0 to 1	Slight Increase
0	No Increase

- Increased Disposition and Attitude of Openness

The pre- and post-ODI interview results of each participant show that 16 of the 20 participants had increased their level of Disposition and Attitude of Openness in the wake of the AL development.

Results from the participant's survey questionnaire indicate that all participants rated themselves as 'improved' after AL training. One participant, in particular, reported a significant increase, six, moderate ones, and thirteen, slight ones.

In keeping with this finding, the paired-samples t-test between the pre- and post-ODI in respect of participants' survey show that there is statistically a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, $t(19) = 6.562$, $p<0.01$ as the post-ODI Disposition Attitude of Openness mean (M=4.72, SD=.24) is higher than the corresponding pre-ODI one (M=3.83, SD=.66).

Another paired-samples t-test, collected from people around the participants also indicate that there is statistically a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, $t(119) = 6.174$, $p<0.01$ with the post-ODI Disposition Attitude of Openness mean (M=4.54, SD=.37) higher than the corresponding pre-ODI one (M=3.86, SD=.33). Clearly, the AL development had a significant effect on the participants in terms of Disposition and Attitude of Openness level.

- Increased Defined Skills of Continuous Learning

The pre-ODI and post-ODI interview results of each participant reveal that 19 of the 20 participants increased their level of Defined Skills of Continuous Learning after the AL development.

The results of the participant's survey in this also indicate just that with one participant reporting a significant increase, eleven, a moderate one and eight a slight one.

A paired-samples t-test between the pre- and post-ODI with regard to the participants' survey confirms the increase as there is statistically a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, t (19) = 8.568, p<0.01; post-ODI Defined Skills of Continuous Learning mean (M= 4.53, SD =.24) higher than the corresponding pre-ODI Defined one (M=3.55, SD =.60).

This is also confirmed by the paired-samples t-test collected from people around the participants with a statistically highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, t (119) = 4.786, p<0.01 and a pre-ODI Defined Skills of Continuous Learning mean (M=4.43, SD=.35) higher than the corresponding pre-ODI one (M=3.40, SD=.37). Here again, the AL development has had a significantly positive effect on the participants as measured by their increased level of Defined Skills of Continuous Learning.

And again, this was also supported by the qualitative analysis in the areas of frequency of experiential learning cycles, implementation of AI projects, adaptation of the AI 5 principles, and high self-motivation.

- Increased Connection to Others

As the overall pre- and post-ODI interviews results of each participant show, 15 of the 20 participants recorded an increase in respect of their level of *Connection to Others* following the AL development. A differing pattern emerged with 1 participant reporting a significant increase, 6, a moderate one, 8, a slightly and, in a departure from the previous criteria considered, 5 showed no increase.

Data from the participant's survey show that each participant improved at the Connection to Others level after the ODI process. One out of 20 participants significantly improved, 4 made moderate improvements, and 15 slightly improved.

The overall results in terms of Connection to Others were calculated by the summation of three arithmetic means (Cooperation, Collaboration, and Complementation) and divided by three. They show that the post-ODI mean (4.5440) was higher than the pre-ODI one (3.7615).

Also, the survey data from people around the participants showed that the post-ODI mean (4.8365) was higher than the pre-ODI one (4.2170) with respect to the level of Connection to Others which in this study is analyzed in sub-terms of Cooperation, Collaboration, and Complementation.

- Increased Cooperation Level

The paired-samples t-test between the pre- and post-ODI of the participants' surveys indicates that there was statistically a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, t (19) = 6.221, p<0.01. The post-ODI Cooperation mean (M= 4.20, SD =.30) was higher than the corresponding pre-ODI one (M=3.47, SD =.59).

Also, another paired-samples t-test, which was collected from people around participants, confirms this increase with a statistically highly significant difference between pre- and post-ODI, t (119) = 9.446, p<0.01 and a post-ODI Cooperation mean (M=4.90, SD=.35) higher than the pre-ODI one (M=4.23, SD=.32).

- Increased Collaboration Level

As with Cooperation, the paired-samples t-test between the pre- and post-ODI of participants' survey demonstrate that there is statistically a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, t (19) = 7.002, p<0.01 as the post-ODI Collaboration mean (M= 4.62, SD =.38) is higher than the corresponding pre-ODI one (M=3.67, SD =.62).

The other paired-samples t-test conducted among people around the participants also goes in the same direction and is consistent with the Cooperation level tests. There is statistically a

highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, t (119) = 7.227, p<0.01. The mean Collaboration of the post-ODI (M=4.71, SD=.28) is higher than the mean Collaboration of the pre-ODI (M=4.10, SD=.32).

- Increased Complementation Level

In this case too, the paired-samples t-test between the pre- and post-ODI of the participants' survey indicate that there is statistically a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, t (19) = 4.156, p<0.01 with the post-ODI mean Complementation (M= 4.82, SD =.27) higher than the pre-ODI one (M=4.15, SD =.76).

And here too, the paired-samples t-test, collected from people around the participants shows that there is statistically a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-ODI, t (119) = 8.561, p<0.01 with the mean Complementation of the post-ODI (M= 4.90, SD=.14) higher than the Pre-ODI one (M= 4.32, SD= .30).

As these findings show, the AL development has had a significant impact on the participants in terms of Cooperation, Collaboration as well as Complementation levels.

This is supported by the qualitative analysis which shows an increase as a result of adapting all 5 of the AI principles. The participants who work in a highly competitive environment as business managers and business owners for medium and large-sized companies grasped the concepts more quickly than those at junior executive positions or those working in a less-strenuous bureaucratic environment. Moreover, those who had had experiences managing people were able to improve faster.

Still, by the end of the AL development program, 12 of the 20 participants had completed their implementation projects while 8 had yet to complete their implementation projects within their own organizations. 5 of the 20 participants have made significant achievements in terms of implementing their AI projects within their respective organizations as they succeeded in

their efforts to bring about a positive impact on the people in their organizations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this research can be considered from four different perspectives: the research itself, the participants, AI Thailand, and AL theory.

With regard to the research itself, the research objectives have been fulfilled and some lessons drawn from the experience. One is that combined AI-based and AL-based trainings should begin by implanting knowledge within the participants, stimulating their mindsets, and repeating the actions of the new behavior.

Concerning the participants themselves, they have acquired new knowledge and skills in AI and AL. Twenty five percent of the participants have made significant achievements in implementing AI projects.

As for AI Thailand, this research has gathered more case studies for the AI-based community and prompted AI Thailand to come up with a support system to support its vision: the *Appreciative Leadership Network*. This research has also brought eight new members to the organization and attracted the attention of others. Regardless of their final achievements, the participants have also helped to implement positive change through Thai society via their projects. In this respect, it can be said that AI Thailand's objectives have been fulfilled.

Finally, with reference to the measurable results shown in the SOAR analysis of AI and AL communities, respectively, this research has been instrumental in creating sustainable growth for AI Thailand and enhanced the human capital in the Thai society.

With respect to the AL theory, this research has helped to accumulate – and disseminate - AL knowledge, particularly in an Eastern context. The AL theory was much appreciated by all the participants and all the others involved one way or the other in this ODI program. Once the researcher connected AL with Buddhism in terms of self-awareness, meditation, and positive

attitude, the AL theory was suddenly easier to understand and more readily accepted by the participants; which says quite a lot about transplanting Western concepts to an Eastern audience, that is in itself food for thoughts and a topic yet to be explored.

- Recommendations for AI Thailand

For those participants who did not complete their AI projects, there needs to be more time to follow up on their implementation results. This would help the researcher understand more of the current outcomes.

In order to gain more insight and knowledge, those people within the participants' organizations should be interviewed to measure the harmony between quantitative and qualitative data.

In order to deepen the knowledge and understanding of AL and Appreciative Coaching, the AL training course should be further developed with respect to an *"AI Learning Team."* The next AL training course will strengthen and enrich AI Thailand's AL knowledge. This may also attract new members to the community.

The next step in AL development should be to study AL in one context, for example, in one company. This study should include enough participants so as to properly monitor the impacts that AL may have on that organization. This would generate a greater understanding and knowledge of AL.

- Recommendations for Further Studies

The results of this research show that this AL development program has worked effectively for people who are managers and business owners in medium and large-sized companies. The individuals to be chosen for such further studies should have at least 4 to 5 years experience in managing people. This will help future participants effectively learn from the self-experiential learning cycle. Further studies should thus focus on this target group.

A customized AL training course should be developed for less experienced people. As previously mentioned, this AL development was effective for people with work experience. Therefore, some intervention activities such as the AI projects should be reframed and customized for this group of people.

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Appendix A

Example of Interview record system

The record system was designed in the scale from 1 to 9 whereas 1 represents a negative response and 9 represent a positive response. For example, Question # 6: "How do you feel when things happen unexpectedly? Why do you feel this way?" This question was designed to measure *The Positive Principle* attitude.

Very Negative Response				Unconcerned				Very Positive Response
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Appendix B

Example of Pre- and Post-Program Interview Questions

1. When you face an unexpected situation, how do you usually respond? And what made you answer the way you do?
2. If someone says "focusing on someone's strengths", how do you feel about it? And what made you answer the way you do?

3. If someone says that "the things that happen in the past are the causes of your present expectation", what will you reply to that person? Why do you say so?

Appendix C

Comments:

*"*The AI and AL concepts were new to us, what we learned is different from what we had studied."

"It was good. I learned something new and now understand AL."

"I feel good about focusing on positive experiences."

Appendix D

Comments:

"It is a practical theory. I have gotten a practical experience."

"I have been exposed to new positive experiences."

"I have learned how to encourage myself when facing a difficult time."

Example of Pre and Post Survey Questionnaire for Participant

No.	Attributes /Competencies	Skills level / Ability of AL				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I have the ability to create positive change in my organization.					
2.	I am working on self-awareness of positive attitude.					
3.	I normally focus on organizational strengths and achievements.					
4.	To develop an organization, I normally pay attention to structure and system first.					

Example of Survey Questionnaires for People around the Participants

No.	Perception to Participant	Opinion				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	This person is working with self-awareness of positive attitude.					
2.	This person encourages me to focus on my strengths.					
3.	This person praises others with his/her genuineness.					
4.	This person admires and adores others when they have done good things for their groups or organizations.					