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Espoused Versus Operationalized Organizational Values: A Case Study of Values Integration

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ESPOUSED VERSUS OPERATIONALIZED ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:
A CASE STUDY OF VALUES INTEGRATION

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

At the start of the 21st century, corporate America found itself confronted by a series of scandals about powerful business leaders unethically exploiting the system and their own organizations. Among the most familiar of these scandals is the one involving the former energy and commodities services corporation, Enron. Illegal accounting practices in that organization resulted both in the dissolution of that organization and in passage of the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which placed greater demands on corporate accounting practices.

Enron's maleficence deeply affected its more than 20,000 employees through job loss and the evaporation of retirement benefits. Enron leaders' widely touted corporate values of Respect, Integrity, Communication and Excellence also injected a note of irony and even cynicism into the entire unfortunate situation. As it turned out, the gap between the values espoused and the values practiced by those at the top of Enron's leadership team was exceedingly wide. The tragic example of Enron suggests the need to focus on whether a company's espoused values are, in fact, being integrated on a day-to-day basis in the activities, policies, and standard operating procedures of organizational life.

Values-Based Leadership (VBL) has been studied through a variety of lenses. Most frequently, the focus has been on values congruence between organizational leaders and followers. However, there is a lack of empirical research exploring values integration, i.e., the relationship between an organization's rhetoric about values and the policies and standard operating procedures that influence its day-to-day operations and organizational employees. Consequently, this qualitative case study examined integration within one organization that claims to be values driven. Research methods included interviews, document analysis, and a limited amount of participant observation.

Findings from this study provided four insights: (1) Values integration requires ceaseless effort; (2) organizational values can exist in tension with one another: (3) proximity to an organization's headquarters impacts integration; and (4) cross-cultural values integration may be problematic. This research will ultimately provide an assessment tool organizational leaders in the future can use to examine whether a gap exists between their organization's rhetoric about values and the values that are operational in day-to-day organizational life.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Kristy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

During the past 30 years, many large-scale corporations have subscribed to the belief that organizational effectiveness is at least partly dependent on an organization intentionally articulating its values and consciously integrating those values into organizational practices (Lencioni, 2002). However, there are documented cases in which organizations had espoused values but neglected to practice them (Kunen, 2002). Enron serves as a tragic case study in which the conduct of a few organizational leaders fell far short of the organization's values commitments (2002).

The Enron Corporation was an American energy commodities and service company based in Houston, TX. Unfortunately, Enron's espoused values of Respect, Integrity, Communication and Excellence were nothing more than a poster on the wall. Eventually reviled for accounting fraud and corruption, Enron ended in a spectacular collapse that greatly impacted the lives of the company's 20,000 employees. It was the fraudulent practices of Enron in 2001 that led to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002; this law placed greater demands on corporate accounting practices (Frontain, n.d.).

Other organizations have been exposed to values-based leadership pedagogical initiatives over the past three decades; it is likely that, like Enron, many of them have posted their company's articulated values on company tokens, trinkets and/or banners on the walls within their corporate headquarters and other properties the organizations own or manage. There is no guarantee, however, that these organizations were or are any better than Enron in working to integrate the values their organizations ostensibly embrace into organizational practices.

It is not clear why the then-leaders of Enron neglected to integrate the values they espoused into the day-to-day life of their organization. But the Enron story demonstrates, quite clearly, that simply espousing values without corresponding action to translate those actions into an organization's standard operating procedures is potentially quite problematic. Successful integration of values into an organization may be one of the keys to avoiding more "Enrons" in the future.

Problem Statement

Many voices have championed the merits of values-based leadership (VBL) taking root inside an organization, and some of these voices have even focused on the need to integrate articulated values into organizational practices and standard operating procedures. Ken Blanchard has been one of those voices.

In 1997, Blanchard and his co-author, Michael O'Connor, published *Managing by Values* —a practical approach to implementing values in an organization. Based on their experience in business and consulting to businesses, the authors concluded that the foundation of an effective organization consist of two key components: mission and values (Blanchard and O'Connor, 1997). They set out to provide a clear pathway for leaders to integrate a values-based approach into organizations. Furthermore, these authors recognized a significant difference between defining values and implementing them within an organization.

In the years since the publication of *Managing by Values*, countless organizations have implemented mission and values initiatives (Lencioni, 2002). Also, leadership consulting firms, over the years, have developed values-based pedagogy to support the notion that organizational values articulated and integrated are still "foundational" to effective organizations. The firm for

which I work, Milestone Leadership, is an example of one of these firms. At Milestone Leadership, we conduct values development training sessions which guide leaders through a set of exercises designed to cultivate personal and organizational values. Included within these exercises is the process of identification and commitment to values-integration behaviors.

Although Blanchard and O'Connor (1997) provide help both for practitioners wishing to integrate values-based leadership into their organizations and for consulting firms aiding practitioners 'values-based leadership initiatives, their work is not grounded in systematic empirical research. Consequently, they do not provide a concrete picture of what values integration looks like in an organization; we do not even know, based on their work, whether training in values-based leadership is likely to have a sustainable impact on an organization.

Within the academic world, in fact, the empirical literature on values-based leadership (VBL) almost exclusively tends to be focused on and emphasizes the importance of values congruence between organizational leaders and followers. Indeed, various studies have explored values congruence from a variety of angles (e.g., Graf et al., 2011; Grojean et al., 2004; Harvie, 1998; Hayibor et al., 2011; Reilly & Ehlinger, 2007; Vveinhardt et al., 2016). yet it is not known to what extent leaders within an organization with espoused values have operationalized their stated values and integrated them in their organizations' culture. We do not know, for example, how organizations' espoused values have been integrated into such things as standard operating processes, daily operations, and employee policy handbooks within an organization's culture. Consequently, there is a need to systematically study values integration in organizations that claim to be practicing values-based leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic study addressing the need identified in the previous problem statement. Through the lens of one organization, this study explored evidence for values integration within both the organizational culture broadly and in the actual organizational practices that were part of that culture. The organization that became the case studied for this research had an articulated emphasis on VBL. More specifically, this study explored the extent to which an organization with articulated organizational values has integrated the articulated values into such things as policies, processes, and daily operations.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research, at least initially:

1. What claims do organizational leaders make about being a values-based organization, and what values are emphasized in these claims?

2. To what extent is there correspondence between (a) the organizational values leaders identify as important to the organization and (b) employees 'perspectives of the values being practiced in the organization?

3. To what extent, if at all, are values evident in the standard operating procedures and other practices of the organization (e.g., policies as represented in an employee handbook, processes, and daily operations)?

4. How, if at all, do organizational leaders monitor whether the espoused values are being adhered to?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

During the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the notion of Values-Based Leadership (VBL) has been prominent in discussions of leadership development. This review will explore a variety of studies, articles, and popular practitioner literature related to this topic. The themes identified in the literature guided my analysis of it. As such, this review is broken up into four sections.

The first section explores how the practitioner literature defines VBL. The second section considers relevant empirical studies of VBL and what these studies say about values congruence between leaders and followers within an organization. The third section explores literature about integrating VBL into an organizational context. The review concludes with a fourth section offering a brief look at literature that critiques VBL. Before these four sections are presented, I will provide a brief description of the search strategies employed to generate the literature that was reviewed.

Search Strategies

I conducted an initial search across 14 data bases, using the term "values-based leadership" and collectively covered the fields of education, psychology, business, and health. The date ranges for my initial search were 1946-2020. This search netted a total 674 results. A search of the same data bases with a limiter between 1990-2020 yielded 665 results, which signaled that the exploration and systematic study of VBL is a relatively new phenomenon. After four subsequent search rounds, using narrowing limiters and additional VBL related search terms within abstracts, I began to narrow my focus. With additional effort focusing on "effects or impact or

outcomes" as well as a cross section of journals ranging from ethics to business to change management, I eventually developed a list of approximately 50 relevant sources to explore.

In addition to academic literature, I also reviewed what might be referred to as VBL practitioner literature to determine how literature aimed at practicing leaders is defined and considered. I initially attempted to access the practitioner literature on VBL by conducting a simple Google search for the term "values-based leadership books." That term netted an astounding 488,000,000 results. Of course, it was not possible to review this massive amount of literature. However, it seemed important to examine a few influential voices regarding VBL in order to understand a practitioner perspective of what VBL means and what it entails. In other words, I wanted to consider a specific question: How do leaders in the "real world" conceive of the role of VBL? As a part of an organization that provides VBL training, I attempted to explore this question by reviewing books my colleagues and I considered influential. I divided these books into two categories: testimonials about VBL and books about VBL training and curricula. The next section summarizes and critiques what was learned from practitioner texts.

<div align="center">Practitioners 'Conceptions of VBL</div>

Testimonials About the Importance of VBL

In his book *What Really Matters*, former Proctor & Gamble CEO John Pepper makes the following statement (2007): "Nothing – absolutely nothing – does as much harm to a sense of community as the perception that senior managers aren't practicing the values and principles of the company, and that no one is doing anything about it" (p. 161). During his 7-year tenure as CEO, Pepper utilized a VBL philosophy as he led Proctor & Gamble (P&G), one of the largest international consumer goods corporations in the world. One of the many examples Pepper provides in his book is a situation in one of P&G's smaller European operations. Pepper describes

the discovery of a local general manager favoring customers through unethical practices. Consistent with P&G's articulated value of integrity, Pepper indicates that swift action was taken to remedy the problem. According to Pepper, his actions were a direct reflection of the organization's values (p.162).

Additional literature on P&G's history also indicates a sustained history of VBL as a guiding principle throughout the organization. For example, Ruggero's and Haley's (2005) interview with the person who would eventually become the subsequent P&G CEO, Bob McDonald, demonstrates a similar point of view between McDonald and Pepper. In presenting his personal leadership philosophy, McDonald asserts, "A company that impresses upon its leaders the importance of knowing and expressing their values is a company with staying power" (p. iii).

Pepper's book highlights a problem common to practitioner literature: It reports the perspectives of leaders who presumably have a vested interest in making their companies and themselves look good. Their perspectives are not triangulated with other data, even other self-report data collected from employees, for example. This particular problem is not evident in the highly influential publication by Blanchard and O'Connor cited earlier. However, their publication does not appear to be grounded in systematic research.

Blanchard and O'Connor's 1997 publication *Managing by Values* sets out to provide a clear pathway for leaders to integrate a values-based approach into their organization. The authors refer to a "Fortunate 500" company. According to Blanchard and O'Connor, a Fortunate 500 company is broader than a Fortune 500 company, which is only defined by its size and volume (1997). Instead, the authors argued, a Fortunate 500 company is "defined by the quality of service available to customers and the quality of life accessible to its employees" (p.1). In the

book, one of the authors (1997) attributed the idea of a Fortunate 500 company to a speaker at a leadership seminar which he attended in 1986.

As mentioned earlier, in the years since *Managing by Values* was published, countless organizations have implemented mission and values initiatives, and leadership consulting firms have developed values-based pedagogy. In the wake of numerous early 21st century corporate ethical failures (i.e., Tyco, WorldCom, Halliburton, and AOL Time Warner), a values-based pedagogy provided a grounding affect for organizations looking to establish ethical moorings. Nonetheless, it seems important to consider whether a values-based pedagogy is a temporal fad or is still relevant to organizations.

In other words, does a focus on values and training in VBL lead to more ethical organizational practices? The practitioner literature cited thus far does not provide actual evidence to answer this question.

A claim in the affirmative was, however, made by the late Don Soderquist, former chief operating officer of Walmart Inc. Soderquist (2005) indicated that values were deeply embedded within Walmart's organizational culture, and he attributed much of Walmart's success to its purportedly values-based culture. Soderquist indicated that while the organization had evolved over time, at least during his tenure its values never changed. Furthermore, Soderquist argued that values were the foundation for organizational actions.

Upon the passing in 1992 of Sam Walton, the founder of Walmart Inc., Soderquist (2005) indicated he was determined to prevent organizational values from deteriorating. Soderquist, like Pepper, emphatically asserted that "values were key" to organizational success (p. 31). A glance through the industry titan endorsers (e.g., Jack Welch, Stanley C. Gault, and John Pepper) of Soderquist's book, *The Wal-Mart Way*, underscores the influence of Soderquist and the so-called

"Wal-Mart Way" in shaping practitioner thoughts regarding the relationship between values and leadership. However, as was the case with the book written by one of the endorsers, John Pepper, there is no real evidence in Soderquist's book to support its claim that Walmart's success was produced even in part by its commitment to VBL. Furthermore, Soderquist's evidence for values adherence throughout Walmart is purely anecdotal.

Conceptions of VBL in the Leadership Development Literature

The Zigarmi et al. Onion Metaphor

In their formative leadership development curriculum based on nearly a hundred years of combined experience in training, consulting, coaching, and research with American business leaders and managers, Zigarmi and his co-authors provide more than 500 pages of leadership development advice (2000). Suggestions and recommendations target professors, teachers, trainers, consultants, and practitioners of leadership.

Their starting point for the student of leadership development is an internal one. By using the metaphor of an onion, Zigarmi et al. assert that leadership development begins by identifying the "layers" of self beneath the surface (2000, p. 28). According to the authors, a leader's style is formed in their inner core consisting of a central unconscious level, a dispositional layer, a values layer, and what they call a "persona," all of which eventually result in outward leadership behavior. When it comes to values, the authors suggest that it is this experientially-evolved layer that contributes to management moments. In other words, core value beliefs greatly impact leadership behavior.

That last statement has a fair amount of face validity associated with it. And the authors' emphasis on the unconscious origins of values and VBL also seems rather self-evident and im-

portant. However, as was the case with what was characterized as the testimonial literature described above, the evidence presented by Zigarmi et al. to support their claims is exceedingly limited. In the book's preface, the authors briefly reference a 7-year statistical study to support the publication's content. However, this study is not provided for the reader.

The Personnel Decisions International Perspective

Personnel Decisions International (PDI), now under parent company Korn Ferry, has long been a central voice within the leadership development market. Their perspective is much less focused on what happens within the internal layers of individual consciousness and more on what could be considered external behavioral skills. Consequently, values are mentioned, but they are not as much a focal point as was the case in the work by Zigarmi et al. (2000). In the sixth edition of their seminal work *The Successful Manager's Handbook*, Stevens et al. (2000) present PDI's latest "research" on what they conceive of as four critical leadership dimensions: Thought Leadership, Result Leadership, People Leadership, and Self Leadership. Embedded within the four dimensions are nine core factors, each consisting of specific competencies associated with the different factors. As has been already noted, in contrast to Zigarmi et al.'s inward-out approach to leadership development, PDI's approach appears to have a skills-based focus. For example, each chapter of competency analysis consists of recommended tips, techniques, or practices.

Essentially PDI provides a very linear, pragmatic, external skill-based approach to leadership development. According to their methodology, there appears to be minimal emphasis on VBL. While PDI clearly alludes to the importance of ethical values, behavioral consistency, and

ethical congruence among leaders, there is only slight importance placed on organizational values. This is in stark contrast to Zigarmi et al.'s (2000) strong emphasis on the role of values in leadership development.

Similar to Zigarmi et al.'s book (2000), however, the PDI book does not seem to have been supported by systematic empirical research. Though the term *research* is utilized when justifying claims and procedures that are recommended, research methods are not discussed, and research results are not presented.

Summary

In most cases, the practitioner literature I reviewed strongly endorsed VBL. But this endorsement is not supported by credible empirical evidence. Instead, the reader is asked to, in essence, trust the authors when they argue for VBL. Hopefully, in the future, the practitioner literature will be more informed by systematic empirical study. This discussion now turns its attention to other academic literature about VBL to see what it says about the concept.

Empirical Academic Literature

When reviewing the academic literature, I attempted to bracket what I knew and let the themes emerge from the work I was reading. When I did this, what emerged was a strong focus on values congruence between leaders and followers. That is the first topic discussed below.

The second topic discussed below, values integration into organizational practices, was less frequently explored in the literature. It had salience for me nonetheless, in part because I have always been interested in whether leaders 'rhetoric is mirrored in their organizational practices. This interest, in fact, is at the center of this dissertation study.

The Importance of Values Congruence

In sifting through the VBL literature, especially that which addresses its implications for organizational leadership, one theme immediately rose to the top: the importance of values congruence—more specifically, values congruence between organizational leaders and followers. This part of the discussion focuses on the following aspects of the literature on leader/follower congruence: (a) the starting point for leader/follower values congruence, (b) implications of values congruence and incongruence, (c) measuring values congruence, and (d) the leader-centric nature of the congruence literature.

The Starting Point for Leader/Follower Values Congruence

Hester and Killian (2010), along with Ciulla and Forsyth (2011), agree that values congruence is grounded in both a moral and relational foundation. Hester and Killian emphasize the need for leaders to intentionally examine shared values from the standpoint of a moral foundation; they also assert that VBL is rooted in a relational exchange between leaders and followers.

Ciulla and Forsyth (2011) reference Burns 'conception of transforming leadership when discussing values congruence between leaders and followers. Ciulla and Forsyth note that, according to Burns, transforming leadership is rooted in a values-oriented dialogue between leaders and followers that results in values congruence (Ciulla & Forsyth, 2011).

Each of the aforementioned authors agree on the importance of leader/follower relationships in establishing values. And they agree on the idea that values, which reflect a shared moral perspective, are likely to enhance leader/follower values congruence. However, they differ slightly on the starting point for values congruence. Burns, at least as Ciulla and Forsyth (2011) read him, hints at a values dialogue as a starting point for establishing values congruence, while

Hester and Killian (2010) propose the examination of shared values as a starting point for developing congruence. In other words, Ciulla's and Forsyth's (2011) Burns-inspired analysis supports the belief that values congruence needs to be constructed, whereas in Hester's and Killian's discussion, shared values already exist and only need to be articulated.

Similar to Hester and Killian, Haslam et al. (2020) propose a relational shared values paradigm in which influential leaders are masters of group identity. According to the authors, group identity is accomplished through strong leader and follower relationship-building which is bolstered by shared values. Through the expression of shared values and the articulation of beliefs and priorities, organizational leaders identify with followers, thus gaining influence as spokespersons for the group. Haslam et al. provide decades of empirical research regarding the psychology of what they call "we-ness" rooted in social identity and self-categorization theories.

Implications of Values Congruence and Incongruence

There is an apparent lack of evidence regarding the impact of values incongruence. Lancaster (1997) provides only anecdotal evidence suggesting values incongruence between leaders and followers may result in employee turnover.

Indeed, it is likely that, at the very least, the leaders of organizations and followers within organizations will prioritize even shared values differently. For example, followers may prioritize the personal value of generosity while leaders may have the organization's profitability as their top priority. In other words, the values of generosity and profitability may be shared, but ranked differently.

Reilly and Ehlinger (2007) have developed a values congruence/incongruence classroom exercise designed to highlight the conflict associated with choosing between a set of "good" values that various people within an organization may prioritize differently. Within the exercise,

participants choose a hypothetical "new" CEO for an organization. Participants assess a company's values and then select one of six potential candidates for the CEO position based on the CEO's listed values. Each value option is considered positive. Thus, selecting the new CEO and choosing among the different values each CEO represents becomes a forced choice among good options. This is much more complicated for the participants than choosing among CEO candidates who hold either "good" or "bad" values.

Reilly and Ehlinger (2007) posit heuristic applications from this exercise related to values in conflict between leaders and followers. According to the authors, their exercise brings to light the problem of forced values choices between leaders and followers, even when values are shared but the prioritization differs (i.e., followers 'top three values are not necessarily congruent with a leaders 'top three values, though neither set of values is considered "bad"). Reilly and Ehlinger's exercise provides a pedagogically valuable experience in the classroom, but it is not clear how applicable their exercise would be in the "real world." It may be grounded in their experiences in organizations, but it is does not appear to be grounded in systematic empirical research, neither theirs nor the research of other scholars.

Problems with empirical evidence—or lack thereof—is common among much of the academic literature on values congruence, even literature that does not offer a simulation to be used in teaching. Klenke (2005), for example, claims there are positive outcomes on organizational climate and culture resulting from values congruence. Though Klenke references literature and vaguely hints at empirical studies, she provides no direct empirical evidence to support her claim. Similarly, although Grojean et al. (2004) draw attention to the critical role leaders play in establishing a values-based climate, they provide no empirical evidence to document what this

role entails. It appears that the implications of value congruence or lack of congruence between organizational leadership and followers 'value rankings has not been systematically researched.

Measuring Values Congruence

One reason for the absence of empirical research about the impact of values congruence is that there does not appear to be a simple and obvious way to quantify it. Harvie (1998) proposes measuring job satisfaction as one indicator of values congruence. In her quantitative analysis of four out of five divisions within a large Canadian governmental agency, Harvie found some positive associations between values congruence and job satisfaction. There are problems with Harvie's study, however. For example, Harvie's methods could not guarantee anonymity due to the need for following up with survey participants. Thus, it is not clear to what degree response bias or social desirability influenced her results. Furthermore, it is not clear to what degree Harvie's results would be relevant to a non-government agency.

Graf et al.'s (2011) dual studies, which built upon the work of Van Quaquebeke et al.'s (2010) research, propose yet a different lens through which values congruence may be viewed, then measured. The authors' quantitative analysis of what Van Quaquebeke et al. called "ideal" and "counter ideal" value orientations (i.e., values that either attract or repel followers) found both value orientations explained variance in the followers 'respect for, and identification with, their leaders. Hence, another form of congruence measurement may be rooted in a follower's attraction to or repulsion by a leader's values. Although the authors conducted two studies that supported their hypotheses, participant and organizational demographics are not clear. Consequently, it is difficult to determine how effectively their findings might be generalized.

The Leader-Centric Nature of Values Congruence Literature

Vveinhardt et al. (2016) and Hayibor et al. (2011) have looked at values congruence from the perspective of senior leadership. More precisely, their studies have systematically considered values congruence through two lenses. First, Vveinhardt et al. considered ways to harmonize individual and organizational values from an executive leader's point of view. Their qualitative work does arrive at conclusions that are consistent with the work of Harvie (1998) regarding a variety of causes for values incongruence. Nevertheless, their sample size of eight only considers the perspective of an executive leader and not that of followers. Furthermore, the organizations within their sample all have 600 or fewer employees. So, it is reasonable to question the applicability of their findings to larger organizations.

Likewise, Hayibor et al.'s (2011) quantitative assessment of values congruence between CEOs and senior leaders only considers the upper echelon of organizational leadership. Additionally, Hayibor et al.'s samples in at least two studies are heavily skewed towards male leaders (i.e., 92% and 95%). As a result, it is not clear how their results would apply to organizations with even a reasonably modest number of female executives.

The aforementioned research suggests a need for more systematic empirical research considering the followers 'perspective in relation to values congruence. Devereaux (2003) considers the relationship between two European principals' espoused and practiced values from their perspective and the perspectives of others. The sample does include one teacher from each of the principal's schools, yet the teachers who were interviewed were considered senior teachers. Additionally, non-tenured teachers may offer a different perspective still. Consequently, questions remain regarding empirical research from the follower's perspective.

Values Integration

The term *values integration* refers to the extent to which an organization's espoused values are reflected in organizational practices. The following aspects of the literature's treatment of values integration will be discussed in this section of the review: (a) the way values are transmitted throughout the organization, (b) values integration models, and (c) industry-specific values adherence.

The Transmission of Values Throughout the Organization

Numerous step-by-step approaches to integrating values within an organization are presented throughout the VBL literature. As agents of values transmission, organizational leaders play a critical role in values integration. Brown (2002) argues that leaders are the transmission agents through an influencing process. According to Brown, the decisions and behaviors of leaders affect the transmission of organizational values into an organizational context. Brown's survey-based field study asserts that leadership behavior influences follower's acceptance of leadership values. Further, Brown reports that demographic and occupational/cultural differences affect the values conveyed by leaders. Interestingly, in the same study that presents Brown's empirical findings, Brown also notes that values transmission has not been empirically studied by other researchers.

Brown's perspective disagrees with Hayibor et al.'s (2011) findings, which suggest that values-based leadership is associated with charismatic leadership. Instead, Brown (2002) asserts that strong attachment to charismatic leadership is too limiting. According to Brown, non-charismatic leaders have successfully integrated values into organizational contexts.

Although Brown's study is an empirical oasis in a field with exceedingly limited systematic empirical evidence, there are potential problems with Brown's survey methods. For example,

the survey included a letter from management urging survey recipients to participate in the study. It is not clear to what degree this letter from management may have contributed to either response bias or social desirability bias.

Values Integration Models

Richard Barrett is one of the major contributing voices within the sphere of organizational transformation. Barrett's (2006) seminal work concerning a systematic approach to organizational cultural transformation presupposes the necessity of building a values-driven organization. Barrett is well known as a proponent of the idea of values providing strict guidance for organizational leaders. Furthermore, Barrett is often quoted within the non-empirical domain of values integration. Barrett's VBL integration work is widely applied by leadership practitioners around the world.

Despite the extensive influence on the field of what could be called a systems approach to values integration, I was not able to find any systematic empirical research on which Barrett based his recommended framework for promoting values integration. Given the absence of much other research in the field, the empirical grounding of Barrett's quite influential framework is not clear.

Whatever its origins, Barrett's systematic approach to tackling values integration is similar to Bresciani's (2010) seven-step approach. In her article, written for academic deans and department chairs, Bresciani provides an excellent framework for assessing values in the context of a learning institution. She presents an assessment-oriented framework which seeks evidence within the organization for integration of values. She provides steps for academic administrators to evaluate evidence for integration (e.g., leadership decision making and resource allocation).

As in the practitioner literature, however, there are no references in Bresciani's work to systematic empirical studies related to integration.

Prilleltensky (2000) and Viinamäki (2012) each recommend somewhat different integration guidelines for organizational leaders. Whereas Viinamäki proposes three integration steps (sensing values, values awareness, and competence to implement), Prilleltensky proposes a model in which an organizational leader delicately balances values, interests, and power among workers and leaders. Both researchers cite limited literature to support their positions; neither offers empirical evidence that they, themselves, had generated.

Others suggest organizational values integration into organizational culture can be managed from the boardroom (Harpur & Finn, 2014). Still others indicate integration begins with an organizational values statement. For example, Kernaghan (2003) argues for the necessity of integrating values into public service. In particular, he advocates for an emphasis on the values statement. Kernaghan examined values statements from a set of public administration Westminster-style government entities located in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Kernaghan posits a values statement which captures the essence of public service as a key starting point to successful values integration within the public service sector. Even so, Kernaghan provides essentially no empirical evidence to support his claims about the importance of value statements; he only documents that having such statements is a standard operating procedure in public service sector organizations in Commonwealth nations.

Industry Specific Values Adherence

Though it appears that little empirical research exists under the theme of values integration, there are a few studies that highlight industry-specific values adherence. Helmig et al. (2015) and Rathert and Phillips (2010) both conducted robust research projects related to values-

based leadership uniqueness in the non-profit and medical sectors, respectively. In looking at the non-profit sector, Helmig et al.'s quantitative analysis contradicts early research regarding variations in values adherence within the non-profit sector. Helmig et al. evaluated the German hospital industry. Of their sample group, 38% were from the non-profit sector. After conducting two survey pretests and drawing from a diverse demographic representation, Helmig's findings appear sturdy. Essentially, Helmig et al.'s findings suggest that when values adherence is evaluated within the same sector (i.e., the non-profit medical sector), adherence may differ. Although, it should be noted that the for-profit sample was slightly underrepresented at 23% compared to 39% of public institutions.

Rathert and Phillips (2010) surveyed 345 care providers evaluating the impact of disclosure training (i.e., reporting medical errors to patients) on staff and organizations. Findings suggest that those organizations which implement disclosure training for their staff demonstrate an integrated values-based environment resulting in a more committed staff. Fundamentally, according to Rathert and Phillips, staff feel more committed to an organization that practices honesty (as a cultural value) with patients, more than emphasizing the self-preservation of the organization. Comprehensive demographic data are not clear in Rathert's and Phillips' sample. However, 87% of their respondents were frontline nurses. Overall, 92% of total respondents indicated they provide front-line care to patients.

Critiques of VBL

Even as a relatively recently developed concept, VBL has found a place in literature about organizational leadership research and leadership development practice. Indeed, the concept has been championed within both fields. For example, Copeland (2014) reviewed VBL liter-

ature, including some empirical studies, through the lens of authentic, ethical, and transformational leadership and concluded that leaders in whom these three VBL-related behaviors are found are perceived by followers to be more effective. In addition, similar to the previously mentioned Brown (2002) study, Copeland rejects the narrow definition of values-based leadership that ties VBL to charismatic leadership. Based on her analysis, Copeland asserts that VBL is essential for all leaders, charismatic or not, to be successful. Yet she also identified the need for longitudinal studies of VBL effectiveness.

While there is strong enthusiasm for VBL, including a limited number of articles consisting of some credible empirical support for a values-based approach to leadership, critiques of VBL are scarce. Perhaps this is at least partially due to the relatively recent emergence of VBL and the lack of longitudinal studies (Cha & Edmondson, 2006). Nonetheless, some questions regarding VBL have been raised within the literature. This final section of the review briefly summarizes these questions/critiques.

In her critique of values-based leadership models, Nahavandi (2015) identifies the need to test assumptions regarding VBL. For example, Nahavandi questions the notion that VBL "works in all situations and contexts" (p. 200). Consequently, she calls for further research. Perhaps future researchers can systematically explore the relationship between VBL effectiveness and organizational context.

In a similar vein, Treviño et al. (2003) assert that an espoused organizational commitment to VBL is not enough to promote ethical leadership in an organization. Instead, Treviño et al. argue for the inclusion of transactional components (e.g., reward systems for ethical behaviors) within the concept of VBL. Interestingly, this argument appears to be challenged by Copeland's (2014) review of the prevailing literature and research on various constructs associated with

VBL. Copeland references Bass' assertion that transactional leadership produces mediocre performance from individuals. These seemingly contradictory conclusions would seem to require further inquiry and analysis.

Some literature also suggests that ethics associated with VBL may have a dark side. Viinamäki (2012) addresses the possibility of VBL becoming narrowly pragmatic, i.e., that VBL is justified solely because it is "good for business." Similarly, Brown (2002) draws attention to the capacity for follower exploitation and raises questions about the potential for engendering "risky" follower behaviors associated with blind allegiance to a leader employing VBL. Nahavandi (2015) seems to extend this concern by suggesting that VBL could, at times, lead to a cavalier dismissal of dissenting points of view within an organization.

Getha-Taylor (2009) addresses one additional potential downside of VBL in her discussion of Admiral James Loy's attempt to employ VBL during his efforts to launch the Transportation Security Administration and in his subsequent work as deputy secretary of the Department of Homeland Security in the wake of 9/11. As effective as Loy's leadership appears to have been, Getha-Taylor raises a concern about values ownership: VBL can be perpetuated by the efforts of a single influential organizational leader; however, according to Getha-Taylor, the sustainability of organizational cohesion is directly tied to the collective efforts of many.

Getha-Taylor (2009) notes a conception of VBL that requires further empirical analysis: Is there a way that the values of the organization can be jointly "owned"? And, if so, what does that joint ownership look like? How can it be accomplished?

The point can be made a slightly different way: If the sole proponent of VBL within an organization departs, is the organization likely to experience more than a leadership vacuum? Might it also experience a philosophical one?

Conclusion: Implications for Future Research

Within this review of the literature, I have attempted to sift through ideas and, in a few instances, findings about values-based leadership. I have explored the practitioner lens, the lens of values congruence, and the lens of values integration, along with critiques of VBL. In almost all parts of the existing literature, there is an apparent lack of empirical research on VBL. Consequently, there were innumerable opportunities to explore the many claims that have been made about it. My plan was to make a modest contribution in the form of an empirical case study designed to systematically gather empirical knowledge about VBL from the perspective of one organization through the case study method.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I begin with a review of my research questions and a discussion regarding my selection of case-study methodology for this study. Then a review of site and participant selection procedures follows. I then provide data collection procedures which consist of details regarding interviews, document review and participant observation. This chapter then closes with my assessment of the significance and limitations of this study.

Research Questions and The Case-Study Method

Case study methodology was employed in this research project. And as previously referenced, the following questions guided my research:

1. What claims do organizational leaders make about being a value-based organization, and what values are emphasized in these claims?

2. To what extent is there correspondence between (a) the organizational values leaders identify as important to the organization and (b) employees' perspectives of the values being practiced in the organization?

3. To what extent, if at all, are values evident in the standard operating procedures and other practices of the organization (e.g., policies as represented in an employee handbook, processes, and daily operations)?

4. How, if at all, do organizational leaders monitor whether the espoused values are being adhered to?

The case study method enabled the researcher to evaluate values integration from the perspective of espoused theory, and theory in use from the viewpoints of senior leadership, middle

managers and frontline workers. Argyris and Schön (1978) have discussed the tension that sometimes exists between an articulated theory of action (theory espoused and communicated to others) and theory in use (the actual theory governing an individual's actions). This is the sort of tension, within the context of values integration, that this research intended to explore, and a case study design seemed the most appropriate type to use to explore this inevitably nuanced phenomenon.

Yin (1994) described the case study method as one that "relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to be converged in a triangulating fashion" (p. 13). Clearly, understanding how values-based leadership (VBL) functions (or fails to function) in the organization being studied required the examination of multiple viewpoints and different sorts of data to generate triangulated documentation about what was happening in the organization. Therefore, a case study research method was a sensible choice for this project's research design.

Site/Participant Selection Procedures

I conducted my case study research at XYZ Group (pseudonym). According to the founder's bio, XYZ Group has grown since its inception in 2006 from a kitchen table startup to a recognized industry leader with a renowned award-winning culture. In the company's formative days, the leadership team decided that a healthy organizational culture would be crucial to its sustainable success. The founders believed that the development and implementation of organizational values across the company was critical to developing and sustaining a healthy organizational culture.

Consequently, the team brought in a consulting firm, with which I am now associated but was not associated with the firm at the time, to support the company in the development of organizational values. During the 15 years from its inception to the time of this writing, XYZ

Group has expanded beyond the borders of its local town. Subsequently, two satellite operations in the United States and one international operation in North Africa have been established as a result of the organization's expansion. As a company that began with the development and implementation of values into its organizational culture, and one that has had a track record of organizational growth, XYZ Group has been an excellent subject about which to conduct an empirical case study 15 years after the organization's launch.

XYZ Group is a for-profit retail growth agency; its clientele consists of suppliers seeking to move their products through established retailers and retailers looking to sell quality products. As a broker between these two entities, XYZ Group provides the supplier community with critical insights related to the retail industry. Among other things, XYZ Group offers suppliers logistics support, insights on merchandising, and ecommerce services. Retailers then benefit from XYZ Group's services by selling quality products in their stores.

XYZ Group is headquartered in a small town in the southern United States. As has already been noted, it has established two satellite offices located in other states. Additionally, XYZ Group has one international satellite office located in North Africa.

XYZ Group was selected using a combination of convenience and purposeful selection procedures. This research employed a convenience sample due to my ability to access a list of potential organizations from my employer's client base. The selection process also can be considered purposeful because the case study site selected was an organization with clearly espoused values that had been articulated in various organizational documents.

The study included interviews with 15 participants. A maximum variation sampling process was employed to be sure that frontline employees, middle managers, and senior leaders (including the CEO) were among the interviewees. The sample of interviewees was diverse from a

gender, ethnicity, and geographical location perspective. I interviewed nine male and six female participants. Seven of the 15 participants identified their ethnicity as white. The remaining eight participants either identified as Hispanic or did not list an ethnicity. Four of the 15 participants interviewed were from the international satellite office in North Africa. Two of the 15 participants interviewed worked in two satellite offices in the northern United States.

Initially, employees within the organization were stratified according to whether they were frontline workers, middle managers, or senior leaders. Then a total of 12 employees, four from each category, were randomly selected and asked to participate in the study. All agreed to participate.

Also, through snowball sampling, I identified an additional three participants with divergent points of view relative to the initial 12 participants. These participants were identified based on the recommendations of interviewed participants who were asked for the names of people who are likely to see things differently than they themselves did.

Data Collection Procedures

Interviews

I gathered data primarily by conducting qualitative interviews with each participant. I developed one interview protocol for each category of participant (e.g., Senior Leader, Middle Manager, and Frontline Worker). (See all interview protocols in Appendix A.) Ideally, interviews would have been conducted in person. However, due to the state of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of the study, interviews were instead conducted via Zoom. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

I scheduled interviews with each person according to their optimal availability. I then emailed each person a general consent and recording consent form. All interviews were recorded

via Zoom. During the interviews, I verbally reviewed the interview protocol with each partici-
pant.

Originally, after all the interviews were completed, I intended to potentially conduct two follow-up interviews. The first interview would have been for clarification and elaboration pur-poses to make sense of any contradictory findings. The second interview would have been for member checking purposes. However, after reviewing the recordings from each interview, I did not deem it necessary to conduct any follow-up interviews. It was a significant advantage for me to have recorded each interview through Zoom. Doing so enabled me to reference exact wording from participant responses. I was satisfied with the clarity of participant responses.

Review of Documents

Upon the completion of all interviews, I reviewed various relevant documents for trian-gulation purposes. I noted and analyzed each document on a document analysis matrix designed to record document titles, organizational value references, and relevant comments. (See Appen-dix B.) Examples include a review of questionnaires used in hiring, employee handbooks, and employee surveys. I specifically looked for mentions of values within each document. I intended to identify insights relevant to whether the company's values had been integrated into processes and daily operations at XYZ Group. I also looked to identify values rhetoric in performance eval-uations and employee feedback reports. Documents such as these were used to triangulate data generated through qualitative interviews.

Results of the document analysis process were recorded on the matrix found in Appendix B. The matrix enabled me to identify convergent, inconsistent, or contradictory evidence related to values integration within the organization. The document analysis was guided by specific questions and then findings were recorded on the matrix. Please see Sample Document Analysis

Matrix in Table 1. (A more detailed, but not filled in, portrayal of the Document Analysis Matrix template can be found in Appendix B.)

Table 1

Sample Document Analysis Matrix

Document	Values Mentioned	Relevant Comment or Observation
Year End Touchpoint	None	n/a
Website	Values-based culture	Founder Bio
Capability Confirmation Plan	None	n/a
2020 Personal Performance Factor Calibration	Values mentioned in rating performance	Peer-to-peer comment: "Plays an active role in reinforcing and building the culture of [XYZ Group] by living out our Mission Vision and Values with authenticity and influence."

Participant Observation

At the time of this research, XYZ Group operated primarily through Zoom-orchestrated meetings. Consequently, participant observation opportunities were limited. However, I was able to observe six operational meetings. Examples include short daily start up meetings, middle manager team meetings which involved frontline workers, and senior level strategy meetings. While participating as an observer, I intended to observe language and behaviors that would provide corroborating and/or contradicting evidence related to the interview data and other data that was collected through the various other methods used to document the integration of values in the or-

ganization (or, possibly the lack of integration). The participant observations data that were gathered were meant both to provide insight into daily operations and serve as another means to triangulate interview and other forms of data.

Once again, I captured these observations on a matrix (Appendix C). Also, see Sample Meeting Observations Document in Table 2 for an indication of what the matrix in Appendix C looked like filled in.

Table 2

Sample Meeting Observations Document

Meeting Name and Date	Values Mentioned	Summary of Observations
Client Services Support L10 Meeting, 3/5/21	None	Themes of prioritization, customer service and team problem solving were present. Team leaders created a welcoming environment by acknowledging a new person.
GM Team Stand Up Meeting 3/8/21	None	Energizing start up with personal question about childhood stories. Very friendly and welcoming environment. This was a mid-level management meeting.

Data Analysis Procedures

Coding was the method used to analyze all collected interview data. I captured various encapsulating quotes from each respondent which represented the participant's answer to each interview question. The quotes were then documented verbatim on a quote matrix (Appendix D)

for analytical purposes. Also, see Sample Quote Matrix provided in Table 3 to see what a filled-in matrix looked like.

Table 3

Sample Quote Matrix

Senior Managers	Would you describe your organization as values based? If so, why, or why not?
Senior Manager A (CEO)	"Yeah, we definitely use that descriptor. We do things based off our values. Values are how we operate."
Senior Manager B	"I would definitely answer yes. I remember the partners telling me from the very beginning we know we have values if we can tell stories about living them and if they cost us something."

Thematic coding provided the framework for organizing data by linking common themes into an index of categories (Gibbs, 2007). All quotes were captured and thematically organized according to corresponding research questions. I also organized the encapsulating quotes by similarity to assess insights and findings. The intention of the quote matrix was to explore the relationship between values espoused and values imbedded within the organization. Organizing the data according to theme, similarity, and corresponding research question enabled me to correlate findings directly with each research question.

Originally, I intended to create a separate categorical theme organizer document to assess each theme. However, I regarded this plan as unnecessary as it seemed better to collect data and attempt to correlate it directly with each research question. In doing so, I was better able to answer each research question based on the data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Limitations and Significance of the Study

Organizations come in all shapes and sizes, from large scale Fortune 500 companies to small non-profit organizations. This study only focused on one organization and the experience and perspective of 15 participants. Due to a narrow focus, this study did not allow for prescriptive insights for all organizations. Instead, the aim of this case study was to take the researcher, as Donmoyer (1990) suggests, to a place they could not otherwise access: the unique context and culture of one organization. Additionally, due to the nature of my leadership development work, personal bias is prevalent. I have a vested interest in seeing positive research outcomes related to the integration of VBL into organizations, especially since the organization with which I am now affiliated provided consultation in the development of XYZ Group's organizational values. Thus, a priori assumptions based on personal experiences likely informed aspects of this study.

At the same time, working as an inside researcher provided me with the advantage of knowing where to look for values potentially embedded within XYZ Group. Additionally, as a practitioner of leadership development work, it was important for me to know if VBL embedded in an organization's culture is effective, or not.

Conducting this research amid the COVID-19 pandemic created limitations for this study. I was not able to observe daily operations in person. As a result, I was only allowed to observe operational meetings virtually. Thus, it would require additional research in person to ensure my virtually-collected findings are consistent with what might be found through in-person observations. Furthermore, it is not known how my presence in a Zoom call impacted the daily operations at XYZ Group. It was not possible to fade into the background while participating on a Zoom call.

In my original study design, I intended to answer research Question 3 through observation rather than direct interview data. This question seeks to understand to what extent, if at all, values are evident in the standard operating procedures and other practices of the organization. I hoped to answer this question not through what people would say, but what I might see. I chose this strategy to minimize self-reporting bias.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I had limited ability to observe daily operations. Consequently, this is a limitation of this study. Fortunately, I was able to observe a cross section of six operational meetings. Five of the meetings involved frontline workers and middle managers. However, I was only able to observe one senior leader meeting. I also reviewed employee surveys and exit interview data which provided insights into the role organizational values play in daily operations at XYZ Group.

It is my aim that this body of research will prompt more research around the important topic of values integration. I believe XYZ Group will benefit from the findings in this research project. I intend to prepare a full summary for the CEO of XYZ Group in order to provide a snapshot of my findings relative to the exploration of XYZ Group's leadership rhetoric and integration of their organizational values.

The consequences of a gap between an organization's espoused and practiced values, as with Enron, can be significant (e.g., Enron's 20,000 jobs lost). Thus, a secondary potential benefit of this study will take the form of a values integration assessment tool in which organizational leaders are equipped to self-assess their organizations for integration. When it comes to the topic of values integration, there is a great deal of research to be done. It is my desire that this study may spark an interest for future researchers on the topic of values integration.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I begin with a brief overview of my experience conducting research at XYZ Group, along with commentary related to completing research via Zoom. I then articulate XYZ Group's organizational values with included definitions. Additionally, I organized my findings to align with my research questions. Each section begins with a question and is followed by answers given in three forms. First, I provide a findings summary in text form followed by one or more tables used to summarize all collected data as they relate to each question. I then present a discussion of the relevant data.

In addition to what is mentioned above, I discuss the results of analyses of (a) documents and (b) summaries of 40 exit interviews for employees leaving the organization. I also include the document analysis results and exit interview data, which is relevant to answering Question 3 (i.e., whether the company's articulated values have been integrated into daily operations within the organization). A discussion of these data sources has been included in the discussion of Research Question 3.

Conducting Research at XYZ Group

XYZ Group is a for-profit retail growth agency which serves as a broker between retailers and suppliers. The company is based in a small town in the southern United States, with additional sites in two U.S. cities, as well as one international site located in North Africa. Additional details about XYZ Group were provided in Chapter 3.

I conducted all research between February and April 2021. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, XYZ Group's employees worked remotely during that time. Consequently, I conducted all interviews and observations via Zoom.

Collecting data via Zoom had benefits and limitations. Virtual research was efficient, as it made it easy to accommodate employees' work schedules. In addition, I was still able to interact with all participants, albeit in a virtual "face to face" manner. However, as a virtual participant in a meeting, I could not fade into the background. Consequently, I do not know to what degree my very visible presence created participant reactivity and affected standard meeting operations.

XYZ Group espouses and defines five organizational values. XYZ Group categorizes these values in the following order of importance:

- Integrity — "Doing what is right in all things"

- Relationship — "Pursuing depth, trust, and collaboration"

- Excellence — "Delivering ever-improving performance and results with humility"

- Journey — "Embracing our past and planning our future with faith"

- Legacy —" Leaving a positive and everlasting impact"

This case study research sought to document the roles these values play in XYZ Group's daily operations.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 had two parts: What claims do organizational leaders make about being a values-based organization, and what values are emphasized in these claims? When interviewing participants for Research Question 1, I was interested in the values mentioned by participants without my prompting. Consequently, data about the values mentioned reflect unprompted responses from participants. In the next section, I provide a summary of findings for RQ 1, along with a table which organizes collected data.

Findings Summary

In Table 4, the affirmative responses are defined as those in which participants provided a clear and definitive "yes" to questions about whether their organization is a values-based organization. The partial-claim response is defined as one which indicated some uncertainty about organizational leaders' values-based claims. The deviation claim is used to describe the organization as values-led rather than values-based. It is not clear whether this is a semantic difference— i.e., a distinction without much of a difference—but it seemed an important distinction for the interviewee who articulated it. As noted in the deviation sample quote in Table 4, the participant considered XYZ Group a values-led company but did not clearly explain how it differs from one that is values-based.

During the process of data analysis, while exploring the question of whether XYZ Group is a values-based organization, I focused on specific values emphasized in unprompted participant responses. Participants did not mention the values Legacy and Journey. However, one participant did reference XYZ Group's "generosity" as a form of impacting the world for good. Although this response could refer to XYZ Group's Legacy value, the participant did not explicitly make this connection by invoking the Legacy language used by the organization.

Table 4

Data Summary and Sample Quotes for Research Question 1

Affirmative Claims	Sample Quote
Eighty-seven percent (13 out of 15) of interviewees fully affirmed XYZ Group as a values-based organization.	"Yeah, we definitely use that descriptor. We do things based off our values. Values are how we operate. We hire people, exit people, promote people and we make business decisions based off our values."

Partial or Deviation Claim	Sample Quotes
One participant partially affirmed XYZ Group as a values-based organization.	"Sometimes I see some people who don't consider relationships as important. There was not much investment in relationships."
One participant provided an alternate definition of XYZ Group as a "values-led" organization	"I believe we are a value-led company as opposed to a values-based company. The reason I say that is we hire people through the lens of our values, we develop and promote people and recognize people through the lens of our values, we resigned clients through our values lens, we let people go through our values lens, and so I think that means that we're led by our values."

Values Mentioned without Prompting	Sample Quote
Five participants mentioned in their response a specific value articulated by their organization: Integrity (three mentions) Relationship (one mention) Excellence (one mention)	"We added integrity because when we started the business, it was assumed and inherent in what we wanted to build. Then as we got into the business, we ran into gray areas."

Discussion of the Data

As shown in Table 4, Integrity was the most frequently value mentioned without being prompted by me to discuss it. However, it was referenced only by senior leaders or middle managers. This value was not mentioned by any of the five frontline workers I interviewed.

Six of the participants interviewed were not located at company headquarters. Two participants were based elsewhere in the United States, and four work in the office located in North

Africa. Only one of the six geographically distant employees (a senior leader) emphasized Integrity as a value of XYZ Group. Although the remaining participants affirmed XYZ Group is a values-based organization, they did not directly mention any specific values.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was: To what extent is there correspondence between (a) the organizational values that leaders identify as important to the organization and (b) employees' perspectives of the values being practiced in the organization? In contrast to the method used in Research Question 1, participants were asked to indicate a value they consider important to the organization. In the next section, I provide a summary of findings for RQ 2 along with a table which organizes collected data.

Findings Summary

Interviewees only named three of the five organizational values as important to XYZ Group. Some participants mentioned more than one value. The Relationship versus Excellence tension was described by two participants as one to "keep an eye on." According to some participants Relationship can have a detrimental effect on Excellence. And a concern for Excellence can supplant the priority of building quality relationships. The concerns related to Integrity range from a lack of transparency to instances of overt misleading. For example, one interviewee described a time when his department was explicitly "misrepresented" to senior leaders. Additionally, as noted in the Journey and Legacy quote in Table 5, it was not clear to one participant how to "live out" the values of Legacy and Journey. This participant identified these values as only "observed in retrospect" and not actualized in daily operations.

Table 5

Data Summary and Sample Quotes for RQ 2

Values Mentioned as Important to the Organization	Sample Quotes
Integrity (seven mentions)	"Integrity — without it, can't accomplish mission and vision."
Relationship (six mentions)	"I think relationship. It's the heart, it's how we do things that really sets us apart. So, for me, I would say that's probably the one that sticks out…"
Excellence (four mentions)	"Excellence, I think excellence is the one we focus on the most."
Journey (none)	
Legacy (none)	

Value Concerns Mentioned	Sample Quotes
Relationship-versus-Excellence (eleven mentions)	"Due to friendliness, it can be hard to hold people accountable."
Integrity (four mentions)	"Growth may be outpacing some value dimensions. Integrity for the company may overshadow integrity for an individual."
Legacy (four mentions)	"The first three values have been seen lived out in work, the last two, Legacy and Journey tend to be
Journey (two mentions)	recognized in retrospect."

Note. Some participants mentioned more than one value.

Discussion of the Data

The Relationship-versus-Excellence tension was the most prominent theme emerging

from the cross-case analysis of the data to answer Question 2. Multiple interviewees suggested

this is a known struggle felt throughout the organization. Middle managers and frontline workers tended to see the emphasis on Excellence as detrimental to building and maintaining Relationship, and some interviewees also noted they saw the emphasis on building and maintaining positive Relationship as a hindrance to Excellence in work quality. More specifically, there was a concern close relationships prevent accountability.

With one exception, the concern with Integrity was not rooted in XYZ Group's headquarters. Three of the four Integrity concern responses were from the international office. The values of Legacy and Journey were not mentioned by any of the frontline workers I interviewed.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was: To what extent, if at all, are values evident in the standard operating procedures and other practices of the organization (e.g., policies as represented in an employee handbook, processes, and daily operations)? I identified four data sources to answer Research Question 3. First, I compiled data from my observations of six XYZ Group operational meetings. Second, I triangulated my findings through a document analysis to provide a peek into values integration within daily operations. Third, I used data from XYZ Group's 2020 Employee Survey. Fourth, I provided an analysis of 40 exit interviews conducted between 2010 and 2021.

The research strategy I employed to answer Research Question 3 did not include gathering direct interview data. Instead, I attempted to answer it through observations of daily operations and through document analysis. I hoped to uncover evidence (or, possibly, the lack of evidence), of values integration in daily operations based on what I could observe directly and in existing company-produced documents. Seeing and describing what is seen firsthand is important to qualitative research (Patton, 2015). Also, I chose this research strategy largely to minimize my reliance on self-reported data that are often perceived as being somewhat biased.

As it turned out, my research observation-oriented plan was difficult to impossible to implement during the COVID-19 pandemic era, as the rather thin findings that follow indicated. As indicated in Chapter 3, my observation-only game plan to answer Research Question 3 is an acknowledged limitation of the study.

Participant Observation Data

No operational observations outside of formally scheduled meetings could be scheduled because the organization operated remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the participant observation part of the study was limited to the observation of six team meetings focused on daily operations within XYZ Group. In the next section, I provide a summary of participant observation findings for RQ 3 along with a table which organizes collected data.

Findings Summary

Meetings play a significant role in operational activities at XYZ Group. To examine themes and group dynamics, I observed a variety of gatherings among employees at all levels of the organizational hierarchy. During each gathering, I listened for any values mentioned. As noted in Table 6, Integrity was the only value discussed in the six meetings I observed, and that discussion happened in only one of the six meetings.

Table 6

Participant Observations

Meeting Name and Date	Values Mentioned	Summary of Observations
Client Services Support L10 Meeting, 3/5/21	None	Themes of prioritization, customer service and team problem solving were present.
		Team leaders created a welcoming environment by acknowledging a new person.

GM Team Stand Up Meeting 3/8/21	None	Energizing start up with personal question about childhood stories. Very friendly and welcoming environment. This was a mid-level management meeting.
Ops Leadership L10 Meeting 3/8/21, senior leader executive operations meeting	Integrity	Language of priority was consistent. A comment was made: "Always follow with values when dealing with clients." A discussion of integrity to protect clients ensued.
Executive Leadership L10 Meeting, 3/8/21	None	Theme of personal faith, growth opportunities and people issues were evident. Values award ceremony was mentioned. A democratic approach to issues was observed.
Develop Us Weekly Prep Call 3/9/21 - regular business meeting	None	A consistent theme of commitment to client priorities and needs was evident. Discussions included project updates, ideating and project analysis.
Daily Stand-Up Meeting 3/11/21	None	Very business-oriented meeting. The call included members of the international team. Friendly interactions but when compared to other meetings, less jovial sense of interconnectivity among the group.

Discussion of the Data

Prioritization was the clear theme during three of the six meetings I observed; participants were clearly focused on prioritizing customer needs and team efforts. During all the meetings I observed, Integrity was the only value mentioned by participants. Integrity was referenced in the senior executive leader meeting known as the Ops Leadership L10 Meeting. In this meeting operational decisions are being made by the senior leaders at XYZ Group.

Five of the six meetings I observed had a lighthearted atmosphere. The sixth meeting was more businesslike and less genial compared to the other five meetings.

Document Analysis Data

In addition to answering Research Question 3 through observations, I attempted to do so through a comprehensive document analysis. In the next section, I provide a summary of document analysis findings for RQ 3 along with a table which organizes the data.

Findings Summary

I reviewed a variety of XYZ Group's documents for triangulation purposes. In my analysis, I looked for evidence of values integration into daily operations. The employee surveys, job description, touchpoints (employee feedback tool), handbook, and interview guides provided a glimpse of values integration into daily operations. I specifically looked for mentions of values within each document. When I did this, I noticed most of the documents alluded to one or more of the company values. However, values were seldom central to the key content of the document. Conversely, when looking through the documents presented in Table 7, there were three allusions to XYZ Group as an organization with a values-based culture. Table 7 is used to describe collected data that informed my conclusions related to values integration at the company.

Table 7

Document Analysis

Document	Values Mentioned	Relevant Comment or Observation
Year End Touchpoint	None	n/a
Website	Values-based culture	Founder Bio
Capability Confirmation Plan	None	n/a

2020 Personal Performance Factor Calibration	Values mentioned in rating performance	Peer-to-peer comment: "Plays an active role in reinforcing and building the culture of XYZ Group by living out our Mission Vision and Values with authenticity and influence."
XYZ Group Interview Guide	Relationship (one mention)	Question: "Give us an example of a situation where you leveraged communication skills & relationship to manage through a difficult situation."
NAM Interview Guide	Relationship (two mentions)	Questions: Describe a situation where your approach to a client/customer relationship resulted in a difference making deep connection. Give us an example of a situation where you leveraged communication skills & relationship to manage through a difficult situation.
"eNPS" Satisfaction Survey 12/11/20	Nine positive comments made about XYZ's values culture	Sample survey comment: "XYZ Group has a fantastic culture, and great mission, vision, and values. I've never been a part of a company that truly lives out their values."
Recruiting Manager Role Profile	All five values mentioned	Five values listed with exemplary descriptors for each. (e.g., Legacy: Approach every new hire as if they will be a cultural flag bearer now and in 10 years.)

SIM Interview Guide	Relationship (one mention)	Question: Give us an example of a situation where you leveraged communication skills & relationship to manage through a difficult situation.
SIM Onboarding Experience	All five values mentioned	Values on agenda to be covered with new employee
Employee Handbook	All five values mentioned	Page 3: All five core values are defined. Page 67: "We want to live our value of relationships by supporting one another's passions and the activities that our children are involved in without inappropriate pressure." Page 7: Excellence and Integrity are mentioned. Page 40 references Legacy.
Year-End Touchpoint Questions	None	n/a

Discussion of the Data

Of the 12 documents I analyzed, nine explicitly mentioned at least one of the organization's values. The employee handbook offers the most complete description of all five values. The two guides to interviewing applicants for positions in the company also included at least one values-related question.

Interestingly, XYZ Group's website did not mention the five core values. Only the founder's bio on the website described XYZ Group as an organization with a "values-based culture." However, the founder's bio did not expand on what the values-based-culture characterization meant operationally, and it did not articulate the five company values.

2020 Employee Survey Data

I also reviewed XYZ Group's 2020 Employee Survey; it was completed at the end of 2020 by 102 of XYZ Group's 140 employees. Within this survey, I located one question that seemed especially relevant for answering Research Question 3. I reported survey data and included quotes from the survey which shed light on employees' perspectives of times when XYZ Group's leadership did not appear to live their values. In the next section, I provide a summary of employee survey findings for RQ 3 along with a table which organizes collected data.

Findings Summary

Seventy-three percent (102 out of 140) of XYZ Group's employees took part in this survey. The data set in Table 8 is copied from one of the survey questions germane to the focus of this case study, since it asked survey respondents to evaluate the XYZ Group's success in applying the company's articulated values in day-to-day business operations. The survey results indicate that nearly all of the employees who participated in the survey consider XYZ Group as either "good," "very good," or "excellent" at applying one or more of the organizational values to daily operations. Each response category was coded as follows to determine the highest-ranking value according to weighted average: Poor (1), Fair (2), Good (3), Very Good (4) and Excellent (5).

There were no "poor" rankings reported in the survey. Additionally, fewer than 3% of participants identified XYZ Group as "fair" at applying the value of Legacy into daily operations. And fewer than 1% of respondents ranked XYZ Group as "fair" at applying the value of Journey into daily operations.

Table 8

The 2020 Employee Survey

[XYZ Group] has created a specific list of values to guide how we operate our business. How good is XYZ Group at applying these values to our day-to-day business? (one for each selected)

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Weighted Average
Integrity	0%	0%	3.92%	23.53%	72.55%	4.69
Excellence	0%	0%	9.8%	37.25%	52.94%	4.43
Relationship	0%	0%	8.82%	26.47%	64.71%	4.56
Journey	0%	0.98%	9.8%	31.37%	57.84%	4.46
Legacy	0%	2.94%	5.88%	33.33%	57.84%	4.46

Sampling of Survey Comments Regarding Times when XYZ Group Failed to Live out Their Values.

"I believe XYZ Group fell short of its values during the international office's transition to new leadership."

"I think we live out the values very well to our clients. However, I don't think that we also practice what we preach to our internal teammates."

"Slowly, values meetings feel like the focus is on self vs. on team."

"Excellence: Due to workload/pace it is impossible to deliver against this Value at all times."

Discussion of the Data

The weighted average results of the survey indicate that the employees of XYZ Group consider the value of Integrity (weighted average of 4.69) as the most widely applied value in "day to day business." The value of Relationship (weighted average of 4.56) was considered the second most widely applied value from the employees' perspective.

Additionally, of the five organizational values, Integrity was rated highest in the "excellent" category. More than 70% of respondents rated XYZ Group as "excellent" at applying Integrity to day-to-day business during 2020. As referenced at the beginning of this chapter, XYZ Group's senior leaders rank their organizational values according to importance; the organization's hierarchical ranking places Integrity and Relationship as the number one and two values of

the organization. Thus, it is interesting to note that, according to the survey data, Integrity and Relationship received the highest rankings in the "excellent" column (i.e., 72.55% for Integrity, 64.71% for Relationships).

Exit Interviews Data

I reviewed summaries for 40 exit interviews conducted by an outside consultant with those leaving the company to explore the perspectives of employees who departed from XYZ Group. I wanted to gain insights related to how those leaving the company felt about the organization's values. In the next section, I provide a summary of exit interview findings for RQ 3 along with a table which organizes collected data.

Findings Summary

In Table 9, Part A is used to provide an overview of total values mentioned across all exit interviews, classified as either positive (affirming) or negative. Part B is used to provide a summary of departure themes (i.e., reasons employees left XYZ Group). Four themes were identified and organized by type according to the total number. To ensure anonymity, I was not permitted to share quotes from the exit interviews. As a result, I classified comments according to my interpretation of reviewed comments. In my review of these documents, I specifically looked for the role of organizational values on employee departures from XYZ Group.

Table 9

Exit Interviews

Part A. Exit Interviews (40 total ranging between 2010–2021)			
Values Mentioned	Total Mentions	Total Positive	Total Negative
Integrity	11	11	0

Relationship	12	7	5
Excellence	4	1	3
Journey	1	1	0
Legacy	1	0	1

Part B. Job Departure Themes

Theme	Description	Total	Observations from Comments
Job Fit	Departure based on wrong fit for job	6	Comments were related to misfit between skill set and job requirements.
Job Related	Departure based on seeking new opportunities outside of XYZ Group	19	Comments were mostly related to individuals seeking new opportunities.
Let Go	Departure based on XYZ Group letting an employee go	2	There were no relevant comment observations.
Personal Reasons	Departure based on personal reasons	11	Comments were related to work-life balance, family priorities, relocations, and financial needs.
Unclear	n/a	2	n/a

Discussion of the Data

Relationship was the value mentioned most often in exit interviews. Seven mentions were positive, while five were negative. Integrity was the second most mentioned value; each of these 11 mentions was positive. Excellence was the third most mentioned value, with four total mentions by participants. Three of the four mentions of Excellence were negative. The negative mentions related to the impact of another value—i.e., Relationship—on Excellence. Either excessive workloads designed to promote the value of Excellence were seen as hindering the implementation of the Relationship value, or a concern with promotion of Relationship was seen as making it difficult to realize the value of Excellence.

The most frequently identified theme in the data is job-related departures due to individuals pursuing new opportunities or promotions in other organizations. Desire for growth is another strong theme among the 19 departures reviewed. It should also be noted the highest concentration of departures from 2016-2021 was "Job Related." I was not able to acquire exit interviews from the international office. What is also important, here, is that there was no evidence in the exit interview summaries I was permitted to review that indicated the organization's values-based culture led to employee departure from the company.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 was: How, if at all, do organizational leaders monitor whether the espoused values are being adhered to? In the next section, I provide a summary of findings for RQ 4 along with a table which organizes collected data.

Findings Summary

Each response is classified by formal or informal means for monitoring values adherence throughout XYZ Group. Formal mentions include structured organizational practices in which

values adherence is monitored. The list of organizational practices included official meetings in which organizational values were regularly discussed and stories which demonstrate adherence to values are shared. Additionally, formal values awards ceremonies provided a significant means through which values adherence were celebrated (and presumably promoted) throughout the organization. Informal values adherence included mentions of values role-modeling by leadership and informal conversations regarding values, also known as "feedback loops." Sample quotes from three different levels of organizational responsibility have also been provided in Table 10.

Table 10

Data Summary and Sample Quotes for Research Question 4

Job Position	Formal Monitoring of Values	Informal Monitoring of Values	Sample Quotes
Senior Leaders	Meetings (four mentions) Survey (one mentions) Hiring (one mentions)	Story (four mentions) Example (five mentions)	"The first week on the job, I'm meeting with every person to ensure that that they understand what they [the organization's values] mean…once a quarter we devote time to telling stories of values."

Middle Managers	Hiring (one mention) Survey (three mentions)	Example (one mention) Feedback loop (two mentions)	"My director is all about relationships. So, she has done a good job of fostering an environment where we feel like we can invest in relationships."
Frontline Workers	Hiring (two mentions)	Example (one mention)	"I think it starts with hiring; it's a pretty rigorous hiring process."

Note. Two senior leaders each mentioned two different meetings.

Discussion of the Data

According to most participant responses, there is a strong blend of formal and informal means through which XYZ Group leaders monitor the adherence to organizational values. Participants reported meetings, hiring practices, and employee surveys are the most common formal means for monitoring the integration of values within organizational life, while stories of values celebration and leadership-role modeling are the most prevalent informal means. Frontline workers offered the fewest mentions of means by which XYZ Group leaders monitor adherence to organizational values compared with middle manager and senior leader perspectives. Two of the four international office employees interviewed — both frontline workers — offered no indication of either a formal or informal means by which leaders monitor adherence to organizational values at XYZ Group.

Conclusion

XYZ Group appears to have integrated and aligned at least three of their values into organizational practices. Document analysis and participant interviews indicate that Integrity, Relationship, and Excellence appear integrated into daily operations at some level throughout the organization. Journey and Legacy were briefly identified in the document analysis and employee survey data. However, these values were scarcely mentioned by those participants who were interviewed. Because my involvement with the day-to-day life of the organization was exceedingly constrained by the COVID-19 epidemic that was occurring during the period in which I was collecting data, there is a need for additional research and greater clarity regarding the operationalizing of these two values.

Additionally, an interesting dynamic emerged related to values integration in proximity to XYZ Group's headquarters. When compared to the headquarters site, there was little evidence in the data I was able to collect during COVID-19 times of the integration of XYZ Group's five values in the international satellite office.

XYZ Group has developed both formal and informal means for monitoring adherence to organizational values. Furthermore, the tension that exists between the values of Relationship and Excellence is widely felt throughout the organization. I will use Chapter 5 to explore the implications of these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This chapter begins by briefly reviewing the problem statement referenced in Chapter 1. I then succinctly summarize the study's key findings followed by a brief discussion of my findings and the existing literature. I then provide an interpretation of findings and implications for future research. This chapter closes with implications for organizational practice and my conclusion.

Review of Problem Statement

Within the practitioner literature, as referenced in the framing of this research in Chapter 1, there are resources available for those wishing to integrate values-based leadership into their organization and for consulting firms aiding practitioners' values-based leadership initiatives. However, because these bodies of literature are not grounded in systematic, empirical research that provides details of what values-based leadership looks like in practice, it does not provide much in the way of detailed information about the form that values integration takes in organizations. Also, it is unknown whether training in values-based leadership is likely to have a sustainable impact on an organization.

Within academia, empirical literature on values-based leadership (VBL) almost entirely emphasizes the importance of values congruence between organizational leaders and followers. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, various studies have explored values congruence from different perspectives. However, it is not known to what extent leaders within an organization with espoused values have operationalized their stated values and inculcated them within the organization's culture. For example, we do not know how an organization's espoused values have been integrated into policies (i.e., represented in an employee handbook), processes, and daily operations.

Consequently, there is a need to systematically study values integration in organizations that claim to be practicing values-based leadership. The purpose of this study was to conduct an empirical, systematic case study addressing the extent to which one organization with articulated organizational values has integrated these values, as reflected in the employee handbook, processes, and daily operations.

Summary of Findings

A summation of answers to the four research questions is as follows:

What claims do organizational leaders make about being a values-based organization, and what values are emphasized in these claims?

- o XYZ Group considers itself a values-based organization with an emphasis on Integrity. The organization articulated five values (in order of importance): Integrity, Relationship, Excellence, Journey, and Legacy. In total, 13 of 15 participants fully affirmed XYZ Group as a values-based organization. Five of the 13 individuals voluntarily emphasized three of XYZ Group's values: Integrity, Relationship, and Excellence.

To what extent is there correspondence between (a) the organizational values leaders identify as important to the organization and (b) employees' perspectives of the values being practiced in the organization?

- o To varying degrees, the values of Integrity, Relationship, and Excellence were considered important to the organization. Most respondents agreed that Integrity is in practice at XYZ Group's headquarters. Yet, there is a concern about the practice of Integrity from the perspective of employees in the international office. A

tension between promoting Relationship on the one hand and striving for Excellence on the other is experienced widely throughout the organization. At times, this tension may diminish the application of both values. There was little evidence generated in this study that Journey and Legacy have been integrated into the organization.

To what extent, if at all, are values evident in the standard operating procedures and other practices of the organization (e.g., policies as represented in an employee handbook, processes, and daily operations)?

- o Five of the six meetings observed exemplified the value of Relationship. Excellence was exemplified in the strong commitment to customer priorities. Integrity was a topic of conversation in at least one meeting. The five organizational values can be found in numerous documents at XYZ Group (e.g., interview guides, handbook). The exit interview data the company allowed me to review revealed a positive perspective on the value of Integrity, while the Relationship-versus-Excellence tension surfaced in employee comments. In addition, the employee survey corroborates integration of organizational values into daily operations. Still, there is concern regarding the extent to which the values have been made operational in the international satellite office.

How, if at all, do organizational leaders monitor whether there is adherence to espoused values?

- o Organizational leaders monitor values adherence through formal and informal means. Formal means include regular employee surveys, which function as a feedback tool enabling leaders to gauge employees' perceptions of values in

practice. Informal means include leadership role-modeling, which is meant to provide an example for employees to see values in practice. Additionally, informally sharing stories of values in practice provides informal means by which leaders can monitor whether employees are practicing values. The international office provided limited evidence of either formal or informal means for monitoring values adherence.

Findings and the Existing Literature

In Chapter 2, I presented my conclusions regarding my assessment of the literature (or lack thereof) on the topic of VBL. As discussed, there is a great deal of practitioner literature that endorsed the practice of VBL (e.g., Blanchard & O'Connor; Pepper, 2007; Soderquist 2005). However, these endorsements are not backed by empirical research.

Conversely, within the academic literature, I identified empirical research on the topic of VBL from a variety of angles. Within this body of literature, a strong emphasis on values congruence between leaders and followers quickly emerged. Numerous studies on values congruence were available (e.g., Graf et al., 2011; Grojean et al., 2004; Harvie, 1998; Hayibor et al., 2011; Reilly & Ehlinger, 2007; Vveinhardt et al., 2016). I explored four aspects of the literature on values congruence: (a) the starting point for leader/follower values congruence, (b) implications of values congruence and incongruence, (c) measuring values congruence, and (d) the leader-centric nature of the congruence literature.

Although there was a strong empirical emphasis within the literature on values congruence, the topic of values integration was less frequently considered. I was able to identify three themes related to integration: (a) the way values are transmitted throughout the organization, (b)

values integration models, and (c) industry-specific values adherence. However, within the litera-ture there was a clear lack of research that empirically explored the evidence of organizational values in day-to-day operations. Barrett (2006) proposed a systematic approach for integration. Yet, I was not able to find systematic empirical research on which Barrett (2006) based his rec-ommended framework for promoting values integration.

In the article written for academic deans and department chairs, Bresciani (2010) pro-vided a framework for assessing values in the context of a learning institution. Bresciani pre-sented an assessment-oriented framework that sought evidence within the organization for inte-gration of values. She provided steps for academic administrators to evaluate evidence for inte-gration (e.g., leadership decision making and resource allocation). However, there were no refer-ences in Bresciani's work to systematic empirical studies. Additionally, as was demonstrated in Chapter 2, no studies have evaluated the degree to which an organization's values have been in-tegrated in day-to-day operations. Consequently, within the existing literature, it is not known what can be learned about values integration from the perspective of assessing a potential gap, or not, between one organization's espoused values versus its operationalized values.

Subsequently, this research attempted to surface heuristic insights through a case study of one organization's espoused versus operationalized values.

Interpretation of Findings and Implications for Further Research

As a result of this study, four overarching insights discovered suggest the need for further research which explores the evidence of values integration within an organization. The four over-arching insights are: (1) values integration requires ceaseless effort, (2) organizational values can

live in tension with one other, (3) proximity impacts integration, and (4) cross-cultural values in-
tegration may be problematic. Each of these insights is briefly reviewed, followed by a brief dis-
cussion of additional needed research.

Overarching Insight 1: Values Integration Requires Ceaseless Effort

Discussion of Insight 1

Running an organization is not an easy task. Among other pressures, organizational lead-
ers must drive revenue, manage expenses, and develop an effective workforce. The arduous na-
ture of managing/leading an organization only makes the challenge to integrate its articulated
values that much more formidable. To intentionally operationalize the values of the organization
requires creativity and endless energy. Values integration is one more demand upon an organiza-
tional leader's capacity, which has been the case with XYZ Group.

Since its inception, XYZ Group has worked to ensure that its values are a key aspect of
its culture. Values language is repeated throughout a variety of XYZ Group's documents includ-
ing employee surveys, handbooks, and interview questionnaires. XYZ Group also employs a va-
riety of formal and informal methods to ensure values adherence, including meeting celebrations
and leadership role-modeling. Yet, in all the leadership team's efforts, values integration is not
fully realized. This extensive effort with unrealized results seems to suggest that the process of
integrating values into the everyday activities of an organization requires ongoing effort. In other
words, values integration is hard work. If the values of an organization are going to be realized in
daily operations, it is imperative that a clear plan to achieve this goal must be articulated and im-
plemented. Perhaps organizations of the future may find success in integrating their values if
they are willing to develop a clear and measurable implementation plan. However, a plan is not

enough. For the organization to realize its values, ceaseless efforts toward this purpose from the top leadership are vital.

Implications for Future Research

It was outside the scope of this research to evaluate the best methods for operationalizing values within an organization. Perhaps future research can evaluate methods of values integration and provide practitioners with vital insights and recommendations.

Overarching Insight 2: Organizational Values Can Exist in Tension with One Another

Discussion of Insight 2

Integrating organizational values is only part of the challenge for leaders. Even if this objective is successfully achieved, there remains the possibility that values will collide in an unanticipated tension with one another, which was the case for XYZ Group. At times, the values of Relationship and Excellence interfered with one another. In some cases, Relationship was seen as a hindrance to Excellence (i.e., people were too friendly; thus, they were not getting their work done and nobody would call them on this because of relationships). Or Excellence was so important that Relationships would suffer for the sake of organizational results. This study suggests an organizational values hierarchy must be clearly described for employees.

Even more so, it would benefit an organization for leaders to describe exemplary ways in which organizational values are meant to guide employee decision-making and operational activities. Furthermore, the tension between values must be monitored and mitigated to prevent the organization from being negatively affected in the process of integrating its values. When organizational leaders of the future set out to inculcate values into their organizational culture, they should consider how the values will "play together" or, at the very least, how values tensions can be managed.

Implications for Future Research

This research shed some light on the notion that integrated values may come into conflict with each other. It was outside the parameters of this research to explore the ways in which organizational values may live more or less comfortably in tension with each other. Organizational researchers in the future might explore how this dynamic might occur. Organizational values must be practiced in a way that does not undermine their intended purpose by being in conflict with each other. Organizational leaders of the future would greatly benefit from additional research that explores this tension and how it can be productively managed.

Overarching Insight 3: Proximity Impacts Integration

Discussion of Insight 3

As organizations grow, they may find it necessary to expand geographically. Sometimes this means establishing additional locations a great distance from the main headquarters. Senior leaders tasked with guiding organization expansion are required to consider numerous factors that will impact the growth of the organization beyond its present location. Factors such as new building costs, hiring new personnel, and establishing methods for managing the operation from a distance will need to be developed. And while the majority of the organization's resources are likely to continue to be centered in its headquarters, a substantial amount of organizational resources may be required to successfully launch satellite operations. In all of the calculating and planning for an organization's expansion, it may be easy to neglect one critical success factor for the organization's future: the integration of organizational values into new operations.

In considering the degree to which XYZ Group's organizational values have been operationalized within the organization, two things were clear in the research. First, values integration was more apparent at XYZ Group's headquarters. The majority of participant interviews were

conducted with participants from the home office. However, I did speak with six participants who were not located at XYZ Group's headquarters, four of whom were from the international location in North Africa. Based on conversations with the four international participants, I concluded there was a minimal degree of values integration apparent at their location. This finding suggests that further investigation would be required to determine definitively the degree to which values integration has taken hold inside the international satellite office of XYZ Group. Furthermore, these findings at least suggest that when an organization expands its operations, proximity matters when it comes to integrating organizational values. Creative and intentional efforts must be made by leaders to ensure organizational values take root inside satellite locations.

Implications for Future Research

There is a need to further explore the degree to which proximity impacts values integration. Future research should focus on the challenges associated with integrating values into an expanding organization. Perhaps additional cross-case analysis would shed more light on the question of proximity and values integration. Organizational leaders would benefit from such insights as they plan for geographical expansion.

Overarching Insight 4: Cross-Cultural Values Integration May Be Problematic

Discussion of Insight 4

Technology has opened a wide path for organizations of the 21st century to globalize on a large scale. The ability to expand the workforce internationally is possible not only for large organizations; small organizations can likewise operate outside of their national borders. Such is the case for XYZ Group. Communication technology made it possible for XYZ Group to expand its workforce by 18 employees who reside in a small country in North Africa.

Although there are benefits to an organization expanding across borders, there are also unknowns; for example, one unknown is the degree to which an organization's values will translate cross-culturally. This research shed light on the lack of values integration within XYZ Group's international satellite office; it was beyond the scope of this study, however, to determine whether this lack of integration was inevitably due to cultural differences.

Implications for Future Research

As just noted, it is not clear to what degree this lack of integration stems from cross-cultural translation of those values. Thus, further research is necessary to answer this question for XYZ Group and for other expanding organizations that promote values-based leadership. We do not know to what degree values integration may be problematic across cultures. However, there is a clear need for future research to explore the problems that may be associated with integrating organizational values cross-culturally. The modern technological advances of today provide new strategic opportunities for organizations with international audiences. Yet, new advances necessitate new leadership strategies for success.

Implications for Organizational Practice

For organizational leaders of the future to successfully integrate their values into their daily operations, they will need to consider the costs of time and money that are necessary to make values integration a priority. Prudent organizational leaders will implement measures to integrate their values from the moment they hire their first employee, including during the interview process. The organizational leaders who commit to hire, promote, and make decisions guided by their values are on their way towards values integration, but consistent promotion efforts are required. Developing and executing a values implementation plan would assist in shaping a values-laden culture.

Although organizational leaders may set out to successfully integrate values into the organization, any of the numerous demands on their time and energy might take precedence over this goal and impede their success in the values integration area. It is as though organizational leaders need a tool to assess the degree to which their values are integrated into the whole of their organization. The tool might take the form of a values checkup list.

Consequently, based on this body of research (and additional research involving a larger organization) I hope to provide such a tool. I intend to compile the insights gleaned from this research into the form of a simple, thorough values assessment tool that leaders can use to evaluate their conduct for themselves. This assessment tool will provide a well-rounded checkpoint for leaders to determine the degree to which their organizational values are integrated. This assessment tool will include four major components. First, survey tools will be made available for leaders to evaluate employees' perceptions of values integration across the organization. Second, a template to guide leaders through locating values language within their policy and procedures will equip them to ensure values integration. Third, a full examination of exit interviews will be evaluated for insights related to organizational values. Fourth, a values adherence assessment will be conducted with the intention of identifying the mechanisms for ensuring values monitoring and adherence. The assessment will likely include a scoring mechanism that will enable organizational leaders to assess the strength or weakness of their values culture. Additionally, suggestions and follow-up training programs will be made available to the organization to support their ongoing values integration efforts.

Conclusion

I am grateful to the leaders of XZY Group, who welcomed this research project. I had the distinct advantage of studying an organization's 15-year journey with its values, albeit through

mostly ex post facto research. From the very beginning, the leaders of XYZ Group intended to create a values-laden culture. Amid their expansion and tremendous growth, they are still committed to ensuring the values are fully realized within the organization. I intended to get the research on values integration started. I am hopeful that future qualitative and quantitative research may arise as a result of this research. I am walking away from this research project with a greater appreciation for leaders who are doing the hard work of values integration. In the end, the employees of an organization with integrated values may realize the greatest benefits. In some of my conversations with XYZ Group's employees, I heard firsthand how organizations grounded in operationalized values can make life better for employees who spend much of their time in the workplace.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Frontline Worker Interview

Intro Script:
"*Thank you for participating in today's interview.*

A quick reminder: This research project is designed to explore the relationship between your organization's espoused and operationalized values.

Two other reminders: You can terminate this interview at any time for any reason. Also, remember that the information you provide will be kept confidential. I will be the only person who will know who said what during the interviews I am conducting in your organization. However, if you think that anything you say may reveal your identity to someone involved with your organization and that such a revelation could be problematic for you, please indicate this concern, either during or after the interview. I either will not report the information or will report it in a way that you agree will not reveal your identity.

If you are ready to be interviewed, let's get started."

Would you describe your organization as values based? If so, why or why not?

From your perspective, which values are the most important to your organization? Why did you select these values? Can you provide examples?

Which values are most important to you personally? Why are these values most important to you?

What values, if any, do you see in practice within your organization? Can you provide examples of these values in practice?

Please describe any gaps you have seen between the values espoused and values practiced by middle and/or senior management?

How do leaders ensure values are practiced within your organization?

Middle Management Interview

Intro Script:
"*Thank you for participating in today's interview.*

A quick reminder: This research project is designed to explore the relationship between your organization's espoused and operationalized values.

Two other reminders: You can terminate this interview at any time for any reason. Also, remember that the information you will provide will be kept confidential. I will be the only person who will know who said what during the interviews I am conducting in your organization. However, if you think that anything you say may reveal your identity to someone involved with your organization and that such a revelation could be problematic for you, please indicate this concern, either during or after the interview. I either will not report the information or will report it in a way that you agree will not reveal your identity.

If you are ready to be interviewed, let's get started."

Would you describe your organization as values based? If so, why or why not?

From your perspective, which values are the most important to your organization?

Which values are most important to you personally?

Which values do you see/not see practiced throughout your organization? Please share examples.

How do you personally ensure values are practiced within your organization?

Senior Leader Interview

Intro Script:
"*Thank you for participating in today's interview.*

A quick reminder: This research project is designed to explore the relationship between your organization's espoused and operationalized values.

Two other reminders: You can terminate this interview at any time for any reason. Also, remember that the information you will provide will be kept confidential. I will be the only person who will know who said what during the interviews I am conducting in your organization. However, if you think that anything you say may reveal your identity to someone involved with your organization and that such a revelation could be problematic for you, please indicate this concern, either during or after the interview. I either will not report the information or will report it in a way that you agree will not reveal your identity.

If you are ready to be interviewed, let's get started."

Would you describe your organization as values based? Why or why not?

Please describe the history of the role of values within your organization.

Who came up with the idea for values as a part of your organization?

What were the original values of the organization? Have these original values changed over time?

From your perspective, which values are the most important to your organization?

Which values are most important to you personally?

Which values do you see/not see practiced throughout your organization? Please share examples.

Through what formal or informal channels are values regularly communicated?

How do you monitor the practice of values within your organization?

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS MATRIX

Document Analysis		
Articulated Value	**Document**	**Relevant Comment/Page Number**

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE MEETING OBSERVATIONS DOCUMENT

Articulated Value	Meeting Name and Date	Summary of Relevant Actions Taken or Comments Made During the Meeting

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE QUOTE MATRIX

Senior Leaders	**Would you describe your organization as values based? If so, why or why not?**	**Please describe the history of the role of values within your organization.**	**Who came up with the idea for values as a part of your organization?**	**What were the original values of the organization? Have these original values changed over time?**
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				
Middle Managers	**Would you describe your organization as values based? If so, why or why not?**	**From your perspective, which values are the most important to your organization? Why?**	**Which values are most important to you personally?**	**Which values do you see/not see practiced throughout your organization? Please share examples.**
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				

Frontline Workers	Would you describe your organization as values based? If so, why or why not?	From your per-spective, which values are the most important to your organi-zation? Why? Examples?	Which values are most im-portant to you personally?	Why are these values most important to you?
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				

IRB #:
Title:
Creation Date:
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator:
Review Board:
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved

Key Study Contacts

Member	Role	Contact
		Contact
Member	Role	