THE EMERGENT SYNCHRONICITY PRINCIPLE IN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY:

SEEING THE CONNECTIONS

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The Emergent Synchronicity Principle
in Appreciative Inquiry: Seeing the Connections

ABSTRACT

This study investigates both individual and group interactions around Synchronicity awareness and the possibility of including a new *Synchronicity Principle* in Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology and practice. In his initial research, Swiss psychologist C. G. Jung defined Synchronicity as "a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than probability of chance is involved" (Jung, 1952, p. 5). Jung goes on to describe Synchronicity as coincident experiences of 'acausal' events between our inner world (the psyche: everything that is conscious and unconscious) and our outer world experiences (Ibid).

In order to gain a deeper understanding around Synchronicity and AI, the following questions are presented and discussed in this study: (1) How does one recognize Synchronicity as a social phenomenon? (2) What are the types of settings where one might acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity that provides a new perspective? Finally, (3) What is the value to create and present a "Synchronicity Principle" within an Appreciative Inquiry framework?

A mixed methodology of research is employed to address these questions. Qualitative data is collected through one-on-one personal ethnographic interviews (n=31) and focus-group sessions (6). In both settings, questions constructed in an AI framework were used (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999). Qualitative data analysis includes identifying common and reoccurring themes, recognizing specific terminologies, and recording of stories of Synchronicity experiences. Additionally, quantitative data analysis is conducted through a comparison of pre- and post-surveys of interview and focus-group participants. Quantitative analysis of a number of variables informed the interpretation of how an individual's or a group's Synchronicity awareness increased, remained constant, or declined during the process. Through the combination of foundational meta-analysis research and current qualitative and quantitative analysis, new possibilities of Synchronicity awareness are identified.

In AI, currently, five core founding Appreciative Inquiry Principles exists – *the Anticipatory Principle, the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Positive Principle,* and *the Simultaneity Principle*. Since AI's conception, the following emerging principles were introduced: *the Wholeness Principle*, *the Enactment Principle*, *the Free Choice Principle*, *the Narrative Principle*, and *the Awareness Principle*. This study outlines and discusses the construction of a new principle: *The Synchronicity Principle* and makes recommendations on how to apply this new principle. It is the hope that from this research, readers will gain a better understanding to recognize and enhance Synchronicity in their own lives, thereby and henceforth, being enabled to identify and leverage these meaningful coincidences and make deeper connections with others. It is these deeper connections that may lead people with more of such insights to utilize their strengths to do good in the world.

CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION

"When a person really desires something all the universe
conspires to help that person to realize his dream."
Paulo Coelho (1993)
~The Alchemist~

I personally believe in the power of Synchronicity and feel
more and more connection to its messages. It's part of our newest
understandings in consciousness studies and social construction of reality.
I'm excited to watch the progress of this new AI emerging principle
within our growing field!
David L. Cooperrider, April 2017

Overview

     Albert Einstein once said, "The intellect has little to do on the road to discovery. There comes a leap in consciousness, call it intuition or what you will, the solution comes to you and you don't know how or why" (Chang, 2006, P. 179). This "leap in consciousness" or "intuition," as Einstein calls it, could refer to the concept of Synchronicity. To establish an initial foundational understanding for the body of Synchronicity research, it is important to provide two definitions of the subject matter: Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry. Synchronicity, as defined by Swiss psychologist, Carl G. Jung is, a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than probability or chance is involved (Jung, 1952). In short, Synchronicity may be defined as "seeing the connections" between people, between events, and between experiences or among them. Appreciative Inquiry or AI "embodies both a philosophy and methodology for change" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 49) and is defined as, "the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms" (Ibid, p. 8).

     This introductory chapter includes a discussion of the background and rationale for the study, the definition of the problem, and the research questions and hypotheses. A definition of terms and their applications are presented as well as the study's research limitations. Literature reviews are presented in Chapter Two to provide overall insights into the research on Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry, and to create a framework for data analysis of results in Chapter Four.

     Through this investigation, readers will gain a deeper understanding of the potential hidden connections in their lives through an increased Synchronicity awareness within the framework of Appreciative Inquiry. Readers will also acquire important methods to leverage and take advantage of these connections (Wiseman, 2003). With the basis of elementary understandings of Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry, this work proposes the development of an emergent principle in Appreciative Inquiry (Ibid. p. 49), known as, the Synchronicity Principle.

Background and Rationale of the Study

I am a full-time Associate Professor and Department Chair of International Business and Management at the *Stiller School of Business* (SSB) at *Champlain College* in Burlington, Vermont, with over fifteen years of service. Our small, private, and experiential-learning college prepares students for professional business careers in for- and non-profit organizations (Champlain College 2020 Strategic Plan, 2010). Our mission statement (*The Robert P. Stiller School of Business* Strategic Plan, 2014), cited below, succinctly describes our educational goal:

> *"The SSB develops the strengths, integrity, expertise and*
> *entrepreneurial mindset of aspiring and innovative professionals to create*
> *positive change in their lives, workplaces, communities, and the world."*

My students and some business leaders have asked me, "What constitutes a happy and purpose-driven life?" "Where and how can I find a workplace culture and environment where I am able to fulfill my personal mission(s)?" "How will I personally and professionally continue to develop throughout my life?" "What will provide me with greater happiness and satisfaction in life and at work?" Questions such as these inspired me to explore the complex ways we receive and acknowledge responses that lead us to a myriad of potential life opportunities and possibilities.

My experience in working with students and organizations has taught me these questions can be creatively and insightfully crafted using Appreciative Inquiry methodology (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cooperrider, & Kaplin, 2013).

The *David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry*, housed within the *Stiller School of Business* at *Champlain College,* is, "the only academic center in the world that focuses directly on Appreciative Inquiry and its implications for Positive Organization Development and Management" (Champlain.edu/appreciativeinquiry, 2016, n.d). Launched in November 2014, the Center offers "a full range of educational programs, research, AI certification and custom collaborative learning partnerships for companies, organizations, and corporations (Ibid). As a professor of management, I work closely with the *David L. Cooperrider Center for AI* to provide workshops, actively incorporate AI methodology into undergraduate business curricula, and provide support for new and ongoing AI research efforts.

Through this experiential education process, I became intrigued by the concept of "meaningful coincidences" or Synchronicity, and began to consider how I might better understand its potential connection to Appreciative Inquiry. I wondered how I might use the existing set of AI tools to help others "see the connections" of Synchronicity in their personal and professional lives. By understanding these potentially new as well as deeper connections, both individuals and groups can realize greater opportunities for themselves and for their respective organizations.

Scope of this Study

Where and how does general recognition of Synchronicity exist? When, or in what situation, is there acceptance and acknowledgment that Synchronicity has occurred or it occurring? Is awareness of Synchronicity more prevalent in an individual setting, or in groups, or is there no significant difference? How might one acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity? A review of past literature on the subject, shows what appears to be a gap in knowledge about how individual people and communities acknowledge, recognize, and leverage

their awareness of Synchronicity. In the words of Cambray (2009), "recognition of the role of Synchronistic phenomena provides unique opportunities for emergent processes to appear in focused group activities. This is an area that deserves much further study as it has great implications for many aspects of our collective life" (p. 92).

There is also a gap in knowledge within the current AI supporting principles. My research found neither recognition nor application of the concept of Synchronicity as a tool and way of understanding connections within AI. In the words of Cooperrider and Whitney, "five AI principles and scholarly streams of thought are central to AI" (2005, p. 49). The original foundational principles are: the Anticipatory Principle, the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Positive Principle, and the Simultaneity Principle (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). "These principles will enable you to adapt Appreciative Inquiry to meet unique and challenging new situations and to create innovative practices of positive change" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 49). Subsequently, five emergent AI Principles have been developed: the Awareness Principle (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003), the Enactment Principle (Ibid.), the Free Choice Principle (Ibid), the Narrative Principle (Barrett & Fry, 2005), and the Wholeness Principle (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). One product from the primary research of this study is the origination and development of an emergent AI principle known as the "Synchronicity Principle." This new principle entails the development of new AI questions accompanied by new curriculum. This new curriculum is designed to guide participants through a pedagogical progression that provides participants with opportunities to explore their own Synchronicity experiences and memories. By exploring these personal experiences within an AI framework (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008), new insights are realized and a heightened awareness of Synchronicity is developed.

Primary Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:
1. How does one recognize Synchronicity as a social phenomenon?
2. What are the situations and surroundings where one might acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity that provides a new perspective?
3. What is the value of trying to identify and develop a "Synchronicity Principle" within an Appreciative Inquiry framework?

Central Thesis

Individuals and groups who recognize, understand, and act upon the presence of Synchronicity in their lives, will create a more fulfilling, positive, and purposeful life and career. An in-depth survey and analysis of foundational research literature suggests there appears to be an unseen and untested opportunity to develop and present a "Synchronicity Principle" within the emerging Appreciative Inquiry framework. The collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data during this research suggests indeed opportunities to develop and present curricula to individuals within an educational seminar, workshop, or AI summit format (Powley, Fry, Barrett, & Bright, 2004), and the perceived effects of this intervention are in the stipulated direction.

Purpose of the Study

The research study was undertaken for two reasons: 1) To investigate awareness of Synchronicity on both an individual basis and in group settings and 2) To explore the possibility of developing a Synchronicity Principle within AI, so the practice and theory of AI is enriched potentially. This may add to contexts in which AI can be applied and employed.

Research Methodology

This section includes an overview of the mixed methodology research used to ascertain whether an understanding of Synchronicity awareness can be recognized and leveraged for a more fulfilling and purposeful personal and professional life. A detailed discussion of this research methodology is found in Chapter Three.

Qualitative research methodology was used in one-on-one participant interviews as well as small focus-group formats. The questions were composed and presented in an Appreciative Inquiry framework (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cooperrider, & Kaplin, 2013). The quantitative research approach applies a pre- and post-survey questionnaire methodology (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). This method measured the participants' awareness and understanding of Synchronicity both before and after interviews and focus-group sessions (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, survey data were collected from the individual participant interviews and the focus-group participants. The protocol questions driving the interview observations were: Was one method more effective than the other? Was there a qualitative difference between the individual and group participants?

By incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods within the research, this study offers new insights into the definition of Synchronicity through individual and group participant responses (Ledermann, 1990; Ho, 2006). An outline of the research methodology used in interactive interviews (Kvale, 2008), focus-groups (Morgan, 1996), and *Pre-* and *Post-focus-group Surveys* (Creswell, 2012) is illustrated below, beginning with the quantitative approach, which initiated the data collection process.

Quantitative Methodology

Each survey instrument employed in this study followed a consistent research protocol. Pre-and post-event surveys were used to collect data from participants prior to, and after their involvement in either a one-on-one personal interview or in a focus-group session. Surveys were also used to gather data to compare a one-on-one setting (interviews) to that of a group setting (focus-group).

The pre-interview survey: A 10-question Likert-style measurement scale (Maeda, 2015) that aimed to capture an individual's understanding of Synchronicity. It was administered before each interview asking: How do people recognize Synchronicity? How have people witnessed Synchronicity incidences before in their lives? Have people experienced it alone and/or in groups? Are people aware of Synchronicity and its potential presence and power?

The post-interview survey: A Likert-style scale survey was developed and administered to measure and provide feedback about the participants' awareness and knowledge of Synchronicity in their lives at a specific time interval (one week) post interview. The same questions were used as in the pre-interview survey in order to provide consistency in the delivery and analysis (Creswell, 2014).

The pre-focus-group survey: A Likert-type scale survey about the participants' awareness of Synchronicity was developed. The same questions as in the *Pre-interview Surveys* were presented (see above for specifics).

The post-focus-group survey: The same questions as in the *Pre-focus-group* Likert-type scale surveys were administered one week after each session. Participants were queried whether they became more aware and cognizant of Synchronicity experiences in their lives. Focus-group participants were also asked whether they became more inclined to apply this Synchronicity awareness to help and support their personal and professional lives.

Qualitative Methodology

Interactive interviews: One-on-one interviews were conducted with participants primarily from the Northeastern region of the United States. The intended length of each interview was budgeted and planned for a minimum of 30 minutes. However, the average length of each interview ballooned to 1:30 hours.

Individual participants varied in gender identity, age, education levels, ethnicity, occupation, work status (full-time, part-time, etc.), and socio-economic backgrounds. A total of thirty-one (31) participants were invited to participate between the dates of September 15, 2015, through August 15, 2016. Personal interviews were recorded by a digital voice recorder, detailed hand-written notes, or both. Interviews conducted on the telephone were recorded primarily in a written note format. Online survey questionnaire data was recorded in the participants' own words. Notes and digital transcripts from all interviews, online questionnaires, and focus-groups were uploaded directly into *NVivo* Qualitative Research Software (QSR, Inc, 2016). During the data analysis of the actual interactive interviews and online questionnaires, common themes, similar narrative patterns, similar terminologies, and recurring descriptive phrases began to manifest (Hampshire, Iqbal, Blell, & Simpson, 2014). Common terminologies and descriptions relative to personal Synchronicity experiences quickly arose from each participant, and were captured and recorded by the researcher. Unseen connections and revelations by the participants were discovered during the interviews and in the focus-group sessions. Questions generated from these individual interviews and focus-group interactions were, "What ways will participants then view future connections through a greater awareness of Synchronicity?" "Will participants now approach future events, interactions, and meetings throughout the world in a new way?"

The Focus-groups: Three focus-group sessions, within a workshop format, were held with 9 to 14 participants present in each group. As in the pre-focus-group survey, the questions used were the same as those used in the individual interviews. The first workshop and focus-group took place on June 2, 2016, during a conference of the *Northeast Strength-based Network Gathering* (Commongoodvt.org, 2016). Two more focus-groups were conducted at Champlain College on July 13 and 20 respectively, and were coordinated with the *David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry* (www.champlain.edu/appreciativeinquiry). Digital voice recordings and transcripts were uploaded into *NVivo* software (www.qsrinternational.com) for data analysis. The research gave rise to the following questions: Do the same descriptions, themes, and terminologies emerge in a focus-group setting as in the individual interview settings? If not, what was different? Were the focus-groups more or less cooperative and generative in their approach during the question response process? Were Synchronicity connections made more or less fluidly and rapidly than in the individual interview process? Was there a difference between focus-group participants' perception of the relevance of Synchronicity awareness and individual interview participants' awareness?

Autobiographical Narrative Accounts of Synchronicity

A collection of historical autobiographical narratives are included to provide the reader with broader levels of insight as to how individuals recognize, understand, and react to Synchronicity events. The stories include past empirical evidence that support the qualitative data findings in this study (Freeman, 2007; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007).

Final Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analyses

Pre- and *Post-interview Surveys* were compared and analyzed using IBM's SPSS Statistical Analysis Software (www.ibm.com/analytics/us/en/technology/spss). The identical procedure was performed for *Pre-* and *Post-focus-group Surveys*. The quantitative differences were observed and noted. After doing so, it was observed there were three instances where the results did not support the initial hypothesis regarding improved Synchronicity awareness among participants. The reasons behind these occurrences and the recommendations for future research are presented and discussed in-depth in Chapter Four.

From a qualitative research standpoint, the data results support the future collaborative group work around Synchronicity in an AI format. Raw collected data was uploaded into NVivo software and analyzed. It was found that there was overlap and common use of terminology within both individual interviews and focus-groups using a discourse analysis research approach (Marsh, 1988; Van Dijk, 1993; Van Dijk, 2001) and a thematic coding analysis (Aronson, 1994; Ayres, 2016; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Qualitative Feedback Research for the Synchronicity Principle Viability

The potential to develop a *Synchronicity Principle* within an AI framework was addressed in personal interviews and focus-group sessions. Within these sessions, a uniquely-developed AI educational process supported the creation of the Synchronicity Principle. It was in these sessions that the initial development and testing of such pedagogy was presented.

Additionally, after the conclusion of a Board of Advisors conference, August 24-26, 2016 for the *Cooperrider Center for AI* at Champlain College, specific questions about this concept were posed to these researchers and practitioners in the AI field. Thus, a qualitative data collection process was conducted in order to validate the concept. The responses from the 16 experienced AI professionals are analyzed and discussed in Chapter Four.

Definition of Terms

This section offers basic definitions and clarifications of terms and their use in this research. Some terms are provided to further clarify the subject matter, while others are necessary to understand the study's foundation or strengthen its design. The terminology will be further elucidated in the course of the following chapters.

Acausal – In Jungian psychology, acausal may be a synonym of a synchronistic event, and related by meaning rather than causation. Not governed by the laws of cause and effect (Jung, 1952).

Appreciative Inquiry – "A composite of change practices based on the assumption that organizations have a positive core, that if revealed and tapped, unleashes positive energy and positive improvement" (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003, p. 8). It is a "philosophy and methodology for change leadership" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 8). "AI is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms" (ibid).

Appreciative Inquiry Principles – The five original principles (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) are the basic tenets of the AI philosophy. The five principles are: the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Simultaneity Principle, the Anticipatory Principle, and the Positive Principle. Subsequently, new AI principles have been added by Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) to reflect new learning and thinking: the Wholeness Principle, the Enactment

Principle, and the Free-choice Principle. Two additional principles, the Narrative Principle (Barrett & Fry, 2005), and the Awareness Principle (Stravros & Torres, 2005) are included as well.

       Content Analysis – A common form of qualitative research by making inferences and both objectively and systematically identify characteristics and/or messages (Holisti, 1968). The analysis is used to record obtained data from interviews, focus-groups, and other forms of media material (Bryman, 2008). Observational notes, recorded text, and terminology are then analyzed (Ibid).

       Focus-group – "a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes regarding a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members" (http://libguides.wpi.edu, 2016). Focus-groups in this study were also conducted with a workshop component used to deliver appropriate Synchronicity information.

       The 4-D Cycle – (Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny or Deliver), a methodology that allows an organization to identify its positive core strengths relative to an "affirmative topic" being addressed and initiate concrete operational steps to achieve its goals. (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Another widely published cycle, The Five-D Phase Cycle, begins the process with "Define" (Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

       Mendeley – an online software program for importing and managing large volumes of research data and sources (Mendeley, 2016). A screen shot of this data base is included in Appendix A.

       NVivo – A qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International, Inc. Designed for qualitative research with rich text-based and/or multimedia information, and where deep levels of analysis of data are required (QSR International, 2016).

       Qualitative Research – Methods of inquiry used in this study to provide specific steps used in analyzing the data (Creswell, 2013). This study uses exploratory inquiry-based research gain a deeper comprehension of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of participants. Data is collected through interactive interviews, online participant responses, focus-groups, and observations. The research provides insights into the questions and helps to develop predetermined ideas or hypotheses. The research collected is coupled with quantitative research in a mixed-methodology approach (Byman, 2006; Creswell, 2013).

       Quantitative Data Research – The method applies objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys (Creswell, 2013).

       Quantum Theory – Considered a theoretical basis of modern physics today. Explains the nature and behavior of matter and energy on both the atomic and subatomic levels (Griffiths, 2001). Theoretical physicists argue the connection of quantum mechanical foundational research to Jung's theory of Synchronicity (Limar, 2011).

       Social Construction – The creation of meaning through collaborative activities (Gergen & Gergen, p. 7). A theory in sociology and communication research that examines development of co-constructed interpretations of the world, which form the basis for shared assumptions around reality (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009).

       Survey Monkey – An online survey-development cloud-based software. Founded in 1999 by Ryan Finley (SurveyMonkey.com, 2016), this instrument was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data for this study.

Significance of the Study

Research into the connection of Synchronicity awareness and AI methodology is significant for two reasons. First, a greater awareness of Synchronicity can help individuals and groups to realize more possibilities of relational connectedness among people, events, and experiences. Equipped with this greater comprehension, people may then leverage and take advantage of existing and new opportunities that arise. Secondly, this research leads to the development of an emergent principle within the research and application of the AI methodology, known at the *Synchronicity Principle*. This new AI principle will promote and support both individual and group recognition of Synchronicity through an AI question format approach. In addition to this new principle, a newly developed associated curriculum is developed and presented. Within an AI framework, the *Synchronicity Principle*, and its associated curriculum, will assist individuals in identifying a more broad understanding of the role of Synchronicity in their personal and professional lives.

An extensive secondary research analysis found no existing AI principle fully addresses the concept of Synchronicity in AI environments. The development of an emergent AI principle and its associated curriculum will help individuals apply a broader awareness of Synchronicity in their own lives.

As mentioned above, the AI research and practitioner community are based on the five original founding principles. Those principles are: the Anticipatory Principle, the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Positive Principle, and the Simultaneity Principle (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). As research and application in the AI field progresses, new principles also have emerged. At the time of this research study, the emergent principles are: the Awareness Principle (Stravros & Torres, 2005), the Enactment Principle (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003), the Free-choice Principle (Ibid), the Narrative Principle (Barrett & Fry, 2005), and the Wholeness Principle (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003).

This new *Synchronicity Principle* stands on the shoulders and expands the "Five Original Principles of AI" (Kelm, 2005, p. 2). This proposed emergent principle incorporates aspects of existing AI Principles and creates new criteria. This principle is introduced and discussed in detail later in Chapter Five.

Assumptions and Limitations

This section discusses the assumptions, limitations, and scope of the study.
The following assumptions apply to this study:

1.   To this researcher's knowledge, all survey questionnaire, interview, and focus-group participants provided honest and truthful responses.
2.   Relative to the literature reviewed, the authors ensured and took the necessary precautions with ethical prudence as they collected and interpreted their research findings.
3.   After providing participants with a working knowledge about the concept of Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry, the respondents would provide suitable and usable data.
4.   The participant demographics varied in age, gender, occupation, and the level of preliminary knowledge of the subject of Synchronicity. Every attempt was made to attract a diverse population of participants.

The study had the following limitations:

1.   The quantitative and qualitative interview and focus-groups participant samplings were primarily constrained to the geographic region of the northeast United States.

2.   The researcher initiated contact with participants through email, phone calls, and word-of-mouth networking. Initially, a 30-minute period was allotted and scheduled for each interview. The actual average time was approximately 1 hour 30 minutes. Time budgeted for each focus-group was 1 hour 30 minutes (excluding preparation and analysis time), which remained on target throughout the study.

3.   The interview participant sample number (n) was a total of 31, and three focus-group sessions each had 9, 13, and 14 participants totaling n=36.

4.   The interactive interviews (Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillmann-Healy, 1997) were held in an in-person format or by phone conversation. Every effort was made to collect the individual and focus-group participants' responses through digital recordings, recorded notes, digital photographs, and the capture of data from classroom whiteboards.

The Scope of the Study

Continuous efforts were made to keep the scope of the research confined and specific. Various boundaries such as time, location, and process prevented the research from including too many objectives, or outcomes, or becoming too broadly focused (Creswell, 2012). This study remained focused on the specific topic of Synchronicity awareness and its possible connection to the Appreciative Inquiry framework for individuals and groups within a fixed geographic setting. While many new potential research avenues on the subject appear worthy of investigation, they were set aside as beyond the scope of this work. Even so, the generalizability (Blair, 2006) of this study's mixed methodological approach could be applied in either of the following potential research projects:

(1) The environment of a mixed methodology research approach to Synchronicity awareness and AI in a broader intercultural and global population. That may prove very intriguing and enlightening.

(2) The sensitivity of specific personality types to Synchronicity awareness. Future research could prove interesting to delve deeper into a broader understanding of personality theory relative to Synchronicity awareness.

Theoretical Foundations

This study has a two-fold theoretical foundation. The first building block is C. G. Jung's provocative hypothesis that there is an acausal connecting principle, which he called Synchronicity. The second is the principles of Appreciative Inquiry, already defined above. Taken together, these two allow for research design and interpretation. The development of both Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry is covered in Chapter Two: The Literature Review.

American astronomer and author, Carl Sagan, once said, "Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality" (1997, p. 45). Throughout time the human understanding of spirituality has taken many forms, incarnations, and has been given numerous interpretations. These views vary from centuries-old traditional interpretations to contemporary 'New Age' definitions. Although there is no single and unanimously accepted

single definition of spirituality, Doug Oman's historical research, *Defining Religion and Spirituality* includes one early English description as an example. He writes, "spirituality was used positively to connote a personal and affective relationship with God" (as cited in The Handbook of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 2013, p. 26).

Could there be a system or an organized framework that might provide a venue to pose such questions about Synchronicity and individual interpretations of spirituality? Is there an established methodology or philosophical environment where these types of questions could be delivered and discussed? An investigation into the design of AI suggests that it offers one such methodology, and this study explores how AI does indeed provide the generative environment in which those questions may be explored (Cooperrider, Avital, & Godwin, 2013).

An overview and analysis of the origins and applications of Social Construction (Gergen, 1994) and Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) in organizations concludes the literature review. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is "a form of action research that attempts to create new theories/ideas/images that aid in the developmental change of a system" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 49). From the investigation into these social applications, a link is developed between the founding principles of AI and current thinking around Synchronicity. There appears to be a gap in the prior knowledge and the application methodology in Appreciative Inquiry. This knowledge gap highlights the opportunity to develop a more distinct relationship between AI applications and methodologies, and the link to greater Synchronicity awareness in individuals and groups. This study illustrates a potential to leverage the concepts of Synchronicity in current AI education and training.

Organization of this Thesis

After the introduction and literature review in chapter two, the third chapter discusses the mixed methodology approach to the data collection process. The fourth chapter presents an analysis and the findings, beginning with the quantitative and then the qualitative mixed-methodology approach. Finally, the fifth chapter provides how the *Synchronicity Principle* might be incorporated within AI's philosophy and its methods. The chapter also presents the reader with practical advice for greater Synchronicity awareness, recognition, and enhancement, as well as recommendations for future directions of associated research.