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TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA – A PHENOMENOLOGICAL
STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

By

James A. Yankech

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
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Under the Supervision of Professor Brent D. Cejda

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 2015

TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA – A PHENOMENOLOGICAL
STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

James A. Yankech, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2015

Advisor: Brent D. Cejda

Trust is a foundational element for success within a higher education consortium. Defined as a group of colleges and universities united through collective effort, a consortium allows member institutions to achieve more cooperatively than alone. However these same institutions still compete in many ways – for students, government appropriations, and research dollars as examples. Therefore a balance must be struck between institutional and consortium interests. As a result trust between and among member institutions of a consortium becomes an important phenomenon to be understood. This study examined the phenomenon of trust from the perspective of consortia directors and leaders.

Two literature reviews revealed three frameworks used for the study. A best practices in higher education consortia literature review revealed organization development human process theory as the first framework. A literature review of trust within and among organizations revealed social exchange and transaction cost economics theories as the two additional frameworks.

A qualitative phenomenological research method was utilized. Nineteen consortium directors and leaders representing a variety of consortia were interviewed.

Research questions related to basic requirements for the development of trust plus interpersonal and interorganizational trust were addressed. Collaboration, commonality, relationships, and leadership were the prominent themes that emerged from the study of experiences of directors and leaders. Data collected during participant interviews confirmed trust is a complex phenomenon that must be acknowledged and understood by directors and leaders of higher education consortia.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Joseph M. (deceased) and Helen A. Yankech, and my granddaughter, Stella R. Stewart. In them I trust.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am a non-traditional doctoral student and a native of Coatesville, PA.

I graduated from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia in 1982. To this day I keep in contact with Fr. Vincent Genovesi, S.J. He is a mentor and friend. Proof that I deserved admission to Hawk Hill I was smart enough never to enroll in one of his classes.

In 1984 I met Lucinda Rose Schardt, from Davenport, NE. We married in 1985 and moved to Lincoln, NE, in 1987. We have two children, Stacey and Adam, and now have a grandchild. I am grateful for Rose's support and dedication throughout our journey together.

In 1988 Dr. Leon Rottmann, PhD, and Dr. John Woodward, PhD, (deceased), both of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, welcomed me to Lincoln, the University, and the Department of Human Development and Family. With their support and encouragement I graduated December 1989 with my master's degree. I will never forget their hospitality and support – given to both me and my family.

Several years ago I began my doctoral journey and in March 2014 Dr. Brent Cejda, PhD, of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, agreed to come in in-relief as my doctoral advisor. I am grateful for his guidance and selflessness during the ninth inning of my doctoral program. I am also grateful for the insight and support of my remaining committee members, Dr. Marilyn Grady, Dr. Colleen Jones, and Dr. Elizabeth Niehaus.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was right. Life is the journey, it is not the destination.
I also believe God can write straight with crooked lines

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Chapter One

Introduction

Introductory Statement

I often use analogies when making a point. They help me illustrate what I am trying to say. They usually add clarity to the discussion.

I like baseball. Imagine being part of a professional baseball league comprised of individually owned and operated teams. Each team is responsible for its own administration and success. Each team recruits and develops talent, hires coaches to accomplish this, and hires administrators to oversee finances and regulatory requirements. Each team is committed to the league and enjoys membership benefits but also desires to succeed and be the best of the alliance. Success of the league requires trust. Responsibility for success of the league is shared among the teams, the league commissioner, and his or her staff.

This is also true for a higher education consortium comprised of individually owned and operated colleges and universities. Each institution is responsible for its own administration and success. Each school recruits and develops talent, hires faculty members and instructors to accomplish this, and hires administrators to oversee finances and regulatory requirements. Each university is committed to the consortium and enjoys membership benefits but also desires to succeed and be the best of the alliance. Success of the consortium also requires trust. Responsibility for success is shared among the institutions, the consortium director, and his or her staff. Baseball is the analogy. This dissertation is about the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia,

specifically the experiences of consortium directors and leaders as related to the phenomenon of trust.

Higher education consortia. A higher education consortium is a group of colleges and universities united through collective effort (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999; Eddy, 2010). Higher education consortia can be geographic (Midwestern Higher Education Compact, 2013), affiliated (Committee on Institutional Cooperation, 2014), or purpose-based (Coursera, 2014) in nature. Higher education consortia serve many purposes. A consortium can help promote the value of higher education and its staff can engage and educate elected officials (Midwestern Higher Education Compact, 2013). A consortium can sponsor the development of telecommunication networks (Dotolo, 2002), promote the implementation of open source software applications (O’Neil, 2014), and coordinate scientific research (Liebeskind & Oliver, 1998; Petrie, 2007; Wiseman, 2011). A consortium can serve as a knowledge center – a repository of sorts – for higher education data, information, and metrics (Midwestern Higher Education Compact, 2013). With roots in developing library resource sharing networks (Dunfee, 1988), consortia over time have expanded services and programs as needs and demands of colleges and universities have changed (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999).

Generally speaking, an institution of higher education joins a consortium based on the assumption that a collective effort involving multiple institutions will yield more and better results than the solitary effort of a single institution (Horgan, 1999). Fiscal motives are behind many if not most consortia initiatives (Strandness, 1999). There seems to be constant attention focused on the cost – and just as much it seems nowadays on the value

and quality – of higher education (Dotolo, 1999; Supiano, 2013). Students, parents, administrators, and government officials at all levels are concerned about the escalating expense of higher education (Blumenstyk, 2014; Dorger, 1999; Dotolo, 1999; Peterson, 2002). The focus is on cost reduction or in some cases, and perhaps more realistically, cost containment (Bishop, 2002; Carlson, 2014; Peterson, 2002).

Multiple factors contribute to the success and sustainability of consortia. Institutional commitment from colleges and universities is critical (Pritzen, 1988). This includes not only demonstrated public support from presidents, chancellors and other chief executives (Pritzen, 1988) but also documented commitment in the form of agreements and contracts (Ring & van de Ven, 1994). Open and frequent communication is essential as is a shared vision of consortia mission and goals (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) added an equitable funding formula is important and each institution needs to pay its own fair share based not only on institutional size but also upon level and depth of participation. Pre-established metrics are essential to measure and demonstrate not only overall consortia performance but also individual consortia program effectiveness (Larrance, 1999). Organizational agility is critical for long term success and sustainability. Consortia need to flex, grow, contract, or adjust depending upon changes in the higher education industry (Godbey & Richter, 1999).

As I mentioned earlier, an institution of higher education joins a consortium based on the assumption that a collective effort involving multiple institutions will yield more and better results than the solitary effort of a single institution. Even so an institution still must protect its own interests and ensure its own welfare – even as a member of a

consortium. Each institution must strike a balance between self and consortium interests (Horgan, 1999; Tubin & Levin-Rozalis, 2008). It is within this pursuit of balance that trust most clearly emerges as a success factor just as if not more important than the other success factors mentioned earlier (Horgan, 1999).

The Phenomenon of Trust. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1973) defined trust as both a noun, "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something" and verb, "to place confidence" (pp. 1255-1256). Trust is both an act and an action. Jansen, Jagers, and Steenbakkens (2002) defined trust as "the mutual willingness of parties (individuals and/or organizations) to take up a position of mutual dependence with a feeling of relative security, even if negative results are possible" (p. 52). Ring and van de Ven (1992) defined trust as "confidence in the other's goodwill" (p. 488).

Trust is often described as a phenomenon in the literature. Bachmann (1998) referred to trust as a "complex phenomenon" (p. 301). Recognizing that multiple theoretical perspectives can be applied to the phenomenon of trust, Bachmann suggested trust cannot be viewed entirely as a cognitive phenomenon, nor solely as a norm-based behavior, nor solely as a calculation. Bachmann implied trust tends to be a "hybrid phenomenon" (p. 303) – a blend of calculation or predictability on one hand and voluntary exposure or goodwill on the other. Calculation requires identifying a level of risk while goodwill requires acknowledging the presence of risk. In an article focused on familiarity and trust within alliances Gulati (1995) referred to trust as "an interpersonal phenomenon" (p. 92) however in an article focused on interorganizational and

interpersonal trust Zaheer, McEvily, and Perrone (1998) acknowledged the “phenomenon of interorganizational trust” (p. 157.)

In an article focused on transaction costs, organizations, and trust, Bromiley and Cummings (1995) defined trust as

an individual’s belief or a common belief among a group of individuals that another individual or group (1) makes good-faith efforts to behave in accordance with any commitments both explicit or implicit, (2) is honest in whatever negotiations proceeded such commitments, and (3) does not take excessive advantage of another even when the opportunity is available (p. 223).

The authors argued trust reduces transaction costs. Transaction costs can include expenses associated with implementing and maintaining agreements for example. The authors also suggested low levels of trust within organizations inhibit organizational growth and development. Low levels of trust can inhibit individuals from interacting with others and exploring new possibilities.

Trust has significant meaning within the context of a higher education consortium. With regard to starting and sustaining a higher education consortium Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) concluded “Trust is a key factor if institutions are going to get beyond the marginal and project-oriented activities that make good public relations stories but are unlikely to have a lasting impact on members” (p. 7). They noted facilitating relationship and trust building is a duty of consortia staff. After examining the third-party role of higher education consortia Baus (1988) concluded “The most significant contribution the third-party agency makes is the development of a sense of trust that all parties’ interests are being protected” (p. 30). Dorger (1999), in an article that focused on consortia purchasing cost-effectiveness, concluded “Trust is not

something that comes naturally among institutions. It must be carefully developed and nurtured over time” (p. 75). Godbey and Turlington (2002) examined relationship capital and trust relationships and contended trust is built up over time and is a key component of social capital.

In 2010 Pamela Eddy published an enlightening monograph that focused on partnerships and collaborations in higher education. Eddy emphasized that open communication helps build trust which in turn helps maintain momentum and that “Partnerships built on trust, communication, and common purposes are more successful, whereas inequality among the partners and fewer resources undermine joint ventures” (p. 5).

Eddy (2010) added there is a greater chance innovation can occur when individuals believe they are in a supportive environment. She also acknowledged the importance of time in regard to the establishment of trust. Eddy concluded the “maturation of a partnership” (p. 51) allows for the building of trust and the testing of relationships. As networks develop, trust is built over time. Finally, Eddy suggested relationships are first built by individuals and can then shift to institutions. This is an important concept to address and I do so in the next paragraph.

Some authors indicate trust can only be between individuals yet others suggest trust can actually exist between organizations. Gulati and Sytch (2008) posited

The basic premise underlying this distinction is that trust may occur not only among individuals, but also among organizations, as similar sentiments can occur between collective entities. As such, interorganizational trust represents an organization’s expectation that another firm will not act opportunistically when dealing with that organization (p. 165).

Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) would likely agree with Gulati and Sytch after stating they understood trust relationships in academic science to take three different forms – “interpersonal trust; intermediated trust; and institutional trust” (p. 121). Alternatively Morrow, Hansen, and Pearson (2004) asserted that organizations cannot trust and that only individuals within organizations are capable of trust. The literature indicates trust relationships can be embodied in contracts, technical authentication systems, and formal and informal agreements (Alberico, 2002).

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, institutional members of higher education consortia cooperate to compete. Godbey and Richter (1999) emphasized “In this cooperate-to-compete environment, trust among partners will become the source of rapid and efficient exploitation of market opportunities, and consortia will help shift cooperation from the margins to the mainstream of institutional structures and functions” (p. 91). Rapid and efficient exploitation of market opportunities is similar to a theme asserted by Covey (2006). Commenting about the economics of trust Covey contended that when trust within an organization is high the speed of transactions and decision-making increases while the cost decreases.

It is clear from the literature referenced in this section that the phenomenon of trust plays an important role in organizational and consortium effectiveness. This research however focused on the phenomenon of trust specifically as experienced by consortium directors and leaders.

Directors and leaders. Higher education consortium directors and leaders serve many roles. Alberico (2002) documented the director needs to be a negotiator, must be

financially savvy, must have the skills of a politician, and be a multi-tasker. Horgan (1999) described the dual leadership role of the academic consortium director. The director must be an arbitrator of the status quo and a visionary of collaborative potentiality. Horgan indicated the most important responsibility of the director is to ensure a definitive understanding of the consortium mission is in place. Clarity and comprehension are essential. Other requirements include strong organizational leadership. Horgan (1999) indicated consortium boards of directors most often look for good managers in their directors. Directors must provide creative management and visionary leadership and be change leaders. Larrance (1999) suggested a consortium director must be a master of collaboration. The director sustains relationships and provides continuity. A common concept that appears in literature is the role of boundary spanner (Gulati & Sytch, 2008). Lane (1998) concluded the process of building trust may be shortened if boundary-spanning persons in exchange relationships have regular personal contact.

In an article exploring the role of a consortium director Horgan (1999) indicated to readers that “Ultimately, the director must keep in mind that the work of the consortium is valuable only to the degree that it eases the load on the individual member institutions and enhances their collective efforts” (p. 24). Horgan (1999) concluded “When a consortium director discovers the proper balance between institutional self-interest and collaborative cooperation, the strategic role of the director in promoting alliances becomes evident” (p. 25). As I mentioned earlier it is within this pursuit of

balance that trust most clearly emerges as a success factor just as if not more important than other success factors mentioned earlier.

Purpose of the Study

A higher education consortium is a group of colleges and universities united through collective effort. Each university is committed to the consortium and enjoys membership benefits but also desires to succeed and be the best of the alliance. Responsibility for success is shared among the institutions, the director, and his or her staff. Success of the consortium requires trust. The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders of higher education consortia.

A purposeful sampling technique was utilized in this study and was supplemented with a snowball participant recruitment technique. As a result some of the participants served a leadership role within a consortium or consortium program but did not necessarily serve as directors of consortia.

Framework of the Study

The framework for this study was drawn from two literature reviews. One review examined the literature related to best practices in higher education consortia. The second review focused on literature related to trust within and among organizations. From these two literature reviews I identified three relevant theories from which the conceptual framework for this study emerged.

The review of higher education best practices literature indicated organization development theory can be applied to the phenomenon of trust, specifically the human

process element of organization development theory. Communication, problem solving, and decision making emerged as common foci of articles found through a review of publications related to successful implementations of higher education consortia (Anderson, 1999; Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999; Eddy, 2010). These foci are concepts or elements within the human process component of the discipline of organization development.

Cummings and Worley (2005) defined organization development as “a systemwide application and transfer of behavioral science knowledge to the planned development, improvement, and reinforcement of the strategies, structures, and processes that lead to organization effectiveness” (p. 1) and identified communication, problem solving, and decision making as human process elements. In an article focusing on higher education strategic alliances, Noftsinger (2002) proposed organizational development and enhancement and human resource development as frameworks for engagement. None of these authors suggested trust is an element within the human process component of the discipline of organization development but rather they suggested trust can be a product or outcome of organization development human process components.

From the second literature review two additional theories emerged to provide the means to develop a framework for this study. The first of these theories was social exchange theory. Jansen et al. (2002), in an article about virtual corporations and trust, proposed social exchange theory applies to the formation of trust. Their basic assumption is that within an organization an individual performs something with which he obliges

another party to reciprocate. He, or she, trusts the other party will reciprocate as expected. Zaheer et al. (1998) in an article on the effects of interorganizational and interpersonal trust on organizational performance contended “A central premise of relational exchange theory is that personal relations generate trust and discourage opportunistic behavior between firms” (p. 142). The authors also addressed the reciprocal effects of interorganizational trust, relational exchange, and interpersonal trust.

The second theory to emerge from the literature review on trust was transaction cost economics (TCE) theory. TCE is similar to social exchange theory in that an individual or organization acts in a certain way and trusts a second party to reciprocate in a similar or expected way. TCE theory however acknowledges there can be a monetary value assigned to social exchanges (Bromiley & Cummings, 1995). Through repeated and successful exchanges the parties develop a level of trust that reduces risk and thereby the costs associated with normal administrative and legal procedures. Each party believes the other will not act opportunistically and that equity – in terms of costs and benefits – will be achieved.

Ring and van de Ven (1992) studied cooperative relationships between organizations (including research consortia), trust, and transaction cost economics theory. They considered trust to be confidence in another’s goodwill and concluded recurrent interorganizational contact and contracting lead to higher levels of trust and, as a result, equity. Gulati (1995) explored trust within interfirm alliances and used both transaction cost economics and sociological theory to examine the factors that explain the choice of governance structure in alliances. Gulati noted that trust is an interpersonal phenomenon

and even though expectations of trust may ultimately reside within individuals it is possible to think of interfirm trust in terms of economic transactions. Similarly Connelly, Miller, and Devers (2012) studied interorganizational relationships and transaction cost economics and concluded trust improves the efficiency of interorganizational governance.

Methodology

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study and answer the research questions a phenomenological methodology was utilized (van Manen, 1990), examining the lived experiences of higher education consortia directors and leaders as related to the phenomenon of trust. I used a purposeful criterion-based sampling strategy (Creswell, 1998) to recruit participants for the study. The criterion was peer recognition as a knowledgeable and accomplished higher education consortium director or leader. Therefore I initiated participant recruitment by inviting the three recipients of the Association for Collaborative Leadership's "John B. Noftsinger, Jr. Award for Service and Leadership" to participate in interviews. This award is given to an "individual who has contributed significantly over the years to support and strengthen cooperation among institutions of higher education" (Association for Collaborative Leadership, 2014).

A snowball recruitment technique was used after contacting the three award recipients. Additional participants were recruited utilizing referrals provided by award recipients and pilot interview participants. Snowball referrals were requested at the end of each pilot and data collection interview after participants had obtained an

understanding of the purpose and focus of the research. This understanding helped participants identify and nominate potential participants.

Interviews are the primary if not sole method for data collection for phenomenological studies. The primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to identify the lived experiences of higher education consortia directors and leaders as related to the phenomenon of trust. Results are presented in Chapter Four using tables and narrative description (Creswell, 1998).

Research Questions

Creswell (1998) recommended the qualitative researcher reduce the entire study to a single, overarching researcher question, sometimes called a grand tour question, plus several subquestions. Acknowledging the challenge associated with such a task, Stake (1995) asserted “Perhaps the most difficult task of the researcher is to design good questions, research questions, that will direct the looking and the thinking enough and not too much” (p. 15). Stake (1995) added “The researcher’s greatest contribution perhaps is in working the research questions until they are just right” (p. 20).

The objective of this qualitative inquiry was to study the lived experiences of higher education consortia directors as related to the phenomenon of trust. Literature reviews revealed three relevant theoretical perspectives to apply to this study. The following research questions were designed to capture desired data and to elucidate the theoretical perspectives.

Primary research question –

1. How do higher education consortia directors experience and describe the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia?

Secondary research questions –

2. Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?
3. Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?
4. Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?

Definitions

Higher education consortium—As noted in the introductory section of this chapter higher education consortia convene for a variety of reasons. For this study a higher education consortium is defined as a group of colleges and universities united through collective effort.

Trust—The literature reviews conducted for this study revealed multiple definitions of trust. For this study trust is defined as “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, 1973, pp. 1255-1256).

Director—For this study director is defined as the leader, administrator, or chief executive officer of a higher education consortium or consortium program.

Human process elements of organization development theory—Cummings and Worley (2005) listed communication, problem solving, decision making, and leadership as human process elements or concepts of organization development theory.

Social exchange theory—As used in this study social exchange theory is defined as a theoretical position that suggests an individual or organization acts in a certain way and trusts a second party to reciprocate in a similar or expected way. This definition is largely based on the work of Jansen et al. (2002).

Transaction cost economics (TCE) theory—As used in this study transaction cost economics theory is defined as a theoretical position similar to social exchange theory except that transaction cost economics allows or acknowledges the assignment of monetary or economic value to social and organizational exchanges and transactions. TCE also recognizes factors such as organizational risk and vulnerability plus opportunistic behavior. This definition is largely based on the work of Bromiley and Cummings (1995).

Limiting Factors

Assumptions. Assumptions are beliefs or premises related to this research project that are accepted to be true. I have identified the following assumptions.

- A phenomenological study is an effective method by which to collect and analyze relevant and meaningful data for this topic.
- Association for Collaborative Leadership “John B. Noftsinger, Jr. Award for Service and Leadership” recipients plus participants identified through the snowball recruitment technique are knowledgeable and accomplished higher

education consortia leaders who have very likely experienced the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia.

- Study participants will describe their experiences related to the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia honestly.

Limitations. Limitations reveal potential weaknesses of the study (Creswell, 1994) and are typically factors outside the control of the researcher. The following limitations were identified.

- The availability and daily schedules of participants potentially impacted gathering of data for the study. Interview dates had to be carefully chosen and daily schedules of participants sometimes restricted the length of interviews.
- All interviews were conducted and recorded on the phone and augmented when possible with Adobe Connect video-only conferencing. Only 8 of the 19 interview sessions were augmented with two-way video conferencing where the researcher and participant could simultaneously see each other.

Delimitations. Delimitations restrict the scope (Creswell, 1994) or create boundaries of the research and are typically defined by the researcher.

- The selection of the phenomenological interview technique could be considered a restriction however as noted above an assumption was made that it was an appropriate research technique for the topic.
- The sampling technique was limited to Noftsinger Award recipients and snowball referrals from award recipients and pilot interview participants.

- It could be argued that the structure and content of interview questions, although carefully revised following pilot interviews, helped form the outcome of the study.

Significance of the Study

This study will be valuable to higher education consortia directors, leaders, and stakeholders as it should lead to a further understanding of the phenomenon of trust. The higher education consortia best practices literature review revealed trust is generally recognized as a requirement in any higher education consortium or collaborative venture. However trust was not the primary topic or focus of the articles. Trust was referenced but not necessarily studied. This research should add to the understanding of the relevance and importance of trust within consortia and perhaps suggest important factors for leaders to consider.

This study will be significant to researchers as it will contribute to the literature relative to higher education consortia and focused on the relationship between the theories of organization development, social exchange, and transaction cost economics, germane to the phenomenon of trust. Throughout the literature reviews conducted for this study I did not identify an article or publication that focused on this combination of topics. I believe all of these topics are relevant and related to one another within the context of this research and I expect this study will help demonstrate their interconnectedness.

As a preliminary study on the phenomenon of trust in higher education consortia this study will provide insights and ideas for future research. After completing the

consortia best practices literature review for this study it seemed to me one could conclude authors were comfortable acknowledging the presence and importance of the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia but hesitant to explore it. It seemed the authors felt compelled to acknowledge the significance of trust but otherwise desired to maintain some distance from the phenomenon. This research will intentionally and directly explore the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia and attempt to relate the findings to the selected framework.

Summary

I like to use analogies when making a point. They help me illustrate what I am trying to say. The analogy is baseball. This dissertation is about the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia as experienced by directors.

A higher education consortium is a group of colleges and universities united through collective effort (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999; Eddy, 2010). Each college and university is committed to the consortium but also desires to succeed and be the best of the alliance. Success of the consortium requires trust. Responsibility for success is shared among the institutions, the consortium director, and his or her staff. The purpose of this study is to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders of higher education consortia.

Literature reviews led to the identification of three theories that provided the framework for this study. Human process concepts from organization development theory, social exchange theory, and transaction economics theory provided the framework. A qualitative phenomenological methodology, employing purposeful

criterion-based and snowball sampling strategies, was utilized to examine the lived experiences of higher education consortia directors and leaders related to the phenomenon of trust. Research questions were designed to capture the desired data and to incorporate the theoretical perspectives.

This study should (a) add to the understanding of the relevance and importance of trust within consortia, should (b) contribute to literature by demonstrating the interconnectedness of organization development, social exchange, and transaction cost economics theories, and the phenomenon of trust, and (c) provide insights and ideas for future research by intentionally and directly exploring the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia.

If, as Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) stressed, higher education consortia are to move towards lasting impact on institutional members, trust becomes an essential phenomenon to understand. The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of trust by examining the experiences of directors and leaders of higher education consortia.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review for this study is organized into two primary sections. The first section examines literature related to best practices in higher education consortia. The second section focuses on the literature of trust within and among organizations.

In examining the literature on the best practices in higher education consortia, organization development human process concepts of communication, problem solving, decision making, and leadership emerged to form a common theme or essence of the review. Baus and Ramsbottom's (1999) comprehensive article on starting and sustaining a consortium incorporated these human process concepts, or foci as I referred to them in Chapter One, and will be used to help form the structure of the first section of this literature review.

Two dominant theories emerged from the literature review of trust within and among institutions. I will use the work of Liebeskind and Oliver (1998), which focused on trust within the social structure of collaborative academic research, to structure the section related to social exchange theory. Ring and van de Ven's (1992) article on structuring cooperative relationships between organizations will be used to help organize the section related to transaction cost economics or TCE. Their work blended social exchange and TCE.

Investigation of the Literature

Best practices in higher education consortia. Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) authored a comprehensive work on the nature, evolution, and success factors of higher education consortia. They documented a wave of consortia initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of student needs, economic pressures, and Federal government incentives. They noted many of these initiatives ultimately failed because of the loss of ongoing external motivation and support. For this research project it is relevant to note that a consortium of consortia, created in the early 1970s, survives to this day. The Council for Inter-Institutional Leadership, initiated by Lewis Patterson of the Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education, is now known as the Association for Consortium Leadership or ACL. Recipients of the ACL's "John B. Noftsinger, Jr. Award for Service and Leadership" were asked to participate in interviews for this study. Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) highlighted the evolution of the Council for Inter-Institutional Leadership into the Association for Consortium Leadership in their article.

Another wave of consortia initiatives developed in the 1990s as a result of the development of information and communication technologies, evolving interdependency of organizations, expectations of inter-institutional cooperation, and the rising consumer cost of education (Alberico, 2002; Anderson & Bonefas, 2002). Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) noted the five common characteristics of early consortia as identified by Lewis Patterson – voluntary, multi-institutional, multifunctional, long-term member support, and professionally managed. The authors documented a greater interdependency among institutions combining efforts to form consortia in the 1990s. As such there was greater

shared risk (Fuller, 1988) and reward and therefore additional factors contributed to consortium success. They were listed as shared vision, clearly defined goals, a focus on real problems, institutionalized decision-making structure (governance), local decision making, personnel continuity, systematic communication, sufficient allocation of time for change to occur, sufficient resources, and professional development opportunities. Many of the success factors listed here surfaced throughout the best practices literature review. Several of the factors are also organization development human process elements as identified by Cummings and Worley (2005) – specifically communication, problem solving, decision making, and leadership. Similarly, Anderson (1999), in an article focused on international consortial cooperation, noted the importance of leadership and a clearly delineated decision-making process. Briber (1988) indicated “Cooperation proceeds best when people know each other and are able to communicate easily” (p. 93). Eddy (2010) emphasized the significance of leadership and cited Goleman’s six styles of leadership and Noftsinger (2002) suggested organization and human resource development and enhancement as elements of a template for collaborative program development. Buttar (2011) emphasized trust is the basis of long-standing successful partnerships and that other ingredients include the ability to resolve disagreements with understanding and regular, ongoing, open communication.

With regard to leadership and administrative support Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) determined executive level institutional support is crucial to both consortium development and sustainability. They noted structuring an effective consortium involves trust and added, as first referenced in Chapter One, “Trust is a key factor if institutions

are going to get beyond the marginal and project-oriented activities that make good public relations stories but are unlikely to have a lasting impact on members” (p. 7). The authors added “Discovering that self-interests across institutions are best served if the institutions work together captures the essence of a successful consortium program” (p. 8). Reaching this level of discovery requires a clear sense of mission and purpose, empowerment, measurable outcomes, and effective communication across and within the consortium. Eddy (2010) also concluded communication was important for sustainability and wrote “Communication is critical throughout partnership formation, as is the ability to negotiate conflicts that may arise” (p. 26).

Similar to sustainability Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) also addressed the importance of stability and concluded continuity of programs, services, and strategic direction depends significantly on the capabilities of consortium staff members. Staff members hold a neutral third-party perspective according to the authors and possess institutional memory. Other responsibilities include keeping projects on track, offering a neutral and objective presence, building consensus, and creating a level playing field. In a solo article about the third-party role of consortium professionals Baus (1988) emphasized “The most significant contribution the third-party agency makes is the development of a sense of trust that all parties’ interests are being protected” (p. 30). Other important responsibilities according to Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) include developing and maintaining vendor relationships, creating a safe place for idea exploration and problem solving, facilitating relationship and trust building, and acting as a buffer when that may not be possible or when trust has failed. Staff members must also

work to “pull down barriers to cooperation” (p. 17) as the authors stated. I believe this role is very similar to the role of the boundary spanner that will be introduced later in this literature review. It is important to emphasize the authors did not place the entire burden on the consortium director or leader but rather indicated these responsibilities were shared among all consortium staff members.

Pritzen (1988) suggested developing a central organization could provide a mechanism and structure with which institutions could define and pursue common goals and a staff to help execute plans. Staff would function as intermediaries and advocates and ensure communication among institutions. Staff would provide administrative assistance, facilitate discussions, arbitrate disagreements, and help overcome inertia. The author postulated that the purpose of institutional cooperation has changed over time and concluded by asserting

In short, while the new challenges, like the old, boil down to the perennial problem of allocating limited resources to provide quality education in a rapidly changing society, for many colleges and universities the challenges are more acute now than then, as the problem of maintaining quality shades into the question of survival. (Pritzen, 1988, p. 46)

In other words the purpose of consortia has evolved from creating efficiencies and safeguarding quality to ensuring self-preservation and survival.

Developing a sustaining funding model is also important for consortium continuity. Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) indicated it is usually more difficult to identify sustaining funding rather than initial start-up funding. Start-up funding often comes from private or corporate philanthropies or governmental agencies whereas sustenance funding normally comes from participating institutions through a negotiated and equitable

formula or algorithm that is often based not only on institutional size but also program utilization or participation.

Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) concluded their article by identifying 11 key elements (p. 17) that contribute to the initial success and long-term sustainability of higher education consortia. Again you will see reference to human process concepts.

1. Leadership and commitment from the highest level
2. A clear mission and goals
3. Balance mechanisms for providing parity between the “heavy weights” and others
4. Commitment and buy-in to the process by all parties
5. Decision-making ability
6. A neutral, third-party function
7. Funding for the initial effort and an ability to make key investments when the collaboration requires it
8. Clear agreements regarding cost-sharing arrangements
9. Mechanisms for measuring success
10. Effective structures and systems for communication among collaborators and within each college
11. The flexibility to be nimble and creative; the ability to be experimental and to develop innovative pilot programs beyond member organizations’ individual capacities

Consortium directors and program leaders play critical roles in the development and long-term success of initiatives and programs. In a comprehensive review of the role of the consortium director Horgan (1999) emphasized the dual leadership responsibilities of the director as both an arbitrator of the status quo and a visionary of collaborative potentiality – requiring talents ranging from the intellectual to the spiritual. The author noted successful consortia have committed boards, clearly defined missions, stable budgets and revenue, and strong and consistent organizational leadership.

Horgan (1999) stressed that consortia leaders need to ensure a clear understanding of the consortium’s mission is in place. This requires clarity and comprehension and is the most important responsibility of the director according to the author. It can be accomplished through regular meetings, publications, and the development of a strategic plan. Horgan (1999) emphasized a consortium director must be a strong organizational leader and that boards are most often looking for good managers for the director role. The director must possess creative management and visionary leadership skills and be a change leader.

Johnson (1988) declared the director or CEO of a consortium must be an eternal optimist and pointed out a challenge within a consortium is to be entrepreneurial and innovative. The author pointed out that cooperation among institutions can strengthen autonomy by avoiding cooptation – the assimilation of one organization by another in order to eliminate a perceived threat. The author emphasized “consortia are very complex organizational units that run counter to institutional tradition” (p. 195). As such successful consortia require well-defined missions and visionary leadership. The author

also warned of the three “straw men” (p. 197) or potential threats to consortia – inertia, tokenism, and turf. The author asserted inertia can be overcome by establishing trust and getting to know one another both professionally and personally. Without trust organizations cannot cooperate. Avoiding tokenism requires genuine commitment to the consortium and its programs. Turf issues can be avoided as trust grows and institutions recognize benefits resulting from mutual efforts.

Two statements from Horgan (1999) summarize the essence of the role of the director. The author concluded “Ultimately, the director must keep in mind that the work of the consortium is valuable only to the degree that it eases the load on the individual member institutions and enhances their collective efforts” (p. 24). Creating value, efficiencies, and cost savings are examples. The author added “When a consortium director discovers the proper balance between institutional self-interest and collaborative cooperation, the strategic role of the director in promoting alliances becomes evident” (p. 25).

Higher education consortium activities are not restricted to programs or initiatives designed specifically to enhance institutional effectiveness or success. Williams (2002) explored the role higher education consortia can have in community development programs. The objective of the development program was to help communities prosper and to address social, economic, and environmental issues. Recognizing colleges and universities have been shaped and have helped to shape communities around them a joint four-year university and community college collaborative effort was initiated. Barriers to success included turf issues, academic snobbery, and institutional self-centeredness.

Strong leadership and constructive dialogue and communication helped address turf issues. Equal roles for the university chancellor and community college president put to rest issues surrounding academic snobbery. Institutional self-centeredness was addressed by recognizing and celebrating institutional differences and areas of expertise.

Horgan (2002) documented that higher education consortia can also be instrumental in assisting with workforce development. A consortium must determine how best to serve its members and constituents, sometimes acting as a facilitator and other times as a catalyst. The author concluded in order for state governments, institutions of higher education, and businesses to successfully collaborate there needs to be high levels of interest, leadership, commitment, and investment.

Similar to workforce development Watson and Jordan (1999) reviewed economic development efforts related to higher education consortia and observed a “seismic shift” (p. 93) to a knowledge and information-based economy. The authors documented the efforts of the Alliance for Higher Education, a consortium of colleges, universities, corporations, hospitals, and other not-for-profit organizations, to address common concerns. Citing consortium success the author stated “Access to convenient, good-quality higher education through the distance education efforts of the Alliance for Higher Education continues to fuel economic development throughout the region” (p. 95). Neal (1988) studied a public school – higher education consortium. Neal concluded the work by identifying barriers to and strategies for consortium success. A consortium must truly represent institutional goals and objectives and its attributes should include communication, coordination, and facilitation. Other factors include realistic

expectations and a willingness to listen to colleagues, in part to help form genuine partnerships.

Ryan (1988) studied the value and strategy of public relations to higher education consortia. The author introduced his work by reviewing principles of communication. Communication is a vehicle with which we impart information, ideas, and attitudes. The manner in which we communicate is just as important as the content. The author asserted communication is the main force for achieving goals and objectives and reaching audiences.

Resource allocation often presents challenges. Peterson (1999) examined fundraising and grant applications within a consortium. Acknowledging that such activity may be institution-specific or a collective consortial effort the author emphasized that good communication and trust are essential for the collective consortial good. Similarly Larrance (2002) studied leveraging resources within consortia. The author postulated leveraging resources is more than just sharing – it is a “synergistic process” (p. 3) of making more from that which is available. Leveraging resources can create growth and energy. The author also warned that inexperience with collaboration or distrust of a process could inhibit consortial progress. Sustainable change comes from shared vision.

Assessment is an important ingredient for consortium success. Peterson (2002) described efforts to assess consortium effectiveness. The Massachusetts Five Colleges consortium board of directors invited a team of educators to assess the impact of cooperation and to plan for the future. The board desired to find a way to distinguish between activities that needed to be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively. Assessing

cost savings activities was important but so was assessing activities designed to impact institutional and curriculum enrichment which was typically a qualitative judgment according to the author.

Also in regard to assessing financial impact Peterson (2002) indicated in some respects cost savings are easier to measure than to accomplish. The author suggested actual savings are easier to accomplish within administrative areas than within academic areas and cited joint purchasing agreements as an example. The author also distinguished between cost savings and cost containment and suggested that cost containment is often a more reasonable expectation. The author asserted “A consortium is most successful when it provides opportunities for sharing that allow some financial relief – if not in cost savings, at least in cost avoidance” (p. 113). The author added “A consortium is financially successful when it provides additional benefits and services - to the institution, faculty, students, and staff that would otherwise be unavailable” (p. 113). The author concluded a consortium succeeds when it respects institutional differences, does not stagnate, and offers flexibility and innovation.

As noted above library initiatives were a primary example of early consortium undertakings. Wylie and Yeager (1999) documented collaborative higher education library initiatives including sharing print collections, distributive staffing resources, developing learning communities, and establishing digital libraries. The collaborative efforts have resulted in institutional discoveries about themselves, their relationships with other institutions, the marketplace, and emerging digital technologies. Consortia goals and objectives include professional development, the facilitation of communication,

development of training opportunities, and the promotion of services. Consortia efforts evolved from the sharing of “things” to the sharing of “people and expertise” (p. 35).

Also focusing on library initiatives Carlson (2003) observed consortia need to reconsider their roles when they begin to compete more directly with one another in times of tight budgets and a struggling economy. The author emphasized “Big library consortia, they say, are facing increasing competition from smaller groups - those with a handful of members compared with several hundred - that are being created all the time” (p. A30). Consortia have created a more competitive environment sometimes even between members of the same consortium.

Academic related programs have also grown in importance. Marino (2002) studied structural models of interinstitutional faculty collaboration and development. The author acknowledged the tension between the collaborative instinct and institutional autonomy. Three collaborative faculty programs were described – a global partners project, an information literacy grant, and an academic collaboration grant. Critical factors included flexibility, adaptability, communication, and retaining institutional autonomy and cultures.

Pritzen (1988) offered a comprehensive and insightful work on academic consortia programs. The author began the work by discussing the proliferation of consortia in the 1960s and 1970s. The general belief then was that the most fruitful area was in academic programming. The earliest and most prevalent example was course cross-registration. Participants soon realized academic sharing did not come easily and that it was more difficult to measure cost savings from academic programs than from

other forms of cooperative activities. Formidable resistance often came from within institutions themselves. There was less resistance to joint purchasing contracts than cross-registration and uniform grading systems. The author asserted “Traditionally, the climate of interinstitutional relationships has been competitive rather than cooperative” (p. 41). Fear of inferiority and turf issues are two reasons.

Similarly focused Strandness (1999) examined the complexities and requirements of cross-registration and joint academic programs. The author delineated the following requirements or considerations – complementary course offerings, governing body approvals, allowing each institution to determine its own procedures, clear and easy cross registration procedures, regular formal and informal communication among registrars, and a sustainable balance of trade and equitable payment formula to redress imbalances. Institutional cooperation resulted in additional student opportunities, new recruiting tools, and cost savings. Pooling resources allowed the institutions to achieve more together than they could alone. The author indicated a creative mind set also resulted and stated “In general, the shared sense that cooperation is a positive good increases faculty morale and productivity” (p. 41). The author emphasized achieving consensus and sustaining trust requires energy, vigilant communication, patience, and diplomacy and that program leaders must be skilled managers, good communicators, and adept diplomats. Sustaining support is an ongoing process and may involve constant reeducation of key leaders.

Larrance (2002) also focused on the value of human resources, professional development, human development, and the potential of employees. Examples included job efficiency, effective communication, joint cross-institutional faculty appointments,

and leadership training. Rose (1988) examined professional development sponsored by higher education consortia and asserted professional development is one of the areas in which interinstitutional cooperation is most effective. The author supported the notion that collegiate cooperation is more effective in administrative than academic areas. Identifying professional development as an administrative task the author indicated it is cost-effective for institutions to manage staff development cooperatively. The author stated consortium staff must use a skillful blend of research, personal contacts, and educational experience to craft effective professional development programs. Reflecting what others have also written the author indicated consortia staff must always make sure they are helping institutions do more together than what they could do alone. As suggested in Chapter One, an institution of higher education joins a consortium based on the assumption that a collective effort involving multiple institutions will yield more and better results than the solitary effort of a single institution.

Collaborative student recruitment programs pose special challenges. Stonewater (1999) reviewed collaborative admissions and recruitment practices. This is a perfect example of how institutions cooperate to compete. Recruitment and admissions is also one of the more difficult arenas to cooperate and one where trust may more slowly develop than others. Similar to Baus and Ramsbottom (1999), Stonewater identified three key ingredients for success in such efforts. The first is commitment from institutional presidents and admissions personnel. The commitment must be clearly delineated and communicated. The second is consistent work and contact among staff both within the institutions and also the consortium office. Nurturing and sustaining

relationships and regular meetings are important. The third, and perhaps the most difficult to achieve, is a belief in the benefit of the institutional collaboration. This belief is nurtured by commitment, consistent contact, and trust. Stonewater (1999) asserted institutions must continue to pursue their own recruitment goals while understanding that some of those goals can be attained under a cooperative banner and added “Developing this belief depends to some extent on commitment and trust” (p. 46). The author also added that trust implies all institutions are playing by the same rules and will not take advantage of the others. The author concluded by stating as state and private resources become less plentiful it will become clear that each college and university cannot be all things to all people. Institutions may need to nurture their own unique “pockets of excellence” (p. 50) and work cooperatively elsewhere in order to ensure the survival of their individual institutions and postsecondary education overall.

In an article focusing on consortia involving primarily small colleges Larrance (1999) identified common consortia success factors such as cooperation, involvement, collegiality, and collaboration. The author also noted that success may eventually be measured in terms of institutional cost savings. Addressing the puzzling question about interdependency between competing institutions the author asserted competition between smaller institutions is likely less fierce because the smaller institutions do acknowledge greater interdependency on each other. The author suggested interpersonal consortium relationships are easier to maintain among smaller institutions. The author concludes the article by stating the director of a smaller consortium must be carefully chosen – the director must know when to reach outside the consortium for assistance for example.

The director must also be a master of collaboration, someone able to sustain relationships and provide continuity.

Information technology is another collaborative area that is popular within higher education consortia. Strange (1988) produced an insightful work and documented challenges higher education institutions face with regard to the growth of information technology services and applications. Citing that some institutions have allocated disproportionate resources in response the author suggested consortium programs can be of value and assistance. The author suggested a higher education consortium can provide an environment that will allow for and encourage innovation. Collaboration must be focused around issues important to institutional missions, and goals should be clear and should enhance institutional autonomy. The author asserted “The key to a successful collaboration is leadership and the imagination necessary to articulate the vision” (p. 172). Institutional hierarchies, reluctance to share information, and inadequate resources are barriers to cooperation. The author emphasized leaders must work together, communication and information-sharing is key, and networks must be established and nurtured. A consortium allows for communication among nontraditional sets of people. The author concluded her work by stating new technology requires innovation and innovation requires collaboration. Consortia can provide such environments if educational leaders lead the way.

Widmayer (1999) described the efforts of a suburban Midwest higher education consortium focused on the effective and efficient delivery of information technology services. The author identified six success factors. First, the institutions established a

common goal – to share resources and avoid unnecessary costs. Second, each institution was given identical status within the consortium. Third, an executive committee comprised of institutional leaders possessing decision-making authority was established. Fourth, the consortium was professionally administered by a director independent of any member institutions. Funding was supported with grants and institutional assessments. Fifth, the consortium adopted an informal structure that was organized around guidelines rather than bylaws. Finally, constant communication among the director, the executive committee, and special task forces was established.

Two publications helped confirm qualitative inquiry is an appropriate methodology with which to study higher education consortium activities. Tubin and Levin-Rozalis (2008) conducted a qualitative study to examine the structural aspect of nurturing trust within an interorganizational cooperative (IOC) effort. The authors described an IOC as “like harnessing a swan, a crab, and a pike to a single wagon and still expecting it to go” (p. 704). Such an effort offers potential advantages but is also characterized by inherent difficulties. The authors theorized that relations of trust among the partners are required to overcome threats. Included in the study was a research question related to the leader’s role in laying the foundations for relations of trust between the partners.

The authors used an instrumental qualitative case study method to conduct an in-depth study of a successful interorganizational cooperative. Observations, interviews and meeting minutes were analyzed using the constant comparative method and open coding. Results indicated factors that enhance trust include low levels of risk, power balance,

clear communication and transparency, and joint ownership. Results also indicated the IOC director must be an effective leader and one that can play the critical role of mediator.

Tucker and de Berranger (2002) conducted a case study, including the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews, to examine information and communication technology diffusion projects. Geography and the information technology network itself bounded the research. The investigators theorized trainers must possess interpersonal as well as technical skills for a diffusion project to succeed. Because diffusion projects are as much of a social process as they are technical they also theorized trust is important for success. The authors referenced the contractual, competence, and goodwill elements of trust, as others noted in this review have, and also asserted as relationships progress trust becomes stronger. The authors found the trainer's approach in fostering goodwill and competence trust was integral to the project's success. Both technical competence and empathy contributed to the program's success.

Baus and Ramsbottom's 1999 article was used to introduce and help form this section of the literature review. Their work illustrated the evolution of consortia and also addressed sustainability, organizational stability, funding models, and key elements. I will finish this section of the literature review with an earlier work from Andrew van de Ven. van de Ven (1976) asserted knowledge of "the inter-organizational field is still at a primitive stage" (p. 25). Nonetheless the author noted that the end objective of organizations involved in an inter-organizational relationship (IR) is "the attainment of goals that are un-achievable by organizations independently" (p. 25). The

author asserted “Flows of resources and information between organizations appear to be the major processes within an IR” (p. 27). As you will see later in this study, statements from research participants with regard to the value and usefulness of this study, and the need to further understand the phenomenon of trust, seemed to echo van de Ven’s comment about the primitive understanding of the “inter-organizational” (p. 25) field. Almost 40 years after van de Ven’s 1976 publication participant reaction to this study indicated more needs to be understood about phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia, a type of “inter-organizational relationship” (p. 25) as mentioned by van de Ven, suggesting perhaps the understanding of the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia may also currently be at a basic or primitive stage.

Trust within and among organizations. Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) begin their article on intellectual property, trust, and the social structure of academic research by stating “Academic science is one area of human activity where trust - in the form of scientific credibility - plays an essential role” (p. 118). The authors referenced the “social structure” (p. 118) of collaborative academic science and trust relationships, and stated that without trust relationships science cannot advance. Their observations and arguments were based on the results of over 40 interviews conducted at 12 universities and 11 biotechnology firms. The authors interviewed research scientists, university technology transfer staff, academic administrators, and corporate managers. Their argument was informed by interview findings and numerous archival sources.

Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) contended trust may result from social processes, from calculation, or from shared values. Social process-based trust is built up over time.

Lane (1998) also referenced process-based trust and argued it is based on the incremental process of building trust through the gradual accumulation of either direct or indirect knowledge about another. As individuals interact, the more they tend to trust or distrust one another. Acknowledging developmental factors and the influence of time Dorger (1999) emphasized “Trust is not something that comes naturally among institutions. It must be carefully developed and nurtured over time” (p. 75). Dotolo (2002) stressed inter-institutional cooperation is a two-way street.

Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) also observed calculative trust is based on estimates of another’s motives and interests – weighing gains and costs. Value-based trust is based on the understanding that actors share norms of trustworthy behavior through social exchange. In other words, trust is based upon familiarity, interests, and values experienced or learned through social exchange. Similarly Lane (1998) considered trust as “a social phenomenon, to be studied at interpersonal, interorganizational and systemic levels, rather than as an aspect of individual personality” (p. 2).

Also with regard to social exchange theory Jansen et al. (2002) asserted “The basic assumption here is that an individual performs something with which he obliges another party to reciprocate. Trust therefore plays a role as a pattern of expectations” (p. 51). The definition of trust as used in this research is based upon this statement. The authors added “The social exchange approach explains why parties which have a strong social bond, built up on the basis of a process of successful exchanges, perceive less of a risk of opportunism than parties to which this does not apply” (p. 51). Their assertions included “Trust is the upshot of a social process” (p. 54).

Zaheer et al. (1998) postulated “A central premise of relational exchange theory is that personal relations generate trust and discourage opportunistic behavior between firms” (p. 142). The notion of opportunism is closely tied to transaction cost economics which will be explored in the next section of this chapter. Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998) documented the three phases of trust – building, stability, and dissolution. The authors also identified different forms of trust including deterrence-based and institution-based. Deterrence-based trust is a precaution against opportunism. Institution-based trust spans the organizational structure and could be viewed as either a control or support mechanism. The authors pointed out that “Institutional controls can also undermine trust, particularly where legal mechanisms give rise to rigidity in responses to conflict and substitute high levels of formalization for more flexible conflict management” (p. 400). Acknowledging the complexity of the phenomenon of trust the authors postulated “Nonetheless, a variety of institutional factors, including legal forms, social networks, and societal norms regarding conflict management and cooperation, are likely to interact in creating a context for interpersonal and interorganizational trust” (p. 401).

As referenced earlier Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) argued “One area of human activity where trust is particularly important is academic scientific research” (p. 118). They went on to say “Thus, within academic science, credibility is a social commodity that is produced through social exchange” (p. 120). Similarly Eddy (2010) proposed trust is a key component of social capital and is built up over time. The author added a mature partnership allows for the building of trust and the testing of relationships and stated

“When individual partners move past individual interests to common goals and mission, partnership capital forms” (p. 49). Social capital is also important with regard to collaborative academic international programs. Godbey and Turlington (2002) concluded the importance of relationship capital can only grow with regard to the emerging global academic environment.

Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) understood trust relationships in academic science to take three different forms – interpersonal, intermediated, and institutional.

Interpersonal trust develops when two collaborators are involved in an exchange relationship over time. Trust may also be intermediated by others, usually involving a calculation of interest. Institutional trust is supported and fostered by formal and informal institutional arrangements. The authors observed an increased emphasis on using contracts to define the “scope and conduct of academic scientific collaborations of all types” (p. 128). They also observed a deeper trust is required “to support a research relationship where collaborators have commercial interests, than is required to support a normal academic research relationship” (p. 129). Arnone (2002) explored issues associated with the development of the online degree program Universitas 21 and acknowledged corporate-academic partnerships can help academic institutions focus on their specific core missions. Trust of such partnerships is important to faculty senates especially amid skepticism. The author pointed out that even the universities within the Universitas 21 consortium were struggling to work collegially.

In an article focused on higher education and business cooperation Bevan and Baker (1988) also emphasized trust, openness, and sharing of power. DeRose (1988)

affirmed “Effective cooperation with a business requires ongoing interaction” (p. 100). Conversely Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) also warned that contractual commitments, often with commercial enterprises, can undermine existing trust relationships among academic scientists to the point that scientists sometimes can no longer collaborate. The authors asserted formal contractual research agreements are often substituted for traditional handshake agreements.

To facilitate the development of trust, or counteract the undermining of trust, individuals can take on a boundary spanning role. The boundary spanning role is very similar to the responsibility of pulling down barriers to cooperation as suggested by Baus and Ramsbottom (1999). Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) noted boundary-spanning individuals can help broker trust with academic researchers. Lane (1998) stipulated the process of building trust may be shortened if boundary-spanning persons in exchange relationships have regular personal contact. Jansen et al. (2002) emphasized the value of “initiators” or “boosters” (p. 61) who encourage organizational development and growth. Bachmann (1998) explored the phenomenon of organizational trust and identified individual actors as “access points” (p. 309) of social systems. These individuals represent and confirm the trustworthiness of the organizational system, and as such, I argue, span the system.

Zaheer et al. (1998) wrote extensively about boundary spanners and contended relationships between organizations are actively managed by individual boundary spanners. They noted boundary spanners are more involved in the interorganizational relationship than others and tend to interact with their counterparts to a greater extent.

The authors acknowledged boundary spanners can “come and go” (p. 144) but that the roles can become stable and enduring between organizations that have mature cooperative arrangements. As new boundary spanners join they become socialized by interorganizational norms.

Even in his early 1976 work van de Ven addressed the importance of boundary-spanners and the role they play in interorganizational development and success. At a general level agency boundary spanners must be aware of goals, services, and resources existing in other agencies. At a more specific level of awareness boundary spanners must have personal acquaintances in other agencies.

Identifying trust as a complex and multilevel phenomenon, Gulati and Sych (2008) argued “trust can emerge from the history of interorganizational interaction as well as from the history of inter personal interaction between organizational boundary spanners” (p. 181). The authors found an effect in the relationship between the past history of boundary spanners and trust. They concluded this effect indicated the joint history of boundary spanners contributed to the formation of interorganizational trust, but only after the boundary spanners have spent over two years in direct contact.

Shah and Swaminathan (2008) studied partner selection within strategic alliances and concluded trust is a key factor that influences partner selection and strategic alliance performance. The authors asserted within research and development alliances organizations can focus on building trust between partners in order to enhance the probability of the success. Cummings and Worley (2005) emphasized the way an alliance begins and proceeds is an important ingredient in building trust.

Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) concluded trust is a social commodity that is not neutral to the interests of individuals or institutions. Their findings included evidence that relationships between university scientists were fundamentally changed by changes in the interests of the individuals involved. Specifically, the introduction of commercial interests can erode or sever many trust-based relationships. The authors underscored the following.

Thus, trust is not best viewed as a fixed or given commodity that exists within a specific social community or network of relationships (Granovetter 1985), but rather should be understood to be the output of dynamic exchange relationships that are fuelled by individual interests, as well as being the lubricant for the formation of new exchange relationships. (Liebeskind and Oliver, 1998, p. 140)

I believe this not only is an excellent summary of their investigation but also a concise description of the connection between trust and social exchange theory.

As stated earlier Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) provided the framework for this first part of the section of the literature review focused on trust within and among organizations and social exchange theory. Ring and van de Ven's (1992) article on structuring cooperative relationships between organizations will be used to help organize the next section of the literature review focused on transaction cost economics or TCE.

You will notice common themes between the two sections.

Transaction cost economics, or TCE, builds upon social exchange theory and was the second theme to emerge from the literature review focused on trust within and among organizations. Ring and van de Ven (1992) studied issues associated with governance of cooperative relationships between organizations including the factor of trust. They included research consortia as examples of cooperative interorganizational relationships

along with strategic alliances, partnerships, and coalitions. The authors noted rapid changes in technology and competitive environments prompt organizations to seek cooperative relationships. The authors defined trust as “confidence in the other’s goodwill” and stated “personal embeddedness” (p. 488) is a necessary condition for trust. Similarly, in a study of antecedents of trust within cooperative organizations, Morrow et al. (2004) included “confident expectations” and a “willingness to be vulnerable” (p. 49) as critical components of definitions of trust. From a transaction cost perspective they suggested trust can reduce governance costs because of the reduced threat of opportunistic behavior. The authors added “A reduction in governance costs may lead to an increase in efficiency, which in turn enhances organizational performance” (p. 54). In 1994 Ring and van de Ven published a follow-up article in which they acknowledged researchers, as reflected in transaction cost theory, use efficiency to define the most expeditious and least costly governance structure for undertaking a transaction.

As part of his study of online interorganizational exchange relationships Pavlou (2002) found trust can act as governance mechanism, diminish opportunism in exchange relationships, and promote cooperation. He also documented trust as confidence in the expectations and goodwill of others. Ring and van de Ven (1992) identified efficiency and opportunism as considerations associated with transaction cost economics. Efficiencies can be gained through collaborative arrangements but collaborators also need to pay attention to opportunistic parties that may seek some sort of advantage over other parties through the agreements. The authors cited Williamson’s definition of opportunism as “self-interest seeking with guile” (p. 487). Lane (1998) indicated that

within economic theory risk arises because trusting behavior exposes one to the presumed opportunistic behavior of another. There is a risk that one party may exploit the vulnerability of the other. However the author did note that repeated personal interactions across firms encourage courtesy and consideration and in turn the prospect of ostracism minimizes individual opportunism. According to the author commitment to a common future and the desire to protect reputations can also protect against opportunism.

Citing transaction cost economics theory Meyer and Alvarez (1998) claimed the value of building trust comes from the reduction of costs associated with longer-term exchange relationships. They also identified trust, reciprocity, and forbearance as counterforces of opportunism. The authors believed trust to be the confidence one has in the expectations and goodwill of another.

Referencing transaction costs economics theory Bromiley and Cummings (1995) argued trust reduces transaction costs. Examples included trust that others will make good-faith efforts to fulfill commitments, trust that others will be honest during negotiations, and trust that others will “not take excessive advantage of another even when the opportunity is available” (p. 223). Jansen et al. (2002) also argued trust decreases transactional costs because there is less fear of opportunistic behavior. Bromiley and Cummings (1995) later asserted “Higher levels of trust reduce the need for and cost of making, monitoring, and enforcing agreements” (p. 229). Whereas lower levels of trust increase the costs of these types of transactions. Lower levels of trust may inhibit organizations from undertaking potentially profitable activities because “the parties involved cannot count on the other parties behaving in a reasonable manner” (p.

232). Bromiley and Cummings' (1995) work was used to fashion the Chapter One definition of transaction cost economics.

Ring and van de Ven (1992) purported interorganizational trust can emerge between business partners when they have successfully completed transactions in the past and they perceive one another as complying with norms of equity. The authors focused on recurrent and relational contracting and the flexibility they can bring to parties who are able to trust each other. They stated parties to contracts negotiated and agreed to on the basis of trustworthiness trust each other to deal fairly with gaps in the contracts that result from the inability to perfectly predict the future. The authors asserted recurrent contracting enables parties to build trust by demonstrating norms of equity and reciprocity. Corsica, Johnson, and Lancaster (2002) focused on the successful "reciprocal relationships" (p. 79) between institutions of higher education in New York and the military and concluded "Give-and-take economics are a major part of this reciprocity" (p. 79). Hopkins and Weathington (2006) affirmed equity is based on the belief that the distribution of rewards should rely on individual contributions, and within an organizational setting equity refers to expected inputs and outcomes from two parties.

While exploring interorganizational relationships, or IORs, Connelly et al. (2012) acknowledged interorganizational confidence is necessary for efficiency and success and stated transaction cost economics scholars would argue formal contracts are essential for developing such confidence. In contrast however the authors also noted trust can improve interorganizational efficiency by substituting, in part anyway, for formal contracts. They asserted trust can be developed through successful and repeated

interactions that demonstrate partner reliability. Bachmann (1998) asserted “the true quality of business relationships is to be found in the forms of informal understanding and practices which are not part of the contract itself, but lie ‘beyond contract’” (p. 314).

In an article that focused on familiarity and trust within alliances Gulati (1995) drew upon both sociological theory and transaction cost economics. The author described trust as “an interpersonal phenomenon” (p. 92) but acknowledged it is possible to think of interfirm trust with regard to economic transactions. Under certain circumstances firms may substitute trust for more formal contractual safeguards. Whether or how trust is transferred from individuals to organizations is an interesting subject. Eddy (2010) proposed relationships are first established by individuals and then shift to institutions. As these relationships develop trust builds over time. Meyer and Alvarez (1998) would likely agree but they emphasized longevity alone does not deepen trust and time must be accompanied by demonstrated trustworthiness and integrity from each firm. Zaheer et al. (1998) argued “it is individuals as members of organizations, rather than the organizations themselves, who trust” (p. 141).

Tubin and Levin-Rozalis (2008) conducted a qualitative case study of an interorganizational cooperative and determined trust exists along the line between people and organizations. They asserted “It (trust) is a human trait that is translated into an organizational act. Possessing this special quality cannot be a characteristic of human relations alone, nor can it be an organizational attribute. In order to materialize, it needs both” (p. 718). The authors warned that depending upon the goodwill of people trust will

disappear at the first problem or under pressure. They suggested a supporting organizational structure could help assuage such threats.

Gulati and Sytch (2008) introduced their study on the antecedents of trust and the distinction between interpersonal and interorganizational trust by asserting trust may occur not only among individuals but also among organizations. Interorganizational trust represents an organization's expectation that another firm will not act opportunistically when dealing with that organization. The authors contended higher levels of trust are related to "reduced negotiation costs, lower levels of conflict, superior information sharing, and account for high levels of cooperation and organizational performance" (p. 166). They added trust serves as an effective control mechanism that can preclude the need for hierarchical controls.

Ring and van de Ven (1992) noted equity can be associated with reciprocity (one is morally obligated to give something in return for something received), fair rates of exchange (between utilitarian costs and benefits), and distributive justice (parties receive benefits that are proportional to their investments). They argued recurrent contracting enables parties to more easily pursue equitable outcomes that lead to higher levels of trust.

Das and Teng (1998) examined confidence levels within strategic alliances including joint research and development arrangements. They defined confidence as the perceived level of certainty that a partner will pursue mutually compatible interests rather than act opportunistically. They argued the sense of confidence comes from two distinct sources – trust and control. They considered trust as the degree to which one holds a

positive attitude toward another's goodwill and reliability in a risky exchange situation. Trust emerges from risk taking, equity preservation, communication, and interfirm adaptation.

In an editorial introducing a special edition of *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* focusing on trust in the digital economy Sambamurthy and Jarvenpaa (2002) quote a corporate CEO as stating "Trust, not profits, is the single greatest challenge facing the business world today" (p. 183). The authors suggested trust is essential for transacting with customers, increasing knowledge sharing, developing inter-organizational collaborative networks, and sharing distributive information technology architectures.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders of higher education consortia. The literature reviewed in this chapter helped refine the research topic and form the framework for this study. The review demonstrated an interconnectedness between organization development human process, social exchange, transaction cost economics concepts, and the phenomenon of trust.

Interpersonal collaboration within organizations is influenced by organization development human processes. Social exchange assumes human interaction and processes. Transaction cost economics assumes social exchange and adds monetary and risk factors. Therefore underpinning both social exchange and transaction cost economics are organization development human processes. The literature indicated the

presence, or absence, of interpersonal and interorganizational trust can be observed by and influences the actions, efforts, and decisions of administrators and leaders.

Salient themes identified in the literature included human process issues such as communication, leadership, and decision-making; organizational interdependency, social exchange, relationship capital, and reciprocity; boundary spanners; transaction costs, efficiencies, opportunism, and equity; and the transfer of trust from individuals to organizations.

Institutional members of a higher education consortium cooperate to compete. This literature review has shed light on the dynamics of this counterintuitive relationship. Success of the consortium requires trust. Responsibility for success is shared among the institutions and within consortia. Baseball is the analogy. This research was about the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia and the experiences of directors and leaders.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

Studying the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia presents challenges. Bachmann (1998) referred to trust as a “complex phenomenon” (p. 301). Gulati and Sytch (2008) identified trust as a complex and multilevel phenomenon. Johnson (1988) emphasized “consortia are very complex organizational units that run counter to institutional tradition” (p. 195). This chapter describes the rationale for selecting a qualitative method for studying the phenomenon of trust and the mechanics of the selected approach.

The Qualitative Method

Creswell (1998) asserted qualitative research normally focuses on the “how” or “what” of a problem rather than the “why” (p. 17) of quantitative research. He described five traditions of qualitative research – biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. A biographical study explores the life of an individual. A phenomenological study focuses on understanding the essence of a phenomenon or experience. A grounded theory study normally results in the development of a theory based upon data collected from the field. Ethnography is the description and interpretation of a cultural or social group. A case study develops an in-depth analysis of a situation or several situations. Each of these traditions was considered in formulating the methodology for this study.

Morse and Richards (2002) noted qualitative research is often used when a researcher must make sense of complex situations, work with multi-context data, and investigate changing and shifting phenomena. They also pointed out that a qualitative approach is recommended when a researcher must learn from participants in a setting or process experienced by the participants. Hatch (2002) described ten characteristics of qualitative research. They are natural settings, participant perspectives, researcher as data gathering instrument, extended firsthand engagement, centrality of meaning, wholeness and complexity, subjectivity, emergent design, inductive data analysis, and reflexivity. Stake (1995) asserted qualitative inquiry is highly personal research and emphasized while quantitative researchers have pressed for explanation and control qualitative researchers have sought understanding complex interrelationships. Although Stake is best known for case study research his insight into the field of qualitative inquiry was helpful during the deliberation and planning for this study.

The approach of this investigation also expanded upon two qualitative studies identified through the literature review. Tubin and Levin-Rozalis (2008) conducted a qualitative case study to examine the structural aspect of nurturing trust within a successful interorganizational cooperative (IOC). Included within this study was a research question related to the role of a leader in laying the foundations for relations of trust between the partners. The authors theorized that relations of trust among the partners are required to overcome threats. Findings indicated factors that enhance trust include low levels of risk, power balance, clear communication and transparency, and

joint ownership. The results also indicated the IOC director must be an effective leader and one whom can play the critical role of mediator.

Tucker and de Berranger (2002) also conducted a qualitative case study to examine information and communication technology diffusion projects. The investigators theorized trainers must possess interpersonal as well as technical skills for a diffusion project to succeed. Because diffusion projects are as much of a social process as they are technical they also theorized trust is important for success. The authors asserted as relationships progress trust becomes stronger. The authors found the approach used by the trainer in fostering goodwill and trust was integral to the success of the project. Both technical competence and empathy contributed to program success.

Tubin and Levin-Rozalis (2008) and Tucker and de Berranger (2002) respectively focused on nurturing interorganizational trust and the social processes associated with developing trust. Ultimately a phenomenological design was crafted for this study, but these two examples of qualitative inquiry found through the literature review for this study point to the usefulness and practicality of the qualitative approach for this project.

The information presented above is intended to be an introduction to the nature of qualitative study. The next section will help explain the rationale for selecting a phenomenological design.

Research Design

The information in this section helps explain the rationale for selecting a phenomenological design for this study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and

leaders of higher education consortia. Gulati (1995) referred to trust as “an interpersonal phenomenon” (p. 92) in an article focused on familiarity and trust within alliances and Gulati and Sytch (2008) identified trust as a complex and multilevel phenomenon. Zaheer et al. (1998) acknowledged the “phenomenon of interorganizational trust” (p. 157) in an article focused on interorganizational and interpersonal trust.

Creswell’s (1998) explanation that phenomenological inquiry normally focuses on the “how” (p. 17) of a problem was reflected in the construction of the research questions for this study. Although I did not come across a phenomenological research study through the literature review, the findings of Tubin and Levin-Rozalis (2008) and Tucker and de Berranger (2002) pointed to the appropriateness of a qualitative design to answer research questions pertinent to understanding the experiences of consortium leaders related to trust.

Several authors have reflected on the nature of phenomenological research. Although very similar in character each author emphasized a slightly different perspective of the phenomenological approach. Hatch (2002) emphasized the nature of the phenomenon while Morse and Richards (2002) highlighted the core and understanding. Merriam (1998) underscored the experience and interpretation. Creswell (2007) suggested phenomenological research focuses on the meaning of individual experiences and leads to the development of a composite description of the phenomenon. van Manen (1990) asserted the purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences to a description of the universal or collective essence.

The citations listed in the three paragraphs above, along with Bachmann's (1998) reference to trust as a "complex phenomenon" (p. 301), the frequent discovery of the terms "relations" and "relationships" in the literature review, and the intent to describe the experiences of consortia directors and leaders as they relate to the issue of trust substantiated the use of a qualitative phenomenological approach.

Considering the personal nature of qualitative research, while I understand the value and appropriateness of quantitative research, selecting a phenomenological method is also a reflection of my personal forte and tendency. My personal and professional decisions are based not only upon quantifiable data but also upon context and perspective and meaning. Data are important but so are processes and relationships.

This methodology for this study involved gathering information about the experiences of individuals within higher education consortia. Biographical, case study, and phenomenological research designs were preliminarily considered for this study. However the perspectives outlined above pointed to the relevance of the phenomenological approach to meet the purpose of this study and address the research questions; thus informing my decision to ultimately select the qualitative phenomenological method and research design.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative studies is complex. Merriam (1998) emphasized the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for both data collection and analysis. Creswell (1994) affirmed researchers must take steps to gain entry to the research setting and to secure permission to study the informants or situation.

Qualitative researchers are also required to distance themselves from, yet also be engaged in, their research. They are expected to employ the concept of epoche during data collection. Epoche requires the researcher to bracket or suspend his or her own preconceived ideas about the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Merriam (1998) stated clarifying and establishing researcher bias at the beginning of the investigation can help validate the study. I viewed my role as researcher to include data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Preventing Bias

As just stated, Merriam (1998) indicated acknowledging bias can help validate a study. Along the same line Creswell (1998) asserted qualitative researchers need to decide how and in what way their personal experiences will be introduced into the study. My own educational and professional experiences, knowingly and unknowingly, led me to this point where I selected a qualitative research method to study the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia.

Stake (2006) indicated triangulation can help assure a study is “relatively free” (p. 77) of researcher bias however he also suggested that biases “can be good, bad, or some of each” (p. 86). Some research efforts may help eliminate biases but as Stake (2006) theorized “We sometimes only succeed in driving our biases deeper into the shadows” (p. 87). Stake (2006) suggested researchers should consider identifying affiliations and ideological commitments that might influence interpretations but he added it is impossible for researchers to identify and understand all relevant predispositions.

Qualitative research, specifically participant interviews regarding their experiences with the phenomenon of trust, reflected my investigative preference of personal interaction rather than formal surveys. I serve on a higher education consortium committee and facilitate a multi-campus university work group. The issue of trust is important to me as both a leader within my organization and higher education but also as an employee. I determined it was impossible to completely suspend my preconceived ideas about the studied phenomenon as Creswell (1998) encouraged. I was careful not to share personal opinions and perspectives during data collection but I could not completely suspend preconceptions as I believed they and my personal experiences helped frame probing follow-up questions during the semi-structured interviews.

Ethical Considerations

This study was submitted for review to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (IRB). A letter of consent was drafted for participants to sign and was modeled after Creswell's (1998) sample consent form and a doctoral dissertation consent form (Batman, 2013). Collected data will be securely stored and research results will only be used for intended and stated purposes.

Anonymity of participants cannot be guaranteed, for example Noftinger Award information and recipients are public data viewable on the ACL website, however all steps possible were taken to do so. Responses were de-identified prior to use in the results section and pseudonyms were used when reporting data.

Sampling Procedure

Phenomenological researchers must find individuals who have experienced the studied phenomenon. Purposeful sampling (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998) allows the researcher to select a sample of participants from which the most valuable research data can be gained. Successful criterion-based sample selection (Merriam, 1998) provides information-rich data that is central to the researcher's topic. I utilized a purposeful criterion-based sampling method.

The objective of this qualitative inquiry was to study the lived experiences of higher education consortia directors and leaders as related to the phenomenon of trust. The participant selection criterion was peer recognition as knowledgeable and accomplished higher education consortium directors and leaders. I started by inviting the recipients of the Association for Collaborative Leadership's "John B. Noftsinger, Jr. Award for Service and Leadership" to participate in interviews. This award is given to an "individual who has contributed significantly over the years to support and strengthen cooperation among institutions of higher education" (Association for Collaborative Leadership, 2014).

It is important to note that success in and of itself was not a criterion for participant selection nor a necessary condition or status of the higher education consortium or program the participant represents. I did not define success within this study. I believe it can be assumed Noftsinger Award recipients have been successful within their profession but that is not why they were invited to participate. The assumption I made is that Noftsinger Award recipients, because of their peer recognition

as accomplished directors, along with their commensurate length of service, experienced the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia at some point during their notable careers. That is why they were invited and is what is meant by purposeful criterion-based sampling. Their experiences with the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia could have been successful or unsuccessful, positive or negative, but the likelihood is, because of their years of service, they experienced the phenomenon of trust one way or another, in some form or fashion.

With regard to sample size Creswell (1998) indicated a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for “several individuals” (p. 51) about a concept or phenomenon. The author did not specify a minimum number of participants but indicated “up to 10 people” (p. 65) can be selected for participation. Elsewhere Creswell (1998) cited phenomenological researchers Dukes and Polkinghorne whose number of participants ranged from one to over a hundred. It is critical that phenomenological research participants have experienced the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 1998) – in this case the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia. A minimum of 12 data-collection participants was planned for this study. A total of 19 were recruited.

Data saturation was also an important consideration with regard to determining the minimum number of participants. Morse and Richards (2002) suggested literature respective to the research can indicate when data collection has become saturated. They also suggested data collection has become saturated when data offer no new direction, when the investigator has a sense of having heard or seen it all, and when the researcher

can fully describe not only the phenomenon but also its antecedents and consequences. Creswell (1998) recommended researchers collect data that continues to add until no more can be found. Data saturation was reached in this study given the number of data-collection participants (19) and the fact that repetition was observed in participant responses. Results tables in Chapter Four help illustrate this even though repeated verbatim responses were eliminated from tables.

To-date there have been 3 Noftsinger Award recipients. Two (2) of the 3 agreed to participate in the study. In a way this was fortunate in that this outcome helped maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the 2 award recipients whom participated. I then utilized a snowball technique to secure additional participants – asking the participating award recipients for referrals to colleagues whom they believed would be appropriate for the study. Knowing that I needed a minimum of 12 participants and considering that not all referrals identified by the 2 award recipients through the snowball technique would accept invitations I reached out to the 4 pilot interview participants for referrals. I believed utilizing a snowball technique with the pilot interview participants was appropriate since they in a very real way were already part of the study – pilot interview results were used to revise the interview protocol and therefore helped form the study. Snowball referrals were requested at the end of each pilot and data collection interview after participants had obtained an understanding of the purpose and focus of the research. This understanding helped participants identify and nominate potential snowball participants. All pilot study and data-collection participants were invited to submit snowball referrals.

A total of 33 interview invitations were sent, including the invitations sent to the 3 Noftsinger Award recipients. Nineteen (19) participants were secured and agreed to be interviewed. Each of the 33 identified individuals were sent an email inviting them to participate in the research. If I received no response within approximately one week I sent a second follow-up email invitation with the same attachments. Please see Appendices A through D. Email invitations were modeled after invitations used in another doctoral dissertation project (Batman, 2013). Two versions of email invitations were used – one for Noftsinger Award recipients and a similar version for all other individuals. Attached to each invitation email was the consent form (see Appendix E) and my resume.

Data Collection Procedures

Participant interviews are the primary method for data collection in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 1998). Semi-structured interviews are appropriate when the researcher knows enough about the study topic to frame the interview or discussion in advance. Informal conversations are accepted as appropriate phenomenological data collection methods but I used an in-depth semi-structured interview protocol, another accepted method. Semi-structured interviews included prepared questions developed ahead of time. The same questions were asked of all participants. The prepared questions were supplemented by additional unplanned probing questions, which elicited additional details and information. Initial semi-structured interviews lasted one hour on average. Follow-up member-checking interviews lasted no more than 15 minutes.

All 19 interviews were conducted with an iPhone and recorded using an iPhone app. Only 8 interviews were augmented with two-way Adobe Connect video-only conferencing. Three (3) interviews were conducted with one-way Adobe Connect video-only conferencing. I could not see the participants but they could see me. Eight (8) interviews were conducted without any Adobe Connect service. These participants either did not have webcams, did not have the required computer hardware or software, or were not near a computer when the interview was conducted. Some participants encountered unspecified technical difficulties trying to initiate the web conferencing service. Although two-way Adobe Connect video-only conferencing enhanced 8 of the interviews I do not believe its absence in the other 11 interviews detracted from the interviews or impeded the gathering of useful data.

Interviewing Strategy

Stake (1995) suggested researchers make sure to take good notes and rely on member checking. He also suggested researchers plan for ample time and space immediately after interviews to add recollections and interpretive commentary. Creswell (1998) listed interview strategies including saying “little” (p. 131) during interviews, using an appropriate level of questioning, being sure to listen rather than talk, moving from ice-breakers to the interview questions, and addressing when interviewees stray from the questions.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed as described above. Participants were asked to sign and return the consent form prior to the initial interview. Verbal consent to participate and be recorded was also secured at the beginning of the initial interview.

Once each subject's willingness and availability to participate was secured I sent each person a copy of the interview protocol (see Appendix F) that included interview questions. I asked each participant to read and contemplate answers to the questions ahead of time. I believe this helped achieve depth of interview data. The interview protocol was prepared with ample space in-between interview questions which could be used by participants to prepare responses and used by the researcher to record interview notes.

An ice-breaker question was used at the beginning of the interview to help establish rapport between myself and the participant. Near the end of the interview participants were asked to suggest publications and documents that would complement or contrast the concepts illustrated by interview questions.

I reviewed my interview notes and the transcribed interviews and considered the recommended publications and documents. Participants were sent interview transcripts and preliminary findings for review. Follow-up phone interviews were conducted with each participant to explore and clarify questions arising from transcribed interviews and the preliminary data. Participants were asked to review quotations intended for use in the research report in order to help ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity.

Interview Questions

Creswell (1998) recommended the qualitative researcher reduce the entire study to a single, overarching research question, sometimes called a grand tour question, plus several research subquestions. Interview questions emerge from the research questions.

Stake (1995) asserted “The researcher’s greatest contribution perhaps is in working the research questions until they are just right” (p. 20). He added “Perhaps the most difficult task of the researcher is to design good questions, research questions, that will direct the looking and the thinking enough and not too much” (p. 15). Stake (1995) emphasized interview questions should be designed to evoke descriptions of episodes, linkages, and explanations.

The research questions as initially stated in Chapter One follow.

Primary research question –

1. How do higher education consortia directors experience and describe the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia?

Secondary research questions –

2. Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?
3. Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?
4. Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?

Interview questions were developed following a careful and thoughtful review of the purpose and context of the study, the research questions, and the concepts that

emerged from the literature review. Interview questions and protocol can be found in Appendix F.

Four (4) pilot interviews were conducted prior to official data collection. I invited 4 colleagues who lead higher education consortia or consortia programs to participate in pilot interviews. The interview protocol was revised following the first 2 pilot interviews. The number of data collection questions was reduced from 23 to 10. Question content was also revised and questions were shortened according to the following process.

I returned to the literature for this study and reduced and grouped the literature concepts to 17 topics. I then sorted these 17 topics according to the 3 frameworks of the study – organization development human process theory, social exchange theory, and transaction costs economics theory. Not surprisingly there was overlap as some of the 17 topics were listed under 2 and sometimes all 3 frameworks. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of these topics. Three (3) interview questions related to each of the 3 frameworks and reflective of the 17 topics were included in the final interview protocol. An additional question related to the overall experience of trust, for a total of 10 data collection questions, was used as the introductory interview protocol question. This allowed for the mapping of interview questions to research questions. Interview question one mapped to research question one. Interview questions 2, 5, and 8 mapped to research question two. Interview questions 3, 6, and 9 mapped to research question three. Interview questions 4, 7, and 10 mapped to research question four.

A microcassette tape recorder was used to record the first two pilot interviews. The poor sound quality made transcription difficult. I researched iPhone phone call recordings apps and selected an app that easily allowed for the digital recording of phone calls on my iPhone, the downloading of the digital MP3 files, and the transfer of the MP3 files to the transcriptionist.

Table 1

Literature Review Concepts

Best Practices Lit Review		Trust Between and Among Organizations Lit Review	
<u>Organization Development Human Process Theory</u>		<u>Social Exchange Theory</u>	<u>Transaction Costs Economics Theory</u>
Basic Requirements		Interpersonal Relationships	Interorganizational Relationships
1. mission - purpose - measurable objectives			
2. boundary spanners		2. boundary spanners	
		3. exposure - risk - vulnerability - opportunism	3. exposure - risk - vulnerability – opportunism
4. equity - reciprocity - expectations		4. equity - reciprocity - expectations	4. equity - reciprocity – expectations
			5. the transfer of trust from individuals to organizations
		6. contracts - gaps - rigidity - institutional controls - undermining of trust	6. contracts - gaps - rigidity - institutional controls - undermining of trust
7. communication - process - credibility – time		7. communication - process - credibility - time	7. communication - process - credibility – time
8. costs - efficiencies		8. costs - efficiencies	8. costs – efficiencies
9. a collective effort yields more and better results			9. a collective effort yields more and better results

Table 1 continues

Best Practices Lit Review	Trust Between and Among Organizations Lit Review	
<u>Organization Development Human Process Theory</u>	<u>Social Exchange Theory</u>	<u>Transaction Costs Economics Theory</u>
Basic Requirements	Interpersonal Relationships	Interorganizational Relationships
10. leadership		
11. sustainability		
12. decision making		
	13. social capital – relationships	13. social capital – relationships
14. governance		14. governance
15. institutional commitment		
16. organizational performance – agility		16. organizational performance - agility
		17. single greatest challenge

Two subsequent pilot interviews were conducted using the revised interview protocol and iPhone phone call recording app. The length and content of interview questions were determined to be appropriate and effective. The iPhone phone call recording app greatly enhanced the transcription process and was used for all subsequent official data collection interviews.

Storing the Data

Data has been stored using a variety of methods – hard copy (paper) notes, scanned copies of notes, and digital recordings. Data has been stored electronically on a computer when possible and files are password protected. Hard copies of data materials will be collected, boxed, and sealed at the completion of the dissertation defense. Only the researcher and secondary researcher will have access to collected data. All collected data will be destroyed three years after completion and defense of the dissertation. Original audio recordings were destroyed after the authentication of transcribed interview recordings.

A Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)-certified transcriptionist was hired to transcribe recorded interviews and verify the accuracy of transcribed interviews. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality statement (see Appendix G).

Coding and Interpreting the Data

Stake (1995) asserted “I am ready to argue when someone claims there is more interpretation in qualitative research than in quantitative – but the function of the qualitative researcher during data gathering is clearly to maintain vigorous interpretation”

(p. 9). In other words, data interpretation and analysis begins during data collection, and in the case of this research project, that means participant interviews.

Stake's (1995) assertion suggests data interpretation and analysis is an iterative process such as that developed by Srivastava and Hopwood (2009). The iterative model established by Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) incorporated a three-question data analysis framework and provided a guideline for the general analytical approach that was used in this study. The three questions follow.

- Q1: What are the data telling me? (Explicitly engaging with theoretical, subjective, ontological, epistemological, and field understandings.)
- Q2: What is it I want to know? (According to research objectives, questions, and theoretical points of interest.)
- Q3: What is the dialectical relationship between what the data are telling me and what I want to know? (Refining the focus and linking back to research questions.)

These three questions indicate the reflective data analysis process which in reality began with participant interviews.

With reference to qualitative research Stake (1995) underscored "The quality and utility of the research is not based on its reproducibility but on whether or not the meanings generated, by the researcher or the reader, are valued" (p. 135). In other words, the reproducibility of qualitative research results is not the gauge of quality research, however the extent to which the positions, arguments, and completeness of the research create meaning for the researcher and reader demonstrates the value of the research.

Hatch (2002) contended virtually all traditions of qualitative research involve some degree of inductive and interpretative data analysis and he argued that during data analysis the researcher uses inductive reasoning and organizes and interprets data with the intent of discovering patterns, themes, and relationships. Creswell (1998) emphasized “Phenomenological data analysis proceeds through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statements and themes, and a search for all possible meanings” (p. 52).

The following steps were used as a guide to code, interpret, and analyze the collected data and are based upon analytical protocols taken from Creswell (1998).

1. The researcher reads all descriptions, or transcribed interviews, in their entirety.
2. The researcher finds statements in the interviews about how individuals experienced the topic, extracts or lists out these significant statements, and treats each statement as having equal worth.
3. These statements are formulated into meanings and these meanings are clustered into themes. The researcher lists these meanings and themes and writes a description or narrative of the experience including verbatim examples.
4. The researcher reflects on his or her own description, seeking all possible meanings and perspectives, and constructs a personal description of how the phenomenon was or has been experienced.

5. The researcher constructs an overall composite or exhaustive description of the meaning and essence of the experience.

Creswell (1998) stressed “The researcher needs to decide how and in what way his or her personal experiences will be introduced into the study” (p. 55) while Stake (1995) encouraged researchers “to include their own personal perspectives in the interpretation” (p. 135). As I stated earlier in this chapter, it was impossible to completely suspend or bracket my own experiences as they related to the phenomenon of trust. I acknowledge they helped inform and inspire probing questions during participant interviews. Beyond that I attempted to suspend my own experiences until step four in the data interpretation process described above.

Creswell (1998) added that self-reflection of the researcher may be used as a preparatory step to interviewing or as the initial step in data analysis. Stake (1995) claimed data interpretation occurs during the data collection phase of qualitative research. Self-reflection was used in the data analysis phase of this research. Phenomenological research normally requires bracketing or epoche – the suspension of “all judgments about what is real” (p. 52) until the judgments are founded on research results or with more certainty (Creswell, 1998). Accepting that as true and normal practice I believe requires the phenomenological researcher to suspend self-reflection until the data analysis phase else risk the process of self-reflection impacting the data gathering process and violating so to say the common phenomenological research element of epoche or bracketing.

Qualitative research coding software was available however I manually organized, analyzed, and coded the research data according to the following steps. Each

interview transcription was printed on paper and read in its entirety. Key words and statements were highlighted and typographical errors edited. Notes and questions were written in the margins and in-between lines. Transcripts were read a second time and reduced to key words and statements that were recorded in writing and sorted according to interview questions. This process was repeated – this time key words and statements were filtered and typed into a word processing document – again according to interview questions, but with the interview questions grouped under the four research questions. This process allowed for easy sorting and searching of text.

The word processing file was then searched for the occurrence of key words or patterns (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). The occurrence of key words helped determine meanings and themes. My reflection on the meanings and themes allowed for the construction of the overall description of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by consortium directors and leaders. Data analysis and verification were conducted using techniques described by Stake (1995), Srivastava and Hopwood (2009), and Creswell (1998).

Verifying the Data

Creswell (1998) claimed verification is a process that occurs throughout data collection, analysis, and report writing. The author also claimed “verification underscores qualitative research as a distinct approach, a legitimate mode of inquiry in its own right” (p. 201). Data verification can be achieved through a number of methods including member checking (asking interview participants to read and verify collected

data, including transcribed interviews, and preliminary draft findings) and researcher reflection. Member checking allows participants to offer responses and clarifications.

Stake (1995) suggested external reader checking can also be used to ensure qualitative data integrity. The external reader, an assistant professor of practice at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln experienced in qualitative research, was sent transcribed interviews, draft findings, and a draft version of this dissertation. The external reader posed insightful questions and helped confirm the quality and depth of the findings.

Early data verification occurred during interviews when clarifying and probing questions were asked of participants. I also took notes during interviews and compared the completed transcripts with notes when necessary. Member checking was also utilized after the completion of transcription. Each participant was sent her or his respective interview transcript, the preliminary list of key words and statements, and respective quotes planned for use in the report. Brief follow up phone calls were conducted to answer questions, confirm preliminary results, and help ensure participant confidentiality. Finally my own reflection, incorporating steps described in Srivastava and Hopwood's (2009) iterative and Creswell's (1998) analytical models, helped confirm data validity.

Reporting the Data

Creswell (1994) emphasized qualitative research as interpretive research and as a result it is useful and positive that the biases, values, and judgment of the researcher be stated explicitly in the report. Also with regard to reporting of the data Creswell (1994) encouraged the researcher to include statements about past experiences that illustrate familiarity with the topic. These experiences likely will shape the interpretation of the

report. The findings were reported using both a descriptive narrative and manually created tables.

Summary

Stake (1995) claimed “Good research is not about good methods as much as it is about good thinking” (p. 19). I suspect it is a little – or perhaps a lot – of both. The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders of higher education consortia. To paraphrase Stake’s comment referenced at the beginning of this paragraph – good research equals good method plus good thinking. The method that was used is phenomenological inquiry. The thinking was the reflection, decision-making, and planning that led to the topic selection, literature reviews, and research design and that also directed data collection and analysis. I believe good method and good thinking go hand-in-hand.

In this study I served as the principal investigator, data collector, data analyst, and reporter. My educational and professional experiences influenced and helped form not only the research topic and design but also the biases which I brought into this research study. The use of bracketing, or the suspension of “all judgments about what is real” (Creswell, 1998, p. 52), was used as a safeguard against bias yet even the acknowledgment of biases is believed to help validate collected data.

A purposeful criterion-based sampling method was utilized and was augmented with a snowball recruitment technique. Collected data, in both physical and electronic form, was securely stored. Recorded interviews were transcribed and verified.

Data was manually organized, analyzed, and reported. Meanings and themes were identified. Software was available to augment this process but was not used. Data was verified through member checking and external review. Data was reported in narrative and table format.

Purposeful criterion-based sampling resulted in the selection of appropriate participants. Participants were provided interview questions ahead of time, and two interviews were held with each participant – the initial interview and a follow-up member checking interview after each participant had an opportunity to review the transcribed initial interview. Data analysis began during the initial interviews. A formal data coding process included the identification of meanings and themes, researcher reflection, and an exhaustive description of the meaning and essence of the experience. An external reviewer was asked to review and critique the collected data and findings following completion of the coding process.

Stake (1995) emphasized qualitative inquiry is highly personal research. My personal, educational, and professional experiences and biases have brought me to this point in time. Those experiences not only helped determine the research topic but also the research design and methodology.

This chapter began with a very brief qualitative inquiry version of Abbott and Costello's more lengthy and legendary "Who's On First" comical baseball routine. In their routine "Who" plays first base, "What" plays second, "I Don't Know" plays third, and "Why" plays left field (Baseball Almanac, 2014). I sincerely hope, in the end, I will not have confused you as much as their comic routine. I do know the answers to the

research questions are *not* “I Don’t Know.” I do not expect this dissertation to be as amusing as their routine, so in this case I am willing to trade clarity for amusement.

Qualitative research is personal. Baseball is the analogy. This dissertation, this research, was about the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia and the experiences of directors and leaders.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

The methodology developed for this study produced valuable and relevant results. In this chapter I describe the participants and the data analysis and verification procedures and present data relevant to the interview and research questions.

The Participants and Setting

Although confidentiality was not guaranteed in the research consent form signed by participants all possible steps were taken to maintain participant anonymity. Many, if not most, higher education consortia directors and leaders know one another. Listing participants' first and last initials would likely reveal identities. Therefore in this report participants were identified as "P1" through "P19" – for "Participant 1," "Participant 2," etc.

In order to give the reader some perspective, 14 of the 19 participants served as directors of higher education consortia. The remaining 5 participants served as administrative leaders within consortia or led consortia programs. Length of service ranged from about 5 to more than 30 years. Seven (7) participants had earned doctoral degrees. Earned degrees of participants reflected subject areas such as English, Sociology, Social Work, Advertising, Education, Library Science, Fine Arts, Philosophy, Business Administration, and Public Policy. Nine (9) participants were male, 10 were female.

Participants represented consortia and programs located in 11 different states from the Eastern, Central, and Mountain time zones. Two participants represented university-system consortia programs. Thirteen (13) participants represented consortia serving state, regional, and metropolitan areas. Four (4) participants represented consortia that spanned more than one state. Both public and private institutions were represented. Consortia affiliated with both small and large institutions were represented as were both voluntarily-formed and legislated consortia.

Research Questions and Identified Themes

Tables 2 through 11 list key words and statements extracted from each interview question. At the top of each table appears the interview question and its respective research question. The number in the first column of each table identifies the research question and the number in the second column identifies the interview question. These numbers were utilized when the tables were first compiled and were retained below.

The occurrence of key words was reviewed and the essence of statements was considered to help identify themes attributed to each interview question. The same process was followed to identify the themes attributed to each research question. Table 12 illustrates the prevalent themes identified for each research question. You will notice common themes among the four research questions.

Following Table 12 I address each of the four research questions by referencing key words and participant quotes (generally unedited except to maintain confidentiality), and by employing baseball analogies. Referred publications, in response to Interview Question 11, appear in Appendix H.

Table 2

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 1 and Interview Question 1

Research Question 1 - How do higher education consortia directors experience and describe the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia?		
Interview Question 1 - How have you experienced the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia?		
1	1	Doesn't happen immediately
1	1	Time and frequency
1	1	Leads to cooperation you would never expect
1	1	Not everyone has to participate in each activity
1	1	Follow through
1	1	Trust undergirds all collaboration
1	1	The degree of trust reflects the strengths of institutional and personal relationships
1	1	The degree of trust determines the level of innovation and depth of collaboration
1	1	Lift up a lot of stones and learn from what's underneath
1	1	Identity management is 25% technology and 75% trust
1	1	Establishing trust is not part of the traditional faculty path
1	1	Degrees of collaboration – coordinate, cooperate, collaborate
1	1	True collaboration involves sharing risk and reward
1	1	Reciprocity is found along the continuum of collaboration
1	1	Safe space
1	1	Common agenda
1	1	More and better
1	1	Trust is based on relationships
1	1	Collaboration is self-serving to start
1	1	Participants need to move beyond reciprocity
1	1	Synergy – getting out more than you put in

Table 2 continues

Research Question 1 - How do higher education consortia directors experience and describe the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia?		
Interview Question 1 - How have you experienced the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia?		
1	1	The collaboration continuum – share, communicate, cooperate, coordinate, collaborate
1	1	Successful collaboration requires risk taking and vulnerability
1	1	Cooperation vs collaboration – trust is required for true collaboration
1	1	Investment
1	1	Collaboration equals creating something new
1	1	Managing expectations
1	1	The opportunity to reduce cost is based more on human and organizational behavior than business plans
1	1	You learn from the entities that don't succeed
1	1	Dialogue leads to relationships; relationships lead to trust; out of trust comes opportunity
1	1	Collaboration quotient – long term ROI – not immediate; in the long run we're better off together than we are apart
1	1	Leadership change – churn
1	1	“do more with friends”
1	1	The presidents of the board see each other as competitors
1	1	Contracts level the playing field
1	1	Contracts are required when there are third parties involved
1	1	Trust is dependent upon relationships
1	1	Shared mutual interest
1	1	Personalities of leaders

Table 3

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 2 and Interview Question 2

Research Question 2 - Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?		
Interview Question 2 - What have you observed to be fundamental requirements for the establishment of trust within higher education consortia?		
2	2	Establishing a relationship
2	2	Respect
2	2	Equal voice
2	2	Three legged stool – honesty, respect, intimacy
2	2	Ability to be vulnerable
2	2	Ethics of contribution – forestall your own personal gain
2	2	Take a risk
2	2	Set aside one’s own need
2	2	Collaboration is a long term investment
2	2	Shared vision
2	2	Reciprocity in the beginning
2	2	Follow through
2	2	Find the common agenda
2	2	More and better – whole is greater than the sum of the parts
2	2	Shared goals
2	2	See what’s in it for me
2	2	Willingness to work together
2	2	Self-serving
2	2	Academics are both protective and collaborative
2	2	Common ground
2	2	Time and frequency

Table 3 continues

Research Question 2 - Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?		
Interview Question 2 - What have you observed to be fundamental requirements for the establishment of trust within higher education consortia?		
2	2	Greater whole – more and better
2	2	Control expectations
2	2	Time and exposure
2	2	Collaboration is not an overlay of more work for others
2	2	Take a flyer
2	2	Three decision gate model
2	2	Safe space
2	2	Failure comes with success
2	2	It's rarely about the technology – it's about the relationships
2	2	Shared risk and gain
2	2	Each college has its own culture
2	2	Respectful
2	2	Listen
2	2	Honest discovery – disagree agreeably
2	2	People trust those they know
2	2	Same page
2	2	Common set of objectives
2	2	Mutual benefit – doesn't have to be equal
2	2	Can't overstate the importance of leadership

Table 4

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 2 and Interview Question 5

Research Question 2 - Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?		
Interview Question 5 - What have you observed to be causes of failure within consortia with regard to the establishment of trust?		
2	5	Bad leadership
2	5	Loss of respect
2	5	No follow through
2	5	Safe space
2	5	Manage expectations
2	5	Leadership transitions
2	5	Failure to listen
2	5	Someone doesn't adapt
2	5	Never forget who the boss is
2	5	Picking the wrong opportunities
2	5	Listening to the wrong people
2	5	It's not about me it's about us
2	5	Make sacrifices for the greater good
2	5	Loss of members
2	5	The common goal is no longer important
2	5	Lack of focus on common need
2	5	Lack of resources
2	5	Collaboration cannot be extra work for people – otherwise there is no benefit
2	5	Unrealistic expectations
2	5	Weak consortium leaders
2	5	Excessive altruism

Table 4 continues

Research Question 2 - Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?		
Interview Question 5 - What have you observed to be causes of failure within consortia with regard to the establishment of trust?		
2	5	Lack of unlearning
2	5	Overly optimistic
2	5	New senior leadership that questions the value of a project
2	5	Failure to recognize the common goal
2	5	Let people vent – don't try to educate at that moment
2	5	Apologize – “bow and bow low” – “I own this”
2	5	Failure to adapt
2	5	Honest expression of purpose
2	5	Breaches of confidence
2	5	Telling others what they need
2	5	Promising more than you can deliver

Table 5

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 2 and Interview Question 8

Research Question 2 - Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?		
Interview Question 8 - Reflecting upon your experiences what do you believe are the responsibilities of the director as they relate to the establishment of trust within a consortium?		
2	8	Get people together
2	8	Respect
2	8	Follow through
2	8	Identify common goals
2	8	You don't want to make the consortium a burden for people
2	8	Serve as a role model
2	8	Set expectations
2	8	The director must be the example
2	8	Radically humble
2	8	Holistic view
2	8	Identify the higher purpose
2	8	Make sure individuals understand their contributions mean something
2	8	Bridge builder
2	8	Cultivate relationships
2	8	Help people find commonalities
2	8	“Creating dinners or opportunities”
2	8	“Setting the table”
2	8	Show what you brought to the table
2	8	Immediately find a way to serve their interest
2	8	Maintain the philosophy
2	8	Provide the voice

Table 5 continues

Research Question 2 - Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?		
Interview Question 8 - Reflecting upon your experiences what do you believe are the responsibilities of the director as they relate to the establishment of trust within a consortium?		
2	8	Tell the story
2	8	Transparent
2	8	Consistent
2	8	Treat everyone equally and fairly
2	8	Process is important in consortia
2	8	Listen and hear
2	8	People who don't believe you've heard them won't trust you
2	8	People who feel they've been heard can accept no for an answer
2	8	Facilitate conversation
2	8	Match maker
2	8	Tie people together
2	8	You should go meet this person – boundary spanner
2	8	Set up the scaffolding
2	8	Focus on the relationships first – not the projects
2	8	Create the relationships
2	8	Authentic
2	8	Tell the story in terms of value
2	8	Create a safe space
2	8	Respectful
2	8	Equality vs equity – contributions will vary
2	8	True collaboration occurs when one invests more than another in order to increase the likelihood of success
2	8	Set the example
2	8	Allow risk taking

Table 5 continues

Research Question 2 - Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?		
Interview Question 8 - Reflecting upon your experiences what do you believe are the responsibilities of the director as they relate to the establishment of trust within a consortium?		
2	8	Failure is a necessary part of success
2	8	Allow all the perspectives at the table
2	8	Coach
2	8	“Presidents don’t consider me their peer nor should they.”
2	8	Relationships with VPs are important – they make presidents feel more comfortable
2	8	Don’t over promise
2	8	Create a neutral table
2	8	Lead – don’t micro manage – engage others

Table 6

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 3 and Interview Question 3

Research Question 3 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 3 - Reflecting upon your experiences please describe how interpersonal relationships – relationships between individuals – impact the development of trust within higher education consortia.		
3	3	Interpersonal relationships are the most important
3	3	Respectful
3	3	Follow through
3	3	Know someone else – leveraging
3	3	Individuals collaborate – institutions don't
3	3	It all comes down to individual relationships
3	3	Forming relationships is vital
3	3	Understanding others
3	3	Relationships are seeds
3	3	New folks require time
3	3	Who are they going to relate to on other campuses
3	3	Relationships are foundational
3	3	Every person you encounter will impact the outcomes you're looking for
3	3	Manage relationships strategically and professionally
3	3	Natural respect
3	3	Develop relationships – time and stability of membership helps
3	3	It's an absolute
3	3	Long personal familiarity
3	3	Have dinner from time to time
3	3	Some who do not like each other will get along for the sake of the institution
3	3	Match maker – here's what you have in common

Table 6 continues

Research Question 3 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 3 - Reflecting upon your experiences please describe how interpersonal relationships – relationships between individuals – impact the development of trust within higher education consortia.		
3	3	Relationships are necessary but not sufficient – there also has to be trust
3	3	The director needs to nurture relationships
3	3	Straw boss – a coworker who doesn't have a title but is a leader among peers
3	3	Where there is trust people will take a leap of faith
3	3	Altruism is often not practical
3	3	Collaboration – a democratic process where individuals cede some decisional sovereignty to the collective good
3	3	Time and frequency
3	3	Interpersonal relationships are crucial
3	3	The group can't move forward if individuals are not exhibiting trust
3	3	You've got to put in on the table
3	3	Presidential and leadership change can have a significant impact
3	3	Individual relationships are the basis
3	3	Create a culture that fosters relationships; if you're able to do that you'll be shocked at what you're able to accomplish
3	3	Nothing substitutes for interpersonal relationships

Table 7

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 3 and Interview Question 6

Research Question 3 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 6 - What different roles have you observed individuals play that facilitate the development of trust within consortia?		
3	6	Understand the problem
3	6	Thoughtful – listener
3	6	Focus on the question
3	6	Faculty leaders as champions
3	6	Engage leadership
3	6	Relationship builder
3	6	Sharing information
3	6	Communicator
3	6	Detail person
3	6	Listener and interpreter
3	6	Champion
3	6	Cheerleader – vocal supporter
3	6	A good chair is a facilitator
3	6	“What if ...”
3	6	Honest broker – has the broad interest of all in mind
3	6	Examination of alternatives
3	6	Peacekeeper
3	6	Energizer
3	6	Reshaping and restating what others say
3	6	Advocate for a position
3	6	40,000 foot view

Table 7 continues

Research Question 3 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 6 - What different roles have you observed individuals play that facilitate the development of trust within consortia?		
3	6	In the weeds
3	6	Writer
3	6	Communicator
3	6	Researcher
3	6	Organizer
3	6	Fiscal conservative vs fiscal liberal
3	6	Sharer
3	6	Listener
3	6	Synthesizer
3	6	Straw boss
3	6	Find the person most interested in the idea – they will move it forward and charge others up
3	6	Dual citizenship – a member of their institution and the consortium
3	6	Heroic leadership – telling your boss the consortium has a better answer
3	6	Alpha leaders
3	6	Quiet partner
3	6	Those who are well connected will be the most successful – human networking
3	6	They leverage their life's journey
3	6	Host
3	6	Mentor
3	6	Chair
3	6	Scribe
3	6	Presidents become confidential advisors for frank discussions of challenging situations and issues

Table 7 continues

Research Question 3 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 6 - What different roles have you observed individuals play that facilitate the development of trust within consortia?		
3	6	Being allowed to say what I need to say
3	6	The leader has to set the tone
3	6	Agendas keep the extroverts on track and give the introverts time to think
3	6	Clear up misconceptions – boundary spanner
3	6	“Spock” – level headed analysis
3	6	Graphic designer – present complex information on paper
3	6	Intellectual leadership
3	6	Financial support
3	6	Individual expertise
3	6	Relationship leverage – often with external contacts
3	6	Doubters – wait for someone to say something
3	6	Understand the audience – at what level do you address them

Table 8

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 3 and Interview Question 9

Research Question 3 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 9 - Reflecting upon your experiences what do you believe is necessary for individuals within consortia to move beyond personal interests and toward common goals?		
3	9	Common goals
3	9	Good for all
3	9	Common good
3	9	Return on investment
3	9	Measurable outcomes
3	9	Faculty working in community with faculty from other schools return energized with more capacity – capacity builder
3	9	Visions statements – it’s important to articulate where they’re trying to go – it helps members see themselves in the vision
3	9	Envision the future
3	9	The magic time usually happens after the first success – it doesn’t have to be a major project
3	9	When someone sees the connection of how all members benefit
3	9	You have to have the right individuals – who can see the value of collaboration
3	9	Shared goals
3	9	How should one vote? For self or the community interest?
3	9	Build a sense of security
3	9	Manage risk
3	9	Change is risk
3	9	Aligned motivations and expectations
3	9	Level of individual maturity that moves us forward
3	9	Having a good teacher – to help people reach their potential
3	9	Similar value systems

Table 8 continues

Research Question 3 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 9 - Reflecting upon your experiences what do you believe is necessary for individuals within consortia to move beyond personal interests and toward common goals?		
3	9	Mutual respect
3	9	The dialogue mantra
3	9	Once they make the conversion they are operating at a whole different level
3	9	They are surprised what they will put at risk from their own institution for the common good
3	9	Alignment of interests
3	9	Leaders need to establish the vision
3	9	Time and experiences together
3	9	Failures and successes go hand in hand
3	9	The collective interest – not personal – must prevail
3	9	Alignment with the institutional mission
3	9	You may have to gore yourself and accept you may lose
3	9	Institutions need shared goals and values
3	9	Be willing to give a little if it meets the common good – that makes you a good partner and solidifies the next project you'll work on together
3	9	Risk needs to be weighed, understood, and managed
3	9	Vulnerability requires risk management
3	9	Ability to see the mutual benefit
3	9	Understand the mission and purpose
3	9	Sometimes an idea is not feasible
3	9	Let the people excited about the project talk with their colleagues
3	9	Intellectual engagement – give them evidence and proof

Table 9

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 4 and Interview Question 4

Research Question 4 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 4 - Reflecting upon your experiences please describe how interorganizational relationships – relationships between organizations – impact the development of trust within higher education consortia.		
4	4	Because leaders have relationships with each other organizations agree to work together
4	4	Enhances what goes on
4	4	It is the example of the leader that determine the relationship of the organization to the consortium
4	4	The leader is the role model
4	4	Organizations live a lot longer than individuals
4	4	Memory
4	4	You can't just buy an organization lunch and talk it out
4	4	Organizations have cultures and personalities
4	4	Employees bring their organization's culture with them to meetings
4	4	Does an institution value collaboration or individual achievement
4	4	Institutions have personalities
4	4	How are decisions made and who makes them
4	4	Institutional personalities are based on founding principles, documents, leadership, boards
4	4	Higher education leadership turnover causes anxiety
4	4	Shared goals are crucial
4	4	Total unanimity is not always necessary to move forward for the good of the group
4	4	Consortia should not try to homogenize campuses
4	4	Some things are not collaborative opportunities
4	4	Do not do anything at the expense of another
4	4	Principles of collaboration

Table 9 continues

Research Question 4 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 4 - Reflecting upon your experiences please describe how interorganizational relationships – relationships between organizations – impact the development of trust within higher education consortia.		
4	4	Each campus has its own culture
4	4	In some ways other schools are seen as competitors for students and resources
4	4	As individuals regularly meet – formal organizational status becomes less critical
4	4	Leadership is a noun and verb – it can come from anyone – straw boss
4	4	Exchanges between organizations rather than discussions within organizations may produce better and desired results
4	4	You need to understand the motivation and incentives of people
4	4	Memories – re institutional memory – lasts forever
4	4	People do remember
4	4	Some institutions are interested and others not – it's a leadership issue
4	4	Don't infringe on projects other organizations are running
4	4	Define the consortium role so we are not duplicating efforts
4	4	Relationships go beyond the president – that helps create the culture
4	4	The more mature the relationship the better they can withstand failure
4	4	Organizations do not have relationships – people have relationships; schools have reputations
4	4	Personal relationships can overcome organizational differences if people spend time together doing meaningful work
4	4	Information technology is one of the greatest areas of collaboration within higher education – you won't see this in private industry because IT is usually a competitive advantage
4	4	Accept not every initiative will be successful
4	4	There are relationships both between individuals and organizations
4	4	The development of inter-organizational relationships must be based on personal relationships

Table 10

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 4 and Interview Question 7

Research Question 4 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 7 - How have you witnessed interpersonal trust transform into interorganizational trust?		
4	7	Faculty get to know each other and soon the relationship goes above them; “percolated up”
4	7	“might be in the water already”
4	7	Create a safe space – allows for experimentation and failure
4	7	We know we will fail – it will be a learning opportunity
4	7	Interpersonal trust is the seed for scaling out to the broader organization
4	7	Relationships between the CFOs started with taking the new president out to dinner
4	7	Football games, tailgating, and bratwurst
4	7	Ideas are shared and trust is built
4	7	Trust flows over into other organizational units – cascade effect
4	7	Are ideas legitimate? They are researched by consortium staff.
4	7	Process is important – it won’t happen overnight by itself
4	7	Repeated interaction over time
4	7	Structure committees so there is not wholesale turnover
4	7	New people are regularly needed for the influx of new ideas
4	7	Happens most often at the leadership level
4	7	Leaders are willing to take on more risk as a group than they would individually
4	7	Groups can become so cohesive they become institutionalized
4	7	Recursive socialization
4	7	Previous success softens future failure
4	7	You really don’t know someone until “you break bread” with them

Table 10 continues

Research Question 4 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 7 - How have you witnessed interpersonal trust transform into interorganizational trust?		
4	7	Therapeutic aspect of consortium board meetings – they face similar challenges and speak candidly
4	7	Once you have enough peers involved it adds to the culture of collaboration
4	7	Peers see the value and want to be involved
4	7	Contracts level the playing field – make sure everyone plays properly in the sandbox
4	7	Successful results help build relationships in external and internal domains
4	7	Initial success was observed by other units and became the seed
4	7	Unplanned providence
4	7	A willingness to trust and seeing results lead to success
4	7	Trust allows deeper conversation and inquiry

Table 11

Key Words and Statements – Research Question 4 and Interview Question 10

Research Question 4 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 10 - How have you observed member institutions address risks that might be associated with joining consortium programs?		
4	10	There are no requirements to join all programs – schools can join later
4	10	The greater the interaction the less risk from that organization – we're in this together
4	10	Never require full participation
4	10	Various funding formulae – lowers cost
4	10	Go for the low-hanging fruit
4	10	Build up goodwill as you work toward harder and more complex projects
4	10	Map out milestones
4	10	Reciprocity – a stage of development
4	10	Reciprocity indicates trust has not yet matured and is still developing
4	10	Some will invest knowing there will be little immediate return – ethics of contribution
4	10	Not joining at that time – wait and see
4	10	Offer different levels of engagement
4	10	Join an exploratory committee
4	10	Research the issue
4	10	Pilot programs
4	10	Principles of engagement – is not a contract – because in a contract you're really not creating a collaborative
4	10	Articulate expectations
4	10	Contracts – trust is out the door – contracts make sure you can't take advantage of another
4	10	Pick and choose your investment
4	10	Be selective what you join
4	10	Schools will protect their students and turf

Table 11 continues

Research Question 4 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 10 - How have you observed member institutions address risks that might be associated with joining consortium programs?		
4	10	But some will test the waters and have the courage to act
4	10	Let others take the risk
4	10	It's okay to be a foil at times – it is a risk mitigation strategy
4	10	Let ideas die on the vine
4	10	Four stages – denial, resistance, exploration, commitment
4	10	Risk taking is change
4	10	Everything the consortium does is sales – help them see the benefits
4	10	Strategic selling model – help them see what's in it for them
4	10	Take turns being the test pilot
4	10	Make sure the right person is at the initial meeting
4	10	Presidents want information before committing
4	10	Schools may rationalize why not to participate
4	10	There's not a lack of things to do – just a lack of imagination and organization
4	10	Three decision gate process – vetting process
4	10	The business model in higher education is broken
4	10	There will be stratification in higher education – the Harvards, tuition dependent schools, and public schools
4	10	Schools “socialize” or float or vet the idea
4	10	Nobody wants to be embarrassed in higher education – it's a huge driver
4	10	No surprises
4	10	Make sure institutional leaders are briefed
4	10	Leaders need to know of risk up front – that's how you maintain integrity
4	10	You don't always have to be an early adopter
4	10	There's usually enough discussion ahead of time

Table 11 continues

Research Question 4 - Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?		
Interview Question 10 - How have you observed member institutions address risks that might be associated with joining consortium programs?		
4	10	Have a conversation – vet the issue
4	10	Identify the consequences
4	10	Allow members to go back to their boards for a larger conversation
4	10	Sometimes an organization will go along with something for someone else’s benefit
4	10	More and better and faster
4	10	Financial and reputational risks – are the two largest drivers
4	10	Not everyone has to play – others can join later – but you can’t always do that – it may be seen as taking advantage of the relationship
4	10	You may not want to alienate a legislator – you may need that person later on

Table 12

Research Question Themes

RQ 1	RQ 2	RQ 3	RQ 4
Collaboration	Common – shared – align – same page – mutual - greater good	Relationship	Leader – role model – be the example
Relationship	Match maker - get people together - bridge builder - cultivate - create - facilitate - tie - nurture - leverage	Common - shared - align - same page - mutual - greater good	Relationship
Common - shared - align - same page - mutual - greater good	Failure - success	Leader - role model - be the example	Culture - institutional personalities
More - higher purpose	Leader - role model - be the example	Time - frequency - exposure – recursive	Failure – success
Vulnerability – risk	Expectations - altruism – optimism	Match maker - get people together - bridge builder - cultivate - create - facilitate - tie - nurture – leverage	Vet - discuss - research – socialize

The Research Questions

Research question one: How do higher education consortia directors experience and describe the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia?

“Tinker to Evers to Chance” – The double-play combination of the Chicago Cubs from 1902 to 1911: shortstop Joe Tinker, second baseman Johnny Evers, and first baseman Frank Chance. The term has become synonymous with precision teamwork. A metaphor describing cool efficiency. (Dickson, 2009, p. 876)

The prevalent theme to emerge relevant to research question one, the primary research question, is – perhaps not surprisingly – collaboration. Collaboration implies teamwork and efficiency. Relationships, having common goals, the notion of being able to accomplish more working together as compared to working individually, and vulnerability and risk also emerged as top themes relevant to research question one.

The idea of degrees of collaboration also emerged. P5 commented

I talk sometimes about early on I was at a presentation and someone talked about you can coordinate things, you can decide to cooperate and you’re working towards truly collaborating and if you’re truly collaborating you’re sharing the risk and you’re sharing the reward.

P11 commented

At a very general level when it [trust] works it allows things to really prosper and grow and it provides the seeds for sustainability. I’ve seen examples of that. When it doesn’t work, you don’t get true collaboration. You might get some cooperation but you get very little true collaboration.

P10 stated “In fact, we look at things on what we call a collaboration continuum. Some things aren’t collaborative opportunities because they’re about the very distinctive nature of the campus and they’re highly competitive.” There is collaboration and then there is true collaboration.

The concept of something new being created as a result of collaboration also emerged. P11 commented “Collaboration is in some ways producing something new whereas with cooperation you often are, as that person put it having an exchange.” P3 stated “I also think that the degree of trust determines the level of innovation that occurs in collaboration. You can’t have a depth of collaboration without a high degree of trust.”

One participant suggested unanimity is not a necessary element of collaboration.

P8 commented

So, I think that’s the main thing to look out for so that there is an ability to develop and maintain consensus and that you don’t all the time have to have total unanimity on a particular question in order to be able to move forward for the good of the group members and so forth.

Collaboration should also not be extra work for the individuals involved. In other words, any collaborative work individuals are involved with should already be part of their responsibilities at their home institutions. P10 commented

One of the things that we’ve worked hard to combat is the perception that collaborative work is extra work as opposed to collaborative work is your work. If we’re working on things or we’re trying to get you to work on things that aren’t a part of what you have to do anyway, that’s more work.

The data collected for this study suggest collaboration is at the heart of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders of higher education consortia. Degrees of collaboration are acknowledged along with the creativity and innovation that is fueled by collaborative activities. Unanimity is not a requirement for collaboration and collaboration should not be extra for those involved.

Later in this paper I will discuss in more detail the conversion individuals involved with consortial efforts go through when they move from self-serving to

collective perspectives. However I want to end this discussion of research question one with a quote from P12. P12 commented “To me, collaboration is essentially [a] democratic process where individuals cede certain decisional sovereignty to the collective good.” P12 eloquently stated that higher education consortium collaboration is a democratic process through which individuals both give up control and forfeit for the common good. The prevalent theme relative to research question one is collaboration. True collaboration involves shared risk and reward (teamwork), does not require additional work (efficiency), and produces something new.

Research question two: Based upon their experiences, what do directors of higher education consortia identify as basic requirements for the development of trust within consortia?

“Play with Anybody” – To win with confidence and consistency. (Dickson, 2009, p. 658)

The prevalent theme to emerge from the first of three secondary research questions is commonality. The concepts of the common good, a shared vision, alignment, being on the same page, and the greater good emerged and are collectively summarized as commonality and suggest consistency of purpose. Other strong themes to emerge from responses to interview questions related to research question two are matchmaking or getting people together, failure and success, leadership, and expectations.

P5 commented

We want to come to a shared vision but in order to even create a shared vision we have to have time together to get to know each other so we can articulate a shared vision or craft a shared vision.

P7 also introduced the concept of a safe space and stated

We're here to work collaboratively, openly and we've been fortunate, I think, across the board by focusing our collaboration in all the work we do in finding a common agenda that trust has been pretty solid here between the participants inside that room, that safe space.

Having a safe space that allows for creativity, innovation, risk, and the identification of a common agenda were frequently mentioned by participants. Similar comments included the following.

P10 mentioned

It's really always about finding some common ground. Sometimes that can be institutional common ground or professional common ground and sometimes that's, very importantly, personal common ground. So, if you have not found any common ground, you haven't vested in each other. Until you do that, you really don't have true trust.

P17 stated

In almost all of the origins of trust relationships I've been in, it started much before the consortial arrangement was in place by knowing the other players that are in the arrangement and having had positive experience with them keeping their word and with them being on the same page in terms of a common set of objectives. Every arrangement I've ever been in has started with that personal relationship with knowing the other players.

When asked the interview question about causes of failure within consortia P8 responded

Sometimes the organizational goals of one of the members of the consortia changes and it's no longer an important issue for them. The reason that brought them to work with others toward a common goal is no longer all that important to them so they back off.

The final three comments I wish to cite in this section take us back to the choices made for the common good mentioned in response to research question one. P14 stated

It's the experience of doing things together is what builds that trust. Sort of as an aside, when there's some shared risk in going forward with a project, they seem to have a sense that there will also be shared gains.

Referencing a purchasing consortium P9 commented

So you try to get together a purchasing consortium to do that. That can work and it works on those occasions when what you're focused on is the common needs of all of the participants. If we're just doing it because I personally have looked around and said "This is what my institution needs and I'm going to try to get a whole bunch of other entities on board with that so that I can do better, that doesn't work."

In other words – there is no room for selfishness.

P3 focused on forestalling personal and institutional gain for the common good when stating

Then I'd also say that another requirement for the kind of trust that leads to deeper innovation is an ethic of contribution. That sense of being able to forestall your own personal or institutional gain for the sake of seeing what happens, taking a risk, allowing the collaboration to unfold and a recognition that sort of that forestalling of immediate benefit will lead to a greater benefit down the line.

You have likely already noticed similarities between the comments cited in response to research questions one and two. This will continue throughout this chapter. The prevalent theme to emerge from the responses relevant to research question two is commonality – being on the same page, having a common agenda, and putting aside personal and institutional gain for the common good. In other words it is having confidence in and being consistent with the collective purpose.

Research question three: Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interpersonal relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?

“Setup man” – A relief pitcher who tries to hold the lead before turning the game over to the closer. Synonymous with bridge and table-setter. (Dickson, 2009, pp. 761-762)

I can't answer a research question with a research question – but that's what the data suggest. The prevalent theme to emerge from interview questions relevant to this research question about relationship is – relationship. In order to avoid answering the question with the question I will instead reference related terms mentioned by participants such as builder, broker, dual citizenship, and conversion. Individuals involved with collaborative higher education activity set up opportunities for bridges – and relationships – to be built.

P1 commented “I personally think that the interpersonal relationships are the most important. How well people get along, how respectful they are of each other, the rapport that they establish.” P4 commented

In interpersonal relationships and the opportunity to participate in meetings or groups or work outside of an institution to form those relationships are really vital. Being able to invest, influence and build those relationships and learn opportunities, you're not going to be able to have reasons to exercise trust unless you have those interpersonal relationships that open those things up.

Please notice other key words or parts of key words in these two statements – respect, rapport, and influence. The word “build” also appears. All of these terms pertain to relationships.

The process of building and establishing relationships is the focus of the next three statements. P5 commented “Some people take on the role of relationship builder.”

P8 stated

I think one of the most crucial ones is the role of the honest broker. Someone who demonstrates and then the other members of the group recognize as having the interest, the broader interest of the group prominent in his or her thoughts as opposed to his or her own personal agenda.

Dual citizenship implies personal and organizational relationships. P12 asserted

I guess it may not come up else wise but it does bring to mind one of the other short hands that we use here which is - I think it's a great compliment to managers when we say they have dual citizenship. They're a citizen of their institution but they're also a citizen of the [consortium].

Managing relationships, not only establishing relationships, also appears to be important. P6 expressed “You have to manage the relationships in a strategic and professional way because of the following. People say that universities never change and they change every ten minutes.” Meaning they change in regard to administrative turnover. P5 indicated “I always try to think about, who are they going to relate to on another campus? Because if I can help them find someone that they're going to relate to, I help build that relationship.” P10 asserted “Our job is about helping people match up. Really you need to say, “Let me have you meet this person over here who needs this thing. Here's what this person and you have in common.”

I mentioned the word “conversion” earlier in this section. Several participants talked about the conversion that occurs when individuals see the real benefit of collaborative work. P12 asserted

It takes a lot of time but once they do, once they make the conversion, they're operating at a whole different level. They're amazed by it. They're surprised at it. They're surprised at what they'll put at risk from their own institution to make sure that the chances for success collectively are enhanced. It's very impressive.

P6 mentioned a "magic time." P6 commented

Okay well there is a magic time. We contemplate this a lot here actually in the following way. There seems to be a point in the life of a group of people that collaborate in the [consortium] when they move from being independent and always looking out for what is going to be best for them, which is a natural human thing. I do that too. It's not like I don't. We do contemplate this. When does that magic thing happen that flips them to thinking that they are we instead of I? Generally speaking it is when they have solved a problem together and done it well. Once they do that it's an amazing thing. It doesn't have to be a big thing. It can be a little thing.

A final citation I want to include with regard to "conversion" comes from P7. P7 declared

Going beyond personal interest, the aha moment – I guess the aha moments are sometimes for that individual when they do see – they're living within the scope of their own institution, when they do suddenly they see the connections of how addressing a particular issue not only helps their small liberal arts school but a community college or a four year public research institution with over 25,000 students compared to a campus with under 1,000.

An interesting perspective was shared by two participants whose consortial work mainly focuses on information technology. P4 said

Really a very holistic picture of never just technology but how people fit into it and what people really need to make this institution run. That really gets at the heart of identity. The technical part of identity is maybe 25% of it on a given day and a good part of the rest of identity and access is working with the campus and understanding the business rules and building trust with different business and academic units and listening.

P13 asserted

I think at the high level, people need to be authentic. They need to – it's sort of like a human relationship and it really is the human side of what we do. It's rarely ever about the technology. It's really about people and probably the hardest thing

is follow through. Because everybody is under typically a very high work load and getting pulled in a lot of directions, I think trust is will people do what they say.

These comments remind us of the human factor in technology and identify the role and value of relationships in the information technology.

Relationships help members of consortia move from the self to the group – again creating the bridge suggested above. P10 commented

If I can see what's in this for me then I might be able to give what it's going to take to get out what's in it for you. I don't mean this in a negative way, it's self-serving to start. When you don't know others, you don't have the relationships, you're not trading on relationships, you start out with what's in it for me and how will I benefit from doing this? Once I understand that then I can start to think about, "What would it take for me – Can I do this in a way that would also benefit you?"

I want to reference two final comments. P19 expressed "I think it's critical and it's not just within higher education it's within just about any organization that you're involved in. Interpersonal relationships, there's nothing to substitute for them in my view because they build trust, or not." P18 remarked

If there isn't the relationship there or the willingness to create an environment of trust, it is destined to fail miserably. I've seen institutions really have a shared interest in a shared and common goal and then extremely successful in a mutual benefit opportunity.

I can't answer the research question with the research question – but the participants in this study did.

Participants talked about managing relationships. They talked about how to set up and bridge relationships. They talked about magic moments when people connect and identify common goals. They talked about how technological innovation is mainly dependent upon human collaboration and trust.

The remaining themes to emerge from interview questions related to research question three are having common goals, the importance of leadership, time, and getting people together. All are referenced explicitly or implicitly in the comments quoted for this research question.

Research question four: Relative to the development of trust within higher education consortia, what aspects of interorganizational relationships do consortia directors experience and identify?

“Follow Through” – To complete a throwing or batting motion. “Follow-Through” – The continuation of the arm and body in the direction of a pitch or throw. A good follow-through gives added impetus to the ball. (Dickson, 2009, pp. 334-335)

The prevalent theme to emerge from interview questions related to research question four is leadership. One of the most important responsibilities of a leader is to follow through on what was said and promised. Follow through gives impetus and momentum to projects and programs. Follow through helps ensure success. Responses indicate successful interorganizational relationships are difficult if not impossible without strong leadership.

P18 stated

Mutual benefit and the perception of a mutual benefit is critical. Then I do think – I can’t overstate the importance of leadership and leaders who are able to see the big picture and can see beyond – can see the forest before they see the tree and who understand the value of participating collaboratively together in a larger group and are supportive of having their staff and their limited resources devoted to a mutually beneficial initiative.

P1 emphasized

What happens is really, once you get this interpersonal relationship, you'd be surprised how the organizations seem to say because their leadership has a relationship, they agree to go ahead and work together. This then enhances what goes on among the institutions.

A comment from P12 provided insight about intraorganizational change that can occur through interorganizational conversation. P12 stated "I knew it [change] wouldn't take place within an organization but when it's between organizations, it's a whole different world." The participant was commenting that sometimes an organization won't implement change on its own but when it sees the success or demonstrated value achieved by other organizations it then realizes doing something differently may be worthwhile. Leadership within a consortium creates the climate that allows this discussion and realization to occur. Similarly the same participant also remarked "It must have been interesting to see the CFO at [institution] say to the president, 'I think the consortium [has] got a better answer.' But, [the CFO] did. I think that's heroic leadership in the right way." This is another example of how leadership can help set the stage for organizational growth through interorganizational relationships.

Two participants pointed out that leadership does not always need to be formal leadership. P11 commented

But, I think one of the things you need to do in the course of developing this work effectively and I'm in the middle of doing this on my campuses, is find the people who are – I use the term straw boss, that's pejoratively now but I think of it as more of a positive is the people who are the unwritten leaders in any group whether it be administrative or whether it be faculty.

P12 commented “The things that can be done collectively that leadership should not just be a noun, it’s a verb and frankly it can come from anyone in an organization: rank and file, non-manager, blue collar.”

This research question relates to topics found in the literature review focused on transaction cost economics. Common topics or subjects identified in that particular review were risk and contracts. Comments from two participants specifically highlighted the topic of risk. P10 asserted “The trust that group has – the members of that group have with each other has really – what I have seen is their willingness to take on risk as a group that none of them would take on alone.” P3 stated “Where you build up a level of experience with these folks with lower risk, lower cost initiatives first to build that good will as you work toward the harder, more complex and deeper, more deeply collaborative projects.” Collectively institutions are usually willing to take on risk they may not otherwise take on. It also helps to initially set manageable objectives associated with manageable risk. Achieving success at that level will increase the likelihood of organizations accepting additional risk later on.

Two participants had particularly salient comments about contracts. P5 commented on the consortium’s principles of engagement and differentiated the principles from a contract. “Again, we did this on this end [the consortium] and some of this is born of experience, but we drafted principles of engagement. It’s not a contract because when you’re in a contract you’re not really creating a collaborative.” The same participant also stated

That's what I find [with regard to contracts and collaboration] and sometimes I feel like when you get down to negotiating contract language, trust is out the door. That's when people bring in their lawyers and it's all about making sure that you can't take advantage of me. None of that is based on trust.

Another participant, P15, took a slightly more affirmative perspective regarding attorneys and contracts and stated "All they're trying to do is level the playing field and make sure that everybody plays properly in the sandbox like we're in kindergarten. That's important."

Most participants spoke of interorganizational relationships in terms of relationships between the organizational leaders – rather than between the organizations themselves. When asked interview question four about interorganizational trust P16 stated "I actually – don't take this personally but I would just pick at that question because organizations don't have relationships. Organizations are things that exist on paper. People have relationships." The same participant also stated

I would focus that question on organizational reputations and peoples' perceptions of organizations. But, then the person to person relationships, in most but not all cases but in many cases the personal relationships can overcome that if people have enough time together doing meaningful work.

Another participant, P5, asserted

I think one of the challenges and we see it is organizations have cultures and personalities and if the culture and personality internal to the organization doesn't value collaboration or – doesn't value collaboration it spills over into our ability to build that between the organizations.

It appears these participants suggest organizations may not have relationships but they do have reputations, cultures, and personalities. Institutional culture and personality was another theme that emerged relevant to this research question.

P13 indicated organizations and institutions also have memories. In reaction to a proposed idea P13's colleague responded "Why the hell do you want to do that? They kind of shafted us ten years ago on this other project. Why would you want to work with them?" P13 went on to say "That was such an eye opening moment to me. I appreciated the candor but I was kind of shocked by it. I think part of what that speaks to is memories last forever in this circle." P13 completed the thought by stating

But, people do remember so if there's a feeling that, "Oh I tried this and it didn't work with so and so institution. I don't want to get burned again." I think that's real and so you'd hope as the positions change over that we get past that and I think in general we do, but it is interesting that there are some institutions that all other things being equal are very interested and active and effective at working together in consortia and there's others that seemingly the footprint is very similar, they just don't seem to have an interest for whatever reason. I think that's mostly a leadership issue.

Additional themes to emerge from responses to interview questions associated with research question four are relationship, failure and success, and vetting, discussing, researching, and socializing consortium proposals.

The predominant theme identified with research question four is leadership. Participants emphasized the importance of leadership – at both a personal and organizational level. Leaders cultivate climates that allow for innovation and growth. Heroic leaders – both institutional presidents and informal straw bosses – challenge the status quo and facilitate change. Leaders consider organizational risks and intentionally or unintentionally promote cultural attitudes and practices.

Leaders need to follow through on what was said and promised. Their follow through provides impetus and momentum for collaborative success.

The Phenomenon of Trust

The results of this study indicate the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders of consortia is complex. Dominant themes for the four respective research questions are collaboration, commonality, relationship, and leadership. Other prominent themes relative to the research questions are the themes of match maker, failure and success, culture, more and greater, time and frequency, vulnerability and risk, expectations, and discussion and research. Following I will highlight three of these prominent themes – match maker, failure and success, and culture. Particularly salient comments were made by participants with regard to these three themes. Based upon my review and assessment of the literature and collected data I believe a discussion of these three additional themes will help illustrate the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia as experienced by directors and leaders and add to the information presented in the previous section relative to the four research questions.

“Set the table” – To serve as a setup man; e.g., Norm Charlton’s main job will be to set the table for closer Armando Benitez. (Dickson, 2009, p. 761)

The analogy of “set the table” is similar to the analogy used earlier of “setup man.” Using perhaps just a small bit of license, I used “setup man” to introduce the concept of bridging relationships. With similar license I use “set the table” but want to emphasize “table” – specifically meals shared at tables. The analogies of “setup man” and “set the table” are similar as are the respective themes associated with each – relationship and match maker.

Data indicate the sharing of meals helps ensure consortium success. In fact P5 reflected the words of the analogy and stated “I think part of it is creating dinners or

opportunities for them to come together and get to know each other. That's part of the responsibility of the director. I call it setting the table." The same participant added "Yeah, it started with me going and meeting with [the president] – our presidents meet over dinner so come to a meeting with us, we need to get to know you."

P12 acknowledged "I think it was – I forgot who that said you really don't know someone until you break bread with them" and P8 commented "The ability to have dinner with people from time to time, sit and talk about how your life is going instead of all the time being focused on the business of the moment. I think that helps a lot." Giving credibility perhaps to participants who would claim organizations do not have relationships only individuals do, P4 stated "But, yet organizations are a lot trickier than individuals. You can't just buy an organization lunch and talk it out."

Finally, P6, acknowledging that suggestions from senior leaders may trend during a certain time of year, noted "It [the sharing of ideas] just happened because they were eating some bratwurst together or whatever you do at a tailgate."

Meals, dinners, and lunches are normal parts of relationships, and the data also suggest normal parts of consortial activity. Of course meals and such have to do with the socialization and social exchange that occurs during the building of relationships, but I also believe they deserve special attention given how often they were mentioned by participants.

“Error” – A misplay on the part of the defensive team that prolongs the time at bat of a batter or the life of a baserunner, or permits a baserunner to advance one or more bases. (Dickson, 2009, p. 295)

“Home run” – A four-base hit on which the batter scores. A major accomplishment; an action that has been a clear success. (Dickson, 2009, pp. 426-428)

Several participants commented failure (error or misplay) and success (home run or accomplishment) go hand-in-hand. P12 stated

If you really want to increase the success rate at the consortium, by definition the failure rate is going to increase. You need to experiment closer and closer to the edge. If everything we do is successful, we’re not trying hard enough, we’re not pushing the envelope.

Similarly P3 commented “We know that we’re going to fail in some of these initiatives, but what can we learn from it?”

P18 emphasized

We’re able to put together a voice for higher education as a sector that only really works because the member colleges, the presidents and others on the campuses are willing to allow a consortia to take on that role. That only occurs if the institutions trust the consortia and if frankly there’s a leader of the consortia that has the respect of the member campuses and it doesn’t always – what you’re trying to accomplish doesn’t always work and being able and willing to accept that not every initiative is going to be wildly successful is another element in this willingness to work together. Again it’s relationships, it’s leadership and it’s a willingness to take some risk and to invest some time and energy and resources into it.

This comment nicely pulls together the themes mentioned earlier of relationships, leadership, risk, and time.

Emphasizing time but also frequency, another prominent theme, P14 expressed “People have to have time together, they have to have experiences together, they have to be able to work on projects and helpfully they’ll be successful but there probably will be

some failures.” P11 implied the value of time and frequency by stating “Some things they try don’t work but they have enough successes to know that this is workable for them.” Finally P3 stated “Our presidents have a very high degree of trust that has enabled them, collectively, to create an environment and a safe space for our committees to work in that allows for experimentation and that allows for failure.”

I believe it is safe to say that success and failure go hand-in-hand within consortial work, and that failure is unavoidable. When you consider individual and institutional personalities and dynamics, the complexity of higher education issues, and the risks associated with consortial work, it is easy to conclude success and failure will occur simultaneously.

“Clubhouse” – The area at a ballpark comprising a team’s locker room, showers, lounge, and the manager’s office. Synonymous with house. (Dickson, 2009, p. 198)

The third and final theme I want to discuss in this section is the theme of culture. In baseball the term “clubhouse” often refers to the culture of a baseball team. If two teams are evenly matched in regard to talent it may often be the culture or cohesiveness of a particular team that determines success. Collected data indicate the same is true within a higher education consortium. As suggested earlier a strong collaborative culture facilitates success – and the accomplishment of more than what could be achieved individually, another prominent theme. But the comments that follow suggest an even higher level of collaboration – resulting in both astonishment and a certain degree of sacrifice.

P1 emphasized

Giving everybody [has] an interest in being involved and then as they continue to meet, the level of respect and trust goes up in most cases. It leads to all other kinds of cooperation that you would never have anticipated. The real act is getting people together, find a project that they all would be interested in and then go from there and branch out. That's pretty much how it works.

P18 similarly stated

I think that's really the key critical issue is can you create a culture that fosters relationships between the leaders of the organizations? If you're able to do that you'll have a very – you're likely to have a very successful consortial relationship. You'll be shocked what can be accomplished.

With regard to sacrifice P15 stated

I've seen it play out beautifully that way where more people were able to get on board because they had time to actually think about it and work with their boards and work with their other association members. I've also seen it where someone throws it out there and basically the group says, "I know I can't do that as an organization, but I would be willing for everyone else because we will see benefit just because it gets done." Do you see what I'm saying? That's based in trust.

Similarly P3 remarked

There may be a grant for which their institution will not see any benefit yet because of their commitment to the consortium and their commitment to advancing all, they will invest when they know they will see very little immediate return.

These four comments suggest to me something out of the ordinary – something beyond what you would normally expect from collaborative consortial work. It is my conclusion that a cohesive clubhouse, a cohesive culture, can facilitate these extraordinary experiences of astonishment and sacrifice.

Summary

The main themes to emerge from the study, respective to each research question, were collaboration, commonality, relationship, and leadership. True collaboration involves shared risk and reward. It also facilitates newness. Commonality reflects a collective purpose. Relationship suggests a bridge and match maker. Through the development of relationships individuals sooner or later encounter a magic time or conversion time when they begin to consider the welfare of their colleagues before their own. Both institutional and consortium leadership are required for effective interorganizational success. Data indicate leaders are largely responsible for the success of interorganizational relationships.

Three additional themes were reviewed. Success and failure go hand-in-hand in consortia. Culture facilitates sacrifice and astonishment. Meals – or socialization – are important.

As you read the results it becomes obvious the themes are interwoven throughout. No single theme applies to a single research question. A theme may be dominant but it is not exclusive. I believe this underscores the complexity of the phenomenon of trust as mentioned earlier in this dissertation.

On to the ninth inning.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

“Ninth Inning” – The last inning of a baseball game unless the score is tied. Anything that is about to be over. (Dickson, 2009, p. 581)

Writing a dissertation is the most personal element of a doctoral program. Most other elements are prescribed. It took several tries to identify a research topic that felt both personally intrinsic and worthwhile. Once that happened, and after I completed the literature review for this study, I decided to blend in baseball analogies, not only because I like baseball but also because I believe they were appropriate and useful. They fit. So to continue this convention, we are now in the final chapter, or ninth inning, of this work.

This final chapter presents the opportunity to reflect upon and review the findings or outcome of this study relative to its purpose, framework, literature, and significance.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

As first stated in Chapter One – a higher education consortium is a group of colleges and universities united through collective effort (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999; Eddy, 2010). Each university is committed to the consortium and enjoys membership benefits but also desires to succeed and be the best of the alliance. Responsibility for success is shared among the institutions, the director, and his or her staff. Success of the consortium requires trust.

Higher education consortia can be geographic, affiliated, or purpose-based in nature. A consortium can help promote the value of higher education, sponsor the development of telecommunication networks, promote the implementation of open

source software applications, and coordinate scientific research. With roots in developing library resource sharing networks, consortia over time have expanded services and programs as needs and demands of colleges and universities have changed (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). A variety of consortia and consortia programs were represented in this study.

Generally speaking, an institution of higher education joins a consortium based on the assumption that a collective effort involving multiple institutions will yield more and better results than the solitary effort of a single institution (Horgan, 1999). Fiscal motives are behind many consortia initiatives (Strandness, 1999). There seems to be constant attention focused on the cost of higher education (Dotolo, 1999; Supiano, 2013). The focus is on cost reduction or in some cases, and perhaps more realistically, cost containment (Carlson, 2014; Peterson, 2002).

Even though an institution of higher education joins a consortium based on the assumption that a collective effort involving multiple institutions will yield more and better results than the solitary effort of a single institution an institution still must protect its own interests and ensure its own welfare. Each institution must strike a balance between self and consortium interests (Horgan, 1999; Tubin & Levin-Rozalis, 2008). It is within this pursuit of balance that trust most clearly emerges as a success factor (Horgan, 1999).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders of higher education

consortia. I believe this was accomplished and I will explain how in the next section of this chapter.

Outcome of the Study

The results of this study correlate closely with the framework, the literature, and the significance as presented in earlier sections of this study.

The framework of the study. The framework for this study was drawn from two literature reviews. One review examined the literature related to best practices in higher education consortia. The second review focused on literature related to trust within and among organizations. From these two literature reviews three relevant theories emerged that formed the conceptual framework for this study.

The review of higher education best practices literature indicated organization development theory can be applied to the phenomenon of trust, specifically the human process element of organization development theory. The works of Cummings and Worley (2005) and Noftsinger (2002) helped form this element of the framework. Communication, problem solving, and decision making emerged as common foci of articles found through a review of publications related to successful implementations of higher education consortia.

From the second literature review two additional theories emerged to provide the means to develop a framework for this study. The first of these theories was social exchange theory. Works from Jansen et al. (2002) and Zaheer et al. (1998) were used to help form this element of the framework. A basic tenant of social exchange theory is that within an organization an individual performs something with which he obliges another

party to reciprocate thereby aiding the formation of trust. Opportunistic behavior between firms and the reciprocal effects of interorganizational trust, relational exchange, and interpersonal trust are also common foci within the theory of social exchange.

The second theory to emerge from the literature review on trust was transaction cost economics (TCE) theory. TCE is similar to social exchange theory in that an individual or organization acts in a certain way and trusts a second party to reciprocate in a similar or expected way. TCE theory however acknowledges there can be a monetary value assigned to social exchanges (Bromiley & Cummings, 1995; Connelly et al., 2012). Through repeated and successful exchanges the parties develop a level of trust which reduces risk and thereby the costs associated with normal administrative and legal procedures. Each party believes the other will not act opportunistically and that equity – in terms of costs and benefits – will be achieved. Trust improves the efficiency of interorganizational governance.

The three theoretical perspectives of the human process element of organization development theory, social exchange, and transaction cost economics proved to be useful in developing both the structure for the study and the content of the research and interview questions. The framework proved to be especially helpful when revising the interview questions following the first two pilot interviews. Ten interview data collection questions were mapped to four research questions which were mapped to the three theoretical frameworks. If you compare Tables 1 (the framework) and 12 (the results) you will notice similarity in content. These tables help illustrate the usefulness of the framework and the interconnectedness of the literature, framework, and outcome.

The literature. The literature reviewed for this study helped refine the research topic and form the framework. The review demonstrated an interconnectedness between organization development human process, social exchange, transaction cost economics concepts, and the phenomenon of trust.

Interpersonal collaboration within organizations is influenced by organization development human processes. Social exchange assumes human interaction and processes. Transaction cost economics assumes social exchange and adds monetary and risk factors. Underpinning both social exchange and transaction cost economics are organization development human processes. The literature indicated the presence, or absence, of interpersonal and interorganizational trust can be observed by and influences the actions, efforts, and decisions of administrators and leaders.

Salient themes identified in the literature included human process issues such as communication, leadership, and decision-making; organizational interdependency, social exchange, relationship capital, and reciprocity; boundary spanners; transaction costs, efficiencies, opportunism, and equity; and the transfer of trust from individuals to organizations.

The results of this study correlate closely with the literature. Results do not conflict with the literature but emphasize different elements of the literature. The challenge in completing this section of the report is that both the literature topics and the research question themes identified through data collection are interwoven. A comparison of Tables 1 and 12 illustrates this. Certain topics and themes may be prevalent but they are not exclusive. In order to simplify this task the four prevalent

themes – collaboration, commonality, relationship, and leadership – respective of the four research questions, were used to help form this section of the report.

Collaboration. The prevalent theme to emerge from Research Question One, the primary research question, was collaboration. Collaboration implies teamwork and efficiency. The notion of degrees of collaboration also emerged. Collaboration was also a common theme found in the literature.

Participant comments relative to collaboration focused on sharing both risk and reward such as P5's comment "if you're truly collaborating you're sharing the risk and you're sharing the reward." Larrance (1999) affirmed this by suggesting consortium directors must be masters of collaboration and identified collegiality and collaboration as consortium success factors. Collaboration must be focused around issues important to institutional missions (Strange, 1988). Strange (1988) also asserted the key to successful collaboration is leadership and the imagination necessary to articulate the vision.

Additional participant comments centered on prosperity, growth, sustainability, and innovation. For example P3 stated "I also think that the degree of trust determines the level of innovation that occurs in collaboration." Accordingly both Larrance (2002) and Eddy (2010) contended distrust can inhibit progress and collaboration. Unanimity is not a necessary element of collaboration (P8) and collaboration should not result in extra work for individuals involved (P10).

Tension between collaborative instinct and institutional autonomy motivated Marino (2002) to study structural models of interinstitutional faculty collaboration and development. The author identified critical factors including flexibility, adaptability,

communication, and retaining institutional autonomy and cultures. P10's statement about the "competitive" and "distinctive nature" of campuses affirms levels of autonomy and campus culture impact collaboration.

Commercial interests can complicate circumstances. Liebeskind and Oliver (1998) suggested a deeper trust is required to support research relationships in which collaborators have commercial interests. Stonewater (1999) reviewed collaborative interinstitutional admissions and recruitment practices and emphasized the importance of commitment from institutional presidents, consistent work and contact among staff, and the belief in the benefit of the institutional collaboration. It is appropriate to reference P12's comment here about collaboration being an "essentially democratic process" in which "individuals cede certain decisional sovereignty to the collective good." This could only happen with presidential commitment and a strong belief in the benefit of institutional collaboration.

Commonality. The prevalent theme to emerge from data collected with regard to Research Question Two was commonality. Concepts of the common good, a shared vision, alignment, being on the same page, and the greater good emerged and are collectively summarized as commonality and suggest consistency of purpose. Relevant to this is P10's comment "So, if you have not found any common ground, you haven't vested in each other. Until you do that, you really don't have true trust." Other strong themes to emerge from responses to interview questions related to Research Question Two are matchmaking or getting people together, failure and success, leadership, and expectations.

With regard to the literature, commonality was also a prevalent topic. Authors such as Pritzen (1988) suggested developing a central organization could provide a mechanism and structure with which institutions could define and pursue common goals. Common concerns help focus resources and identifying common goals is normally recognized as a success factor (Widmayer, 1999).

Partnership capital forms when individual partners move past individual interests toward common goals and mission (Eddy, 2010). Related to this P5 commented

We want to come to a shared vision but in order to even create a shared vision we have to have time together to get to know each other so we can articulate a shared vision or craft a shared vision.

Lane (1998) indicated that within economic theory risk arises because trusting behavior exposes one to the presumed opportunistic behavior of another. In contrast to opportunistic behavior P7 commented about working collaboratively and finding a common agenda within a “safe space.” Having a safe space within a consortium allows for creativity, innovation, and the identification of a common agenda. Commitment to a common future however can protect against opportunism.

Watson and Jordan (1999) reviewed consortium-based economic development efforts involving colleges, universities, corporations, hospitals, and not-for-profit organizations and emphasized the importance of identifying common concerns. Knowing others (P17) and doing things together (P14) can help consortium members identify and understand common concerns.

Relationship. The prevalent theme to emerge from interview questions relevant to Research Question Three was relationship. Any discussion about relationship with

regard to Research Question Three must be augmented with additional concepts since the word “relationship” was contained in the research question itself. Related terms offered by participants such as builder (P5), honest broker (P8), dual citizenship (P12), and conversion (P12) are insightful. Builders help build relationships and honest brokers are proven to keep the needs of the group in mind. Dual citizenship implies someone is a member of their institution but also a member of the consortium. Building and facilitating relationships is important as is the conversion moment or “magic time” (P6) when an individual sees the real benefit of collaborative work.

Other identified prominent themes relative to this research question were commonality, leadership, time and frequency, and match maker. Individuals involved with collaborative higher education activity set up opportunities for bridges – and relationships – to be built. An example includes P10’s assertion that “Our job is about helping people match up. Really you need to say, ‘Let me have you meet this person over here who needs this thing. Here’s what this person and you have in common.’”

With regard to the literature, acknowledging the importance of time with regard to the establishment of trust Eddy (2010) concluded mature partnership allows for the building of trust and the testing of relationships. Similarly P1 remarked “I personally think that the interpersonal relationships are the most important” and added comments about respect and rapport. P4 commented about investing in, influencing, and building “interpersonal relationships.” Godbey and Turlington (2002) examined relationship capital and trust relationships and contended trust is built up over time and is a key

component of social capital. This sentiment is also reflected in the comments from P5 and P8 mentioned earlier.

Both Lane (1998) and Gulati and Sytch (2008) wrote about the roles of boundary-spanning individuals. These individuals, sometimes called access points, facilitate or help bridge relationships as also stated by P5. P5 indicated “I always try to think about, who are they going to relate to on another campus? Because if I can help them find someone that they’re going to relate to, I help build that relationship.” Lane (1998) concluded the process of building trust may be shortened if boundary-spanning persons in exchange relationships have regular personal contact. Similar responsibilities according to Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) include developing and maintaining vendor relationships, creating a safe place for idea exploration and problem solving, facilitating relationship and trust building, and acting as a buffer when trust has failed. Removing barriers is important and is often attributable to boundary spanners.

Both Ring and van de Ven (1992) and Eddy (2010) suggested relationships are first built by individuals and can then shift to institutions. Pavlou (2002) found trust can act as governance mechanism, diminish opportunism in exchange relationships, and promote cooperation. Similarly Connelly et al. (2012) studied interorganizational relationships and transaction cost economics and concluded trust improves the efficiency of interorganizational governance. Interorganizational collaborative efforts have resulted in institutional, marketplace, and technological discoveries (Wylie & Yeager, 1999). You may recall P13’s comment from the discussion of Research Question Four in the results section where P13’s colleague exclaimed “Why the hell do you want to do that?”

They kind of shafted us ten years ago on this other project. Why would you want to work with them?” I think it is appropriate to use here and I believe it indicates organizations and institutions, or perhaps I concede maybe only the member individuals, have memories. I suggest these sorts of memories can present challenges to the interorganizational activities and objectives described above in this paragraph.

Leadership. The prevalent theme to emerge from interview questions related to Research Question Four was leadership. Leaders cultivate climates that allow for innovation and growth and they consider organizational risks and intentionally or unintentionally promote cultural attitudes and practices. Leaders need to follow through on what was said and promised. Their follow through provides impetus and momentum for collaborative success.

Participant responses indicated successful interorganizational relationships are difficult if not impossible without strong leadership. Participant comments included having leaders who are able to see the big picture and who understand the value of collaborative participation (recall P18’s comment in Chapter Four about the “big picture” and “mutually beneficial initiative”). Relationships between leaders of different institutions encourage and facilitate relationships between other organizational members. Likewise sometimes an organization won’t implement change on its own but when it sees the success or demonstrated value achieved by other organizations it then realizes doing something differently may be worthwhile. P12’s comment in Chapter Four about how intraorganizational change can occur through interorganizational conversation illustrates

this. Leadership within a consortium creates the climate that allows this discussion and realization to occur.

The value of informal leadership and collective risk management was also mentioned by participants. Contracts may not always increase levels of trust and sometimes may have just the opposite effect. Contracts were not necessarily viewed as collaborative. Institutional memories, personalities, and cultures were mentioned. Two participants had particularly salient comments about contracts. P5 commented “because when you’re in a contract you’re not really creating a collaborative” and “That’s what I find [with regard to contracts and collaboration] and sometimes I feel like when you get down to negotiating contract language, trust is out the door.” P15 was more affirmative and acknowledged contracts can help level the proverbial playing field.

Additional themes to emerge from responses to interview questions associated with Research Question Four were relationship, failure and success, and vetting, discussing, researching, and socializing consortium proposals.

Any inconsistency within this research project between the collected data and the literature can be found within this research question. The research question focused on interorganizational relationships and was based upon the transaction cost economics theory within the framework. None of the articles included in the social exchange or transaction cost economics literature review related to or referenced leadership. Articles presented in the best practices literature review did reference leadership (Eddy, 2010) and topics included the dual leadership role of the director as arbitrator of the status quo and visionary of collaborative potentiality (Horgan, 1999). Directors must provide creative

management and visionary leadership and be change leaders. Leadership, a clearly delineated decision-making process, and executive level institutional support were also important (Anderson, 1999). Alberico (2002) documented the need for directors to have negotiation and political skills and Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) determined executive level institutional support is crucial to both consortium development and sustainability.

My belief as to why participants often referenced leadership when answering interview questions related to transaction cost economics and interorganizational relationships, and the reason why it was identified as the prevalent theme, is that strong leadership is required to overcome interorganizational differences and identify mutually beneficial opportunities. Williams (2002) concluded strong leadership can help address barriers to success such as turf issues and Strange (1988) suggested leaders who are able to articulate a vision are key to successful collaboration.

Keep in mind concepts such as risk, vulnerability, and opportunism were identified in the transaction cost economics literature review. Interview participants never mentioned opportunism, but they did reference risk and vulnerability. It is my conclusion leadership surfaced as the prevalent theme for Research Question Four because participants viewed leadership as the critical element for success for interorganizational relationships and to mitigate threats from risk, vulnerability, and opportunism.

The Significance of the Study. In Chapter One I suggested this study would be valuable to higher education consortia directors, leaders, and stakeholders as it should lead to a further understanding of the phenomenon of trust. The higher education

consortia best practices literature review revealed trust is generally recognized as a requirement in any higher education consortium or collaborative venture. Participant comments generally supported this statement.

Four selected responses to interview question one, some of which were cited in the results section, indicate trust is the essence of higher education consortium collaboration. Trust can be regarded as the mortar that holds consortia together. It is foundational – nothing happens within a consortium or between institutions without it. Four participant comments are highlighted below and illustrate agreement with this statement.

- “Definitely trust is involved in pretty much any decision that you do cooperatively.” P2
- “I think the trust undergirds all collaboration and that the degree of trust reflects both the strengths of relationships that exist institutionally but also personally.” P3
- “Well, I think it’s crucial to getting anything done, frankly and not just within consortia but on campuses and in state systems and so forth. If you’re relying on something other than that, you’ve probably got difficulties to begin with.” P8
- “It is the thing that will make a consortium work. It will make or break the consortium.” P16

This study contributed to the literature relative to higher education consortia and the phenomenon of trust, with a focus on the relationship between the theories of organization development, social exchange, and transaction cost economics. Throughout the literature reviews conducted for this study I did not identify an article or publication that focused on this combination of topics. I believed all of these topics were relevant and related to one another within the context of this research and I expected this study

would help demonstrate their interconnectedness. This indeed happened and Tables 1 and 12 illustrate this interconnectedness.

Table 1 illustrates how the topics identified through the literature review related to one another. Exclusive distinctions between and among the theories and frameworks were few. The same is true for the themes identified through participant interviews and illustrated in Table 12. There are predominant themes for each research question but themes are not exclusive to the research questions. Most themes in Table 12 can be mapped to topics illustrated in Table 1. This demonstrates the interconnectedness of the theories of organization development, social exchange, and transaction cost economics. A review of Tables 2 through 11 which illustrate key words and statements extracted from participant interviews also helps elucidate the interconnectedness of the theories.

As a preliminary study on the phenomenon of trust in higher education consortia this study provided insights and ideas for future research. Recommendations for future research will be included in the next section of this chapter.

Additional insight into the significance of this study and the results was provided by the participants through their responses to Interview Question 1, the global introductory question inviting participants to talk about their experiences regarding the phenomenon of trust, and Interview Question 13, a closing question inviting participants to add final statements.

A list of selected responses to Interview Question 1 follows.

- “It [trust] leads to all other kinds of cooperation that you would never have anticipated.” P1

- “Actually you have hit upon what I consider to be the key to the success or failure of really any collaborative enterprise but certainly higher education consortia ...” P6
- “So, it enables or it inhibits your ability to move forward.” P6
- “At a very general level when it works it allows things to really prosper and grow and it provides the seeds for sustainability. I’ve seen examples of that. When it doesn’t work, you don’t get true collaboration.” P11
- “If there isn’t the relationship there or the willingness to create an environment of trust, it is destined to fail miserably.” P18

Responses to Interview Question 13 illustrated the perceived value of this study by participants. Interview Question 13 was not used as a data collection question for the purpose of answering research questions. It was however used as a closing follow-up question to see if the participant had any questions or needed clarification about anything. Responses to Interview Question 13 however revealed enthusiastic participant identification with the value of the study. Participants seemed genuinely interested in the topic and looked forward to reading the results of the study. Selected responses to Interview Question 13 follow.

- “It’s an interesting study. I guess I’d never thought of it that way until you started asking the questions.” P1
- “I think you’ll be really making a significant contribution to the literature and our work and I really appreciate it.” P6
- “I look forward to seeing your work and I wish you the best. I think it’s really interesting. This is the kind of stuff that needs to be done.” P12
- “This has been really interesting. No one asks about this specifically but it’s so central to what we do.” “I can’t wait to read it. Which I don’t say about many dissertations.” P16

- “I can’t wait to read your dissertation when it’s all done. I think this is a fabulous topic and I hope you get a lot of support out of the department in pursuing it. I think collaboration in higher ed is pretty unique. It’s unique in a very, very, positive way. I’m actually interested in reading your research when it’s done.” P17

The significance stated in Chapter One was realized however I believe these selected comments in response to Interview Question 13 add additional significance to the study. I am somewhat surprised that an experienced consortium leader would state “I guess I’d never thought of it that way until you started asking the questions.” The fact that P1 made this comment suggested to me the study was relevant and valuable perhaps in ways I had not planned nor foreseen. The fact that so many participants indicated an interest in reading the completed dissertation is equally complimentary and scary. It is exciting to know of the level of interest in the project. Perhaps this dissertation will not gather proverbial dust on the digital bookshelf. But admittedly it does heighten my anxiety a bit in my attempt to complete a worthwhile project.

As intended the results of this study have led to a further understanding of the phenomenon of trust. This research has also added to the understanding of the relevance and importance of trust within consortia and has pointed to important factors for leaders to consider. This research intentionally and directly explored the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia. This study related the findings to the selected framework and has contributed to the literature related to higher education consortia and focused on the relationship between the theories of organization development, social exchange, and transaction cost economics. Recommendations for future research follow.

Recommendations for further Research

As a preliminary study on the phenomenon of trust in higher education consortia this study provided insights and ideas for future research. After completing the consortia best practices literature review for this study it seemed to me one could conclude authors were comfortable acknowledging the presence and importance of the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia but hesitant to explore it. It seemed the authors felt compelled to acknowledge the significance of trust but otherwise desired to maintain some distance from the phenomenon. This research intentionally explored the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia.

In some ways it feels like I collected too much data. My first recommendation would be to perhaps repeat the study using only one of the three selected frameworks. Each framework could be used to structure separate and distinct studies. This would focus or narrow each study and provide more specific and perhaps more detailed and useful results.

A second recommendation would be to explore the astonishment and sacrifice described in the results section with regard to the theme of culture. At a fundamental level collaborative work requires reciprocity and at an advanced level it requires an appreciation of the collective good – but not necessarily organizational sacrifice. Yet that is exactly what some of the participants indicated. Would one organization truly make sacrifices for another? Would senior administrators concerned with compliance and revenue and institutional brand truly allow this? I think, based upon the data, the answer is yes. I believe that *is* astonishing. What really needs to happen for that to occur? I

believe it is more than any potential return on investment and I believe it is worthy of additional study.

Third, during interviews some participants referenced consortia that have dissolved over time. I suggest a review of why from the same context or perspective of this study might be valuable. Did factors associated with best practices, social exchange, transaction cost economics, and ultimately trust impact circumstances and the decisions to dissolve the consortia?

A fourth suggestion would be to repeat the study but restrict the research to consortia or programs that serve certain segments within higher education. For example, research participants in this study from the higher education information technology sector indicated information technology provides for collaborative opportunities within higher education which is something that would rarely occur among private commercial enterprises since information technology usually provides a competitive edge. Would segmenting participation yield different results?

A fifth recommendation would be to repeat the study with a focus on international or foreign consortia. Both Anderson (1999) and Godbey and Turlington (2002) referenced international consortia and a research participant (P18) mentioned the growth and development of consortia programs in South Africa, the Middle East, Norway, and Brazil. Would geographic, political, and cultural differences lead to different results?

Sixth, and perhaps simply for heuristic or exploratory reasons, I suggest it might be interesting, and maybe even somewhat amusing, to interview directors and leaders to obtain opinions and beliefs as to whether relationships are confined to individuals or if

relationships are also possible between organizations. Eddy (2010) proposed relationships are first established by individuals and then shift to institutions however Zaheer et al. (1998) argued individuals as members of organizations extend trust rather than the organizations themselves. I think most if not all participants would agree institutions have cultures and personalities so perhaps they are also truly capable of having relationships. The cornerstone of such a study would likely be the definition of relationship that is used.

My final recommendation has to do with practice rather than research. I suggest the results of this study can be helpful when searching for directors and leaders of consortia or consortia programs and also when institutions are considering joining a consortium or undertaking a collaborative effort. Hiring officials and governing boards could consider the findings of this study when developing position descriptions and evaluating candidates for consortium roles. The findings could help determine position qualifications and guide the interview and selection process. Institutions could consider these findings when determining whether or not to join a consortium or collaborative effort. The findings could be used as decision factors when assessing the function, structure, and strength of a consortium or program.

Summary

“Bottom of the Ninth” – “the last half of the ninth inning. Last chance to accomplish something. (Dickson, 2009, p. 128)

I began this work with an analogy between a professional baseball league and a higher education consortium. Each team and institution is individually owned and

operated. Each team and institution is responsible for its own administration and success. Each team and institution recruits and develops talent, hires coaches or faculty to accomplish this, and hires administrators to oversee finances and regulatory requirements. Each team and institution is committed to the association and enjoys membership benefits – but also desires to succeed and be the best of the alliance. Success of the association requires trust. Responsibility for success is shared among the teams or institutions, the association leader, and his or her staff.

Institutional members of a higher education consortium cooperate to compete. This study has shed light on the dynamics of this counterintuitive relationship. Baseball was the analogy. This dissertation was about the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia and the experiences of directors and leaders.

I will close by using five quotes from three different participants. As you know there are a variety of consortium programs. Among many objectives a consortium can help promote the value of higher education, sponsor the development of telecommunication networks, promote the implementation of open source software applications, and coordinate scientific research. Consortia have expanded services and programs as needs and demands of colleges and universities have changed. There seems to be constant attention focused on the cost and also the value and quality of higher education. Consortium activity is about sharing resources, cost savings, cost containment, and creating efficiencies.

With this perspective in mind it is startling to read, even for experienced higher education professionals, the comment from P12 that “The business model in higher

education is broken, have no doubt.” This blunt statement suggests a dire situation in need of attention. P12 also stated

I believe there will be stratification in higher ed. There will always be a Harvard and there will always be wealthy people who can afford to send their kids there and then you're going to have the publics, hopefully there will still be some state support and then you'll have the tuition dependent schools in the middle who I think will be able to create a market.

This comment suggests concerns associated with cost of attendance including the sharing of resources, cost savings, cost containment, and creating efficiencies will not disappear anytime soon.

With regard to the focus of this study P12 perhaps most poignantly asserted “in fact what determined the level of opportunity to reduce cost was about issues of human behavior, human and organizational behavior not about business plans and return on investment as important as those indicators may be.” P12's comment suggests human behavior can have a greater impact on the outcome of consortia activities than refined business plans. I believe this participant comment emphasizes the value of this study, its framework which employed human process, social exchange, and transaction cost economic theory, and its focus on the phenomenon of trust.

Emphasizing the value of higher education consortia, P18 stated

As far as anything else to say, I think the only thing to add would be that it's going to be interesting over the next several years to watch what happens with consortia as institutions continue to confront major issues around accountability and cost and how higher education changes and how it's delivered. There's tremendous opportunities, I think, for colleges to look to consortiums as part of the answer to many of these questions and I'm frankly surprised that foundations and regulators have not put more emphasis on collaboration.

Complementing P18's statement, and emphasizing the value and nature of this research project, P7 stated "If collaboration is the future of higher ed, you're on to something."

Afterword

"Walk-off" – Said of a game-ending event, such as a 'walk-off single' that drives in the winning run in the bottom of the ninth or a 'walk-off pitch' that results in a game winning home run. Said of an event that brings finality to a situation.
(Dickson, 2009, pp. 919-920)

This research project does not have the drama of a game-winning hit in the bottom of the ninth inning, but it has reached its finality.

I want to thank the participants for their authenticity. Their participation, insight, and honesty made this a truly rewarding scholarly venture. The candor of participants was striking. Not only was I pleased that 19 directors and leaders agreed to give me one hour of their time but I was amazed at how unguarded participants were. I have concluded their candor not only demonstrated their belief in the mission of their respective organizations but also their willingness and desire to participate in a research project that they believed had valuable and applicable objectives. At times, because of their truthfulness, I felt like I was providing respite or therapy for participants – an opportunity for participants to not only reflect but also vent. Their passion for their work was obvious and I believe helped shape the results of this study.

As I shared in the acknowledgment section of this paper I am a non-traditional doctoral student. The desire to finish what I started several years ago was one incentive for me to complete this research project. Alternatively perhaps this research project might be a springboard into the next phase of my higher education career. Regardless, as

I also stated in the acknowledgment section of this paper, I still believe life is the journey, it is not the destination, and I still believe God can write straight with crooked lines.

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Appendix A

Noftsinger Award Recipient Email Invitation

Dear NAME:

My name is Jim Yankech. I am a PhD candidate in Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and also work full-time at UNL in student health care administration. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation entitled “TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA – A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS.”

This research explores the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders in higher education consortia. I am inviting your participation in this study because you are a recipient of the Association for Collaborative Leadership’s (ACL) “John B. Noftsinger, Jr. Award for Service and Leadership.” I believe your experiences will inform this study and I would like to schedule a phone interview with you at your earliest convenience.

The initial interview should last no more than 90 minutes. The interview will be conducted and recorded on the phone. I would like to supplement the phone interview with a convenient Adobe Connect video link which will not be recorded. A second phone interview, to be scheduled at a later time, should last no more than thirty minutes. This study has been approved by the UNL Institutional Review Board.

I would be happy to talk with you ahead of time to answer questions you may have about the interview process and my research. I have provided additional details in the attached Informed Consent form. I have also attached my resume for your review. If you wish you may also contact Brent Cejda, PhD, secondary investigator, at bcejda2@unl.edu or 402-472-0989.

If you agree to participate please respond to this email message, provide me the phone number you wish me to use for the interview, and sign and return to me the Informed Consent form. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim Yankech
PhD Candidate - Department of Educational Administration, UNL

Appendix B

Snowball Email Invitation

Dear NAME:

My name is Jim Yankech. I am a PhD candidate in Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and also work full-time at UNL in student health care administration. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation entitled “TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA – A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS.”

This research explores the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders in higher education consortia. I am inviting your participation in this study because you have been referred to me by <name> <title>. I believe your experiences will inform this study and I would like to schedule a phone interview with you at your earliest convenience.

The initial interview should last no more than 90 minutes. The interview will be conducted and recorded on the phone. I would like to supplement the phone interview with a convenient Adobe Connect video link which will not be recorded. A second phone interview, to be scheduled at a later time, should last no more than thirty minutes. This study has been approved by the UNL Institutional Review Board.

I would be happy to talk with you ahead of time to answer questions you may have about the interview process and my research. I have provided additional details in the attached Informed Consent form. I have also attached my resume for your review. If you wish you may also contact Brent Cejda, PhD, secondary investigator, at bcejda2@unl.edu or 402-472-0989.

If you agree to participate please respond to this email message, provide me the phone number you wish me to use for the interview, and sign and return to me the Informed Consent form. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim Yankech
PhD Candidate - Department of Educational Administration, UNL

Appendix C

Noftsinger Award Recipient Follow Up Email Invitation

Dear NAME:

I hope you received my previous email I sent to you on <date.>

My name is Jim Yankech. I am a PhD candidate in Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and also work full-time at UNL in student health care administration. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation entitled “TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA – A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS.”

This research explores the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders in higher education consortia. I am inviting your participation in this study because you are a recipient of the Association for Collaborative Leadership’s (ACL) “John B. Noftsinger, Jr. Award for Service and Leadership.” I believe your experiences will inform this study and I would like to schedule a phone interview with you at your earliest convenience.

If you prefer not to participate in this study, please just let me know. If you choose not to participate I ask that you refer me to colleagues whom you believe would be appropriate participants based upon the description of my research that I have provided.

The initial interview should last no more than 90 minutes. The interview will be conducted and recorded on the phone. I would like to supplement the phone interview with a convenient Adobe Connect video link which will not be recorded. A second phone interview, to be scheduled at a later time, should last no more than thirty minutes. This study has been approved by the UNL Institutional Review Board.

I would be happy to talk with you ahead of time to answer questions you may have about the interview process and my research. I have provided additional details in the attached Informed Consent form. I have also attached my resume for your review. If you wish you may also contact Brent Cejda, PhD, secondary investigator, at bcejda2@unl.edu or 402-472-0989.

If you agree to participate please respond to this email message, provide me the phone number you wish me to use for the interview, and sign and return to me the Informed Consent form. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James A Yankech
PhD Candidate - Department of Educational Administration, UNL

Appendix D

Snowball Follow Up Email Invitation

Dear NAME:

I hope you received my previous email I sent to you on <date.>

My name is Jim Yankech. I am a PhD candidate in Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and also work full-time at UNL in student health care administration. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation entitled “TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA – A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS.”

This research explores the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders in higher education consortia. I am inviting your participation in this study because you have been referred to me by <name> <title>. I believe your experiences will inform this study and I would like to schedule a phone interview with you at your earliest convenience.

If you prefer not to participate in this study, please just let me know. If you choose not to participate I ask that you refer me to colleagues whom you believe would be appropriate participants based upon the description of my research that I have provided.

The initial interview should last no more than 90 minutes. The interview will be conducted and recorded on the phone. I would like to supplement the phone interview with a convenient Adobe Connect video link which will not be recorded. A second phone interview, to be scheduled at a later time, should last no more than thirty minutes. This study has been approved by the UNL Institutional Review Board.

I would be happy to talk with you ahead of time to answer questions you may have about the interview process and my research. I have provided additional details in the attached Informed Consent form. I have also attached my resume for your review. If you wish you may also contact Brent Cejda, PhD, secondary investigator, at bcejda2@unl.edu or 402-472-0989.

If you agree to participate please respond to this email message, provide me the phone number you wish me to use for the interview, and sign and return to me the Informed Consent form. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James A Yankech
PhD Candidate - Department of Educational Administration, UNL

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT

TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA –
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS

We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

Purpose: This study is being conducted for the purpose of research and to meet the requirements of a doctoral program of study. This is a qualitative phenomenological study examining the lived experiences of higher education consortia directors and leaders as related to the phenomenon of trust within consortia.

Procedures: Participation in this study involves two interviews – an initial phone interview lasting no more than 90 minutes and a second follow-up phone interview lasting no more than 30 minutes. Interview questions will pertain to your experiences regarding the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia. Phone interviews will be recorded with your permission. When possible phone interviews will be supplemented with a convenient Adobe Connect video link which will not be recorded. Interview questions will be sent to you prior to the interview. Transcribed interviews and a draft of the data analysis will be sent to you for your review and comment.

You are being asked to participate in this research because you are a director or leader associated with a higher education consortium. You have been recognized or referred by one or more colleagues. Your peer recognition as an accomplished leader, along with your commensurate length of service, means that you have likely experienced the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia at some point during your career and can inform this study.

Risks and/or discomforts: There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Benefits: You may find the final written report, which you will receive, helpful as you consider consortium policies, programs, and priorities. The information gained will inform research about the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia.

Confidentiality: Because of your peer recognition the confidentiality of your participation and any information obtained during this study cannot be guaranteed. However pseudonyms for you and your organization will be used when reporting findings.

The recorded interview will briefly be stored on a remote server until downloaded for secured local storage and transcription. The transcribed interview will be stored electronically using a word processing software program. Word processing files of transcribed interviews will be password protected. A pseudonym will be assigned after

accuracy is verified of the transcription and this transcript will be used during data analysis. Printed copies of the transcribed interview will likely be used during data analysis. Handwritten notes taken during the interview will be scanned and saved as PDF files. Data files related to the study will be maintained for three years after the study is complete. The information obtained in this study may be published in journals or presented at meetings but the data will be reported under pseudonyms with only a general reference to the position you hold.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this research.

Opportunity to ask questions: You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. You may contact the investigators at any time, James Yankech, jyankech1@unl.edu, 402-304-1149, or Brent Cejda, bcejda2@unl.edu, 402-472-0989. Please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Institutional Review Board at 402-472-6965 for the following reasons: you wish to talk to someone other than the research staff to obtain answers to questions about your rights as a research participant; to voice concerns or complaints about the research; and to provide input concerning the research process in the event the study staff could not be reached.

Freedom to withdraw: Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or UNL, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The researcher is a graduate student in the UNL Department of Educational Administration and works full-time at UNL in student health care administration.

Consent, right to receive a copy: You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this study. Your response to this e-mail to schedule an interview certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented and agree to be recorded during the interview. You will also be asked to provide a signed copy of this consent form prior to the first interview.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Name and Phone number of investigator(s)

James Yankech, MS, Principal Investigator Cell 402-304-1149
 Brent Cejda, PhD, Secondary Investigator Office 402-472-0989

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA –
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS

INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. Can you please confirm your consent to participate in this study?
- A higher education consortium is a group of colleges and universities united through collective effort. The purpose of this research study is to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon of trust as experienced by directors and leaders of higher education consortia. *Three theoretical frameworks* emerged from the literature reviews conducted for this study. They are *organization development human process theory, social exchange theory, and transaction cost economics (TCE) theory*. The interview questions I will ask you today are generally related to these three theories. I may ask additional probing questions not listed on this sheet. Please answer the questions based upon your experiences.
- Are you ready to begin? Can I record our conversation?
- I would like to start by asking you to tell me about yourself. Please share with me your education, your professional experiences, and how you attained your higher education consortium leadership position.

QUESTIONS

1. How have you experienced the phenomenon of trust within higher education consortia?
2. What have you observed to be fundamental requirements for the establishment of trust within higher education consortia?
3. Reflecting upon your experiences please describe how interpersonal relationships – relationships between individuals – impact the development of trust within higher education consortia.
4. Reflecting upon your experiences please describe how interorganizational relationships – relationships between organizations – impact the development of trust within higher education consortia.
5. What have you observed to be causes of failure within consortia with regard to the establishment of trust?

6. What different roles have you observed individuals play that facilitate the development of trust within consortia?
7. How have you witnessed interpersonal trust transform into interorganizational trust?
8. Reflecting upon your experiences what do you believe are the responsibilities of the director as they relate to the establishment of trust within a consortium?
9. Reflecting upon your experiences what do you believe is necessary for individuals within consortia to move beyond personal interests and toward common goals?
10. How have you observed member institutions address risks that might be associated with joining consortium programs?
11. Reflecting upon my questions and your answers, can you think of any publications you wish to refer me to, or documents you wish to provide me, that would provide additional information and detail and that would help add depth to the information I have collected today?
12. I need to interview a minimum of twelve participants. It is also important for me to ensure I have collected sufficient and relevant data. Can you provide me the names and email addresses of four higher education consortium directors or leaders whom I could contact whom you believe would be appropriate participants for this study? I will notify these individuals you referred me to them.
13. These are all questions I have today. Would you like to add anything before we conclude the interview?

CONCLUSION

- Thank you for your time.
- I will send you a copy of the transcribed interview and the preliminary data analysis for your review. I will also contact you to schedule a brief follow-up interview. The purpose of the follow-up interview is to provide an opportunity for us both to verify the accuracy of the transcribed interview, discuss preliminary findings, and to ask follow-up or clarifying questions.
- Do you have any questions before we conclude our interview?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix G

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Statement

TRANSCRIPTIONIST CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA –
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS

I _____ (name of transcriptionist) agree to hold all information contained on audio recorded tapes/ and in interviews received from James A Yankech, primary investigator for the dissertation research project entitled “TRUST WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA – A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF DIRECTORS” in confidence with regard to the individual and institutions involved in the research study. I understand that to violate this agreement would constitute a serious and unethical infringement on the informant’s right to privacy.

I also certify that I have completed the CITI Limited Research Worker training in Human Research Protections.

Signature of Transcriptionist

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Appendix H

Referred Publications

- Adler, P., Heckscher, C., & Prusak, L. (2011, July-August). Building a collaborative enterprise. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(7/8), 94-101.
- Anderson, W. (2014). *Creative collaboration: The associated colleges of the south*. Retrieved from <http://colleges.org/creative-collaboration/>
- Covey, S. M. R. (2006). *The speed of trust*. New York: Free Press.
- Kezar, A. (2015). *Scaling and sustaining change and innovation*. Retrieved from The Teagle Foundation website: <http://www.teaglefoundation.org/getmedia/f5560934-c4db-42e3-8e52-439bd7aa82f6/Kezar-Sustaining-Change>
- Sample, S. B. (2002). *The contrarian's guide to leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.