

THE CULTURE OF INNOVATION IN SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTES
OF RELIGION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Griffin D. Sorenson

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of seminary principals in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion (S&I) as they have been called to innovate within an environment that may not support it. The central research question is What are the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of instructional leaders (seminary principals) in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call to innovate in a culture that may not support it? The theory guiding this study is Christensen's disruptive innovation theory, as it outlines what is required to support innovation in organizations. The sample size consisted of 13 participants from a pool of seminary principals in S&I. The setting was in multiple S&I centers on the Wasatch Front of Utah. This qualitative work drew heavily from the lived experiences of seminary principals through interviews, journal entries, and survey/questionnaires. Data analysis involved triangulation, evaluation, and description of the experiences, followed by a synthesis of the data. Eight themes emerged that addressed the central research question and three sub-questions. The findings show that seminary principals hold diverse beliefs, attitudes, and desires concerning innovation within their programs, with the overarching challenge being that they are called to innovate in an environment that may only partially support such changes. These findings underscore the complex nature of innovation within religious education and the need for an innovative approach to address the intricate interplay of cultural, organizational, and leadership factors affecting the introduction of innovative practices in seminary programs.

Keywords: innovation, seminaries, and institutes of religion, instructional leadership,

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my Savior Jesus Christ who is my rock and redeemer, and to His kingdom here on earth. To my sweet wife and children who inspire me to be a better man, and who patiently help me accomplish hard endeavors. To my parents, Scott and Patricia Sorenson, who have provided me with the safety and security to pursue my path in life with confidence and faith.

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This work could not have been accomplished without the support of my eternal companion Sydney, who has always been my greatest strength and cheerleader. I have been blessed with five wonderful children who have given me grace as I pursued this work, I am grateful for their love, inspiration, motivation, and patience along the way. My parents, Scott and Patricia Sorenson have instilled in me a work ethic throughout my life that has made this work possible. I am forever grateful to my parents and grandparents for forging a path of success and showing me that great things are possible.

I am grateful for my employer, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have been encouraged to become the best instrument in the hands of the Lord as possible and am forever grateful for their investment in me and my growth. They have provided me financial assistance, time, and encouragement and I am deeply grateful.

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List of Abbreviations

Instructional Leadership (IL)

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion (S&I)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Societies around the globe undergo changes every day, as do the needs and preferences of the people. Innovation can be a useful tool for organizations to keep up with such changes and meet the growing needs of their target audience. Seminaries and Institutes of Religion (S&I) is a global religious education entity that has steadily, and at times, exponentially grown for over 100 years (Ewer et al., 2015). The S&I administration has declared that their greatest desire is to expand their influence to students that they are not currently reaching and has called for innovative efforts to accomplish this task (Panel Discussion, 2021). Although S&I is a strong and growing organization, it may not be supportive of innovation, which is a major challenge because the declining enrollment percentages necessitate changes (Healey, 2019). The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges of S&I in innovating within a culture that may not be fully supportive of change, even as the organization recognizes the critical need to make changes.

This chapter contains a clear and comprehensive background of S&I and its challenges. Further, this chapter includes the historical, theoretical, and social context of S&I and its desire to innovate. Following the contextual background, I will discuss the problem and discuss the purpose of this study and its significance. I will then explore the central research questions, give definitions of key terms, and provide a summary paragraph outlining the contents of this work.

Background

S&I is a religious educational organization that provides religious instruction for over 700,000 students worldwide with the objective of promoting faith in Jesus Christ (Seminaries and Institutes, 2021). It operates under the direction of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints and teaches the fundamental principles of this religious sect as found in scripture. As the organization of interest for this present study, the historical and social contexts of the S&I are discussed alongside the theoretical context of disruptive innovation in the following subsections to provide a deeper understanding of the current study.

Historical Context

The culture of S&I is heavily influenced by the culture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its founding philosophies. A strong cultural aspect in this church is evident in the way that the first leader of the church, Joseph Smith, stated that he teaches members about principles, but it is up to them to govern themselves (McConkie & Wayne Boss, 2005). This culturalism of principle or objective based governance is a central feature in church teaching, which should allow innovation to take place freely. What matters are outcomes, not methods.

Although innovation should be embraced and incorporated within this culture, at least one recent grounded theory study has indicated that may not be the case (Healey, 2019). This comes at a pivotal moment in S&I history. Unlike many religious institutions, enrollment in S&I programs continues to increase, but what is concerning is that enrollment percentages are dropping, something that has never occurred before in S&I as it has seen steady and at times, exponential growth throughout its 100-year history (Ewer et al., 2015). Although the exact numbers of the enrollment percentages have not been disclosed, top administrators have addressed this issue (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2021). Therefore, innovative changes are critical to reverse this troubling trend.

To address the decline in enrollment percentage, the top administration has called for innovative practices in S&I (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2021). The call to innovate is being disseminated and discussed throughout the organization but the organizational

culture may not be supporting it. This outcome is most apparent at the local level, where S&I instructional leaders are unclear on what innovations are allowed and which are not (Healey, 2019). The role of instructional leadership is critical for innovation and must be empowered at the local level for significant innovations to take root, without empowerment at the instructional leadership level, innovation will be unsuccessful (Christensen, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004).

Innovation is a difficult process for almost every organization. Christensen et al. (2008) noted that most companies do not actually meet the expectations of their senior executives in terms of innovation, and that they may tend to exaggerate their innovation for marketing purposes. The reality is that innovation is problematic for even the most dynamic companies. S&I is a conservative organization where change occurs slowly and it prides itself in its steadiness. Sorenson (2017) claimed in his study, which focused on the history of S&I curriculum, that if one were to observe a seminary class today, it looks the same as it did in 1912 when it was founded as far as methodology and curriculum. Sorenson's observation demonstrates that S&I is slow to make changes in any major way.

Although S&I has been slow to innovate in foundational ways, it has adapted, grown, and been successful for over 100 years (Ewer et al., 2015). This history of adaptation and evolution provides a solid foundation for S&I today, but this is not without drawbacks. It is important to note that research is clear that smaller, newer organizations have an advantage over older, more established organizations (Yu & Hang, 2010). This observation is rooted in the idea that smaller organization allow them to be more agile and quick to change, they do not have long histories that can hold them to established norms, and they have less commitments to traditional methods of the past (Macher & Richman, 2004; Walsh et al., 2002).

The larger historical context of church culture also penetrates the historical context of this work. The current challenge facing S&I, namely, a call to innovate in culture that may not support it, is historically important for this long-standing organization and the wider context of change within the church. This study was significantly rooted in traditional ecclesiastical and organizational operation methods and the need to innovate to meet current goals.

Social Context

Although this study focuses on innovation in a religious education context, specifically in S&I, Wodon (2021) noted that enrollment in other religious schools is declining rather fast in some cases. This study contributes to the wider social audience of religious educational entities that are facing changing and challenging times with enrollment and increasingly dynamic environments that call for innovations in long-standing institutions. Also, this study may appeal to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with its 16 million memberships worldwide. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has undergone many significant innovations in the last few years quite successfully (Panel Discussion, 2021).

The struggles in S&I with innovation may contribute to a wider vision of ecclesiastical change in this context. In recent years, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been confronted in some significant ways with change and innovation. Women have challenged traditional roles in the church ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the issue has been examined with some innovations taking place (Cunningham, 2022). Another social context that is pertinent is the church's rhetoric with LGBT members. Furthermore, there is an ongoing trend towards pluralism or religious appreciation, wherein students are taught to respect and appreciate the essence and experiences of other religious groups (Arifianto et al., 2021). No doctrinal

innovations have been made or are expected but the tone that has been adopted has shifted to be more accommodating and inclusive (Panel Discussion, 2021).

S&I is closely overseen by senior members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints leadership. The challenges that S&I is facing regarding innovation are socially linked to the innovative changes that are taking place in the church, such as the role of women in church leadership and LGBT-related issues; as a result, a call for belonging has been raised in connection to these concerns (Panel Discussion, 2021). Change in the church and in S&I should be seen in the same social context in that the values are the same, the decision makers are the same, and the challenges are closely related (Charted Course, 1938).

Theoretical Context

This study is rooted in the theoretical context of disruptive innovation, with the disruptive innovation theory (Christensen, 1997) serving as the main theoretical framework. The idea behind disruptive innovation originated from Schumpeter's (1942) concept of creative destruction, which indicates the capitalist phenomenon of how innovations can open new markets and destabilize existing ones, thus disrupting organizational, technological, industrial, regulatory, or economic systems. Henderson and Clark (1990) expanded on this concept by proposing a two-dimensional model wherein innovation can be categorized as incremental, architectural, modular, or radical based on changes in the core concept of architecture. Product improvements that do not change the core concept nor the architecture are incremental innovations (Ho, 2022). Changes in core concept are only under modular innovation. Innovations involving changes in core concepts and architecture are radical innovations. Architectural innovations were purported to be disruptive as they improve the design of established products

while maintaining the core concept, rendering incumbent organizations unable to respond (Ho, 2022). These early theories reflect the principle of disruptive innovation theory.

Based on the concepts and theories above, Harvard business professor and leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Clayton Christensen, developed the theory of disruptive innovation in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Yu & Hang, 2010). This theory centers on innovations that take place to disrupt traditional models or products (Christensen, 1997). Christensen et al. (2008) use the term disruptive innovation to advance organizational change, which is congruent with S&I's call for innovation to increase their enrollment amongst students that they have not traditionally enrolled. The disruptive innovation theory served as a foundational theory for this study.

This theoretical context of disruptive innovation is suited for S&I, as this organization is not seeking to escalate capabilities in well-established areas alone but rather to establish new approaches and services that have never previously been done. This goal corresponds to the research by Yu and Hang (2010) who described how disruptive innovation is needed when new services, different from the mainstream services or products, are desired. As S&I works to provide services by reaching a new segment of students, the theory of disruptive innovation will be fundamental.

The experience that instructional leaders are having with a call to innovate must first be framed in the context of innovation. Questions must be asked regarding what promotes or inhibits innovation. Without starting with a clear understanding of innovation, this study would be ambiguous. Clarity in a theoretical context regarding innovation would enhance understanding of what is taking place in S&I with instructional leaders.

Another key theoretical aspect is the role of instructional leaders in educational organizations. Thessin (2019) noted the important role instructional leaders have in educational organizations and their significant impact on overall outcomes. Instructional leaders are the lynchpin for innovation, change, and productivity in an educational organization. Robust research has been done, and there is a strong consensus that the role of a principal is vital to improving and innovating in schools (Dahal, 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2004; Rahman et al., 2020; Sibomana, 2022).

When instructional leaders function at a high level, improvement occurs in learning outcomes (Dahal, 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020). Middle management does not wield the same influence on organizations that instructional leaders do. Therefore, the role of instructional leaders enlightened this study and demonstrated the important impact of this leadership style. Research has been done that demonstrates the unique influence that instructional leaders can have regarding innovation and outcome achievements (Rahman et al., 2020; Sibomana, 2022).

Although S&I is a religious educational entity, research has demonstrated that religious educational entities generally follow core philosophies of the wider educational field (Kallemeyn, 2009). Therefore, the theory of instructional leadership and the best practices in this context was deeply informative in examining instructional leadership in S&I. This has been directly established in S&I from the research of Johnson (2008).

The final theoretical aspect that must be understood is the nature and mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This Christian denomination values education and intertwines it with church doctrine in some interesting and significant ways. All efforts taking place in S&I are a product of the larger view of educational importance in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Ewer et al., 2015). With the main framework of disruptive

innovation theory (Christensen, 1997), together with the concepts of instructional leadership and organizational culture, clarity may be established on how seminary principals perceive innovation in S&I.

Problem Statement

The problem is that S&I principals have significant reasons to innovate but may be hindered by a culture that is not conducive to innovation where it matters most, the local seminary programs (Panel Discussion, 2021). Although overall enrollment in S&I continues to increase, the enrollment percentage is decreasing (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2021). In recent years, S&I administration has called for innovation to address the decreasing enrollment percentage trend (Panel Discussion, 2021). Unfortunately, innovation tends to be viewed negatively or as a difficult task within traditional and established religious institutions (Cunningham, 2022; Ferguson, 2020), such as S&I. This issue is further augmented by the culture of consistency that is prominent in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Kline, 2020; Stapley, 2021). Previous authors have noted a significant gap in the literature on how such religious institutions respond to the wider cultural changes in their environment (Esler, 2021; Rymarz, 2021).

Principals, as local leaders of their institutions, are in an ideal position to engender innovation (Dahal, 2020). However, Healey (2019) found that S&I struggles with innovation at the local instructional leadership level. Healey noted that released-time seminary leaders appear to be reluctant or even afraid of innovating without the guidance or approval from upper-level leadership. When principals initiate innovation, they may struggle with resistance from teachers or other stakeholders who may prefer traditional approaches (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020). Although instructional leadership has been cited as

an effective leadership style for promoting innovation (Dahal, 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2020; Sibomana, 2022), as of this writing, there has yet to be an investigation of the lived experiences of seminary leaders, and their perceptions regarding instructional leadership within an organizational culture of tradition and consistency, such as S&I. This gap in the literature is a problem for organizational leaders in the same position, which I aimed to address in the current study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it. The lived experiences of seminary principals in this context were the phenomenon studied. In this research, the phenomenon was the call for innovation within a culture that is not prepared to support at the instructional leadership level. Within this context, innovation was defined as a multi-stage process in which organizational leaders and members convert ideas into novel or improved models, products, or services to have a competitive advantage in the market, according to Baregheh et al. (2009).

Significance of the Study

My aim for the present study was understanding the lived experiences of seminary principals regarding innovation in a culture that may not support it, and subsequently, potentially alleviating the issue of decreasing enrollment percentages of the S&I through such innovation. The potential findings of this study may serve as a significant contribution to the topic of innovation within religious institutions. The specific theoretical, empirical, and practical significance of the current study are discussed in the subsections below.

Theoretical Significance

The aim of this study was to examine the theory of innovation (Christensen et al., 2008) regarding what inhibits or promotes innovation in organizations. As previously noted, innovation is already a difficult phenomenon. With this work, I aim to assist future researchers to understand what stops innovation from happening, even as there is a clear message from administrative leaders to innovate. The lived experiences outlined in this work can be used to demonstrate the frustrations of those that desire to innovate but may not have a supportive organization to do so.

This work also contributes to the expansive research on instructional leadership. Instructional leadership has been lauded and elevated in many recent studies such as Cosner et al. (2012); this work can help understand what stops instructional leadership from being successful. As instructional leadership practices are understood through the experiences of seminary instructional leaders, this work may lead to greater clarity of what matters. Correspondingly, the role of middle management in this process adds to the body of research in this area, specifically how middle management can promote or inhibit innovation at the local level.

Empirical Significance

This work can also help demonstrate how religious educational organizational entities are alike and dissimilar to public school organizations, as Cohen (2006) claimed. As S&I operates within the context of a religious educational context, many other religion-based schools can benefit from this work in understanding the unique aspects that are involved in religious organizations. The differences of religious schools from public schools are demonstrated throughout this study assisting to fill in gaps that exist in religious school operations. This

information is provided especially regarding enrollment and different services that are sought after through innovation.

Furthermore, this work may enlarge the understanding for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding the call to change and the challenges that are presented when innovation is called for. This expansive viewpoint will take place as S&I works with a challenging demographic within the church. Many of the wider challenges that the church is facing are rooted in the attitudes and beliefs of the young people. This work sheds important light on this subject.

Practical Significance

In a practical way, this work should assist decision makers in S&I to reframe and change certain policies and practices that are not in line with their mission and objectives. It includes a discussion on what practical changes by instructional leaders in S&I programs would make the most significant differences to allow innovation to take place. The scope of this work can help in understanding the lived experiences of seminary principals and their desire to innovate within a culture that may not support it. This work can guide decision makers to be better prepared to innovate without obstruction and eliminate obstacles that are currently found in the organization.

Research Questions

The research questions of this work center on the lived experiences of instructional leaders in S&I regarding a call to innovate to increase enrollment. The key questions focused what is required to successfully innovate ~~what~~ and the opportunities of instructional leaders in innovative practices. They also center on how religious organizations are uniquely affected in these attempts.

Central Research Question

What are the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of instructional leaders (seminary principals) in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call to innovate in a culture that may not support it?

Sub-Question 1

How do seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints perceive their organizational culture about innovation?

Organizational culture, which describes the collective beliefs, values, symbols, and assumptions within an organization (Ziaei Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020), was purported to be a vital factor for organizational innovation (Cai et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2020). Studies on the organizational culture of S&I are extremely limited, and the sparse evidence on this matter indicates that a nonsupportive culture exists regarding innovation in S&I (Healey, 2019). This first sub-question was helpful in determining how seminary leaders in the S&I perceive their organizational culture, and how this affects innovation within their local institutions.

Sub-Question 2

What are the perceptions of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding their own and others' roles in promoting innovation in their program?

As instructional leaders, seminary principals may hold several roles in their institutions that are relevant to innovation (Dahal, 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020). It is important for instructional leaders to share their vision of innovation across the institution and lead by example (Ferguson, 2020; Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021). Concurrently, teachers also play a significant role in applying the vision in their daily work (Nelson & Yang, 2022). Other significant players

that could influence innovation within an institution are top executives and middle managers (Childress et al., 2020; Si & Chen, 2020; Tran & Nguyen, 2021). The purpose of the second sub-question was to obtain the perceptions of seminary principals regarding their own and others' roles in promoting innovation within S&I based on their lived experience.

Sub-Question 3

What catalysts and barriers to innovation are perceived by seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

As aforementioned, churches and religious institutions may have a negative predisposition to innovation due to their long-established traditions (Cunningham, 2022; Ferguson, 2020). Enacting change can be especially difficult in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with its culture of consistency (Kline, 2020; Stapley, 2021). This third sub-question may elicit specific examples of catalysts and barriers to innovation that seminary principals have experienced, which may help in identifying best practices or areas for improvement regarding innovation within S&I.

Definitions

1. *Culture Strength* - The level of influence held by the organizational culture to affect all undertakings within the organization (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). In organizations with strong cultures, members share similar values and adhere to the norms (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022).
2. *Disruptive Innovation* - A process of innovation that interrupts the field and leads to new or modified models, products, or services that may initially be dismissed or disapproved by incumbents but can serve as an improvement to attract new markets (Ferguson, 2020; Si & Chen, 2020).

3. *Innovation* - A multi-stage process in which organizational leaders and members convert ideas into novel or improved models, products, or services to have a competitive advantage in the market (Baregheh et al., 2009).
4. *Instructional Leadership* - A leadership style within the educational field that involves support for teachers' professional development, close supervision, a shared vision, and an overall focus on improving student learning (Childress et al., 2020; Mushi & Ye, 2021).
5. *Internal/External Orientation* - How much an organization focuses on internal factors, such as collaboration and integration within the team, or external factors, such as the market or competitors (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).
6. *Learning Organization* - An organization that values the cumulative personal and professional development of its members and the organization as a whole (Alonazi, 2021).
7. *Organizational Culture* - Informal set of shared ideals, values, and assumptions that holds an organization together and influences how members think or behave (Carmona et al., 2020; Ferguson, 2020).
8. *Pluralism* - The teaching that all religions are valid and that all individuals are free to select any religion or none (Arifianto et al., 2021).
9. *Stability/Flexibility Orientation* - How much an organization values clear structures and reliable plans (stability) or quick adaptation to changing situations (flexibility) (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Summary

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion have been providing religious education for over 100 years. Enrollment in S&I programs has steadily, and at times, exponentially grown over time

(Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2021). Current trends in enrollment show a decline in enrollment percentages and S&I administration has called for innovation to address this significant concern. The problem with this call for innovation is that S&I may not be culturally prepared for it.

In many ways, it appears that S&I culture may significantly hinder innovation (Healey, 2019). The problem is that instructional leaders in S&I programs desire to innovate and are motivated to do so but may lack a culture that promotes it. This work may further the understanding of disruptive innovation in instructional leadership from a religious educational perspective. This unique vantage point will assist S&I, other religious organizations, and innovation researchers to better understand the theories outlined.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it. The participants were instructional leaders who completed a survey, participated in interviews, and wrote journal prompts describing their experiences in an environment that has called for them to innovate but may not support it (Healey, 2019). In Chapter Two, I will outline the literature describing the best innovation practices along with the opportunities that instructional leaders possess.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter will comprise a literature review framing the context of the current study. In this chapter, I will discuss a theoretical framework used for describing the phenomenon related to S&I and their call to innovate. The central theory of this work is the disruptive innovation theory (Christensen & Bower, 1996), which guided and served as a foundation for this work. Furthermore, I will review existing related literature related to the phenomenon of interest, including organizational culture and instructional leadership, their relationship or influence on innovation, and innovation in religious institutions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the totality of the literature presented.

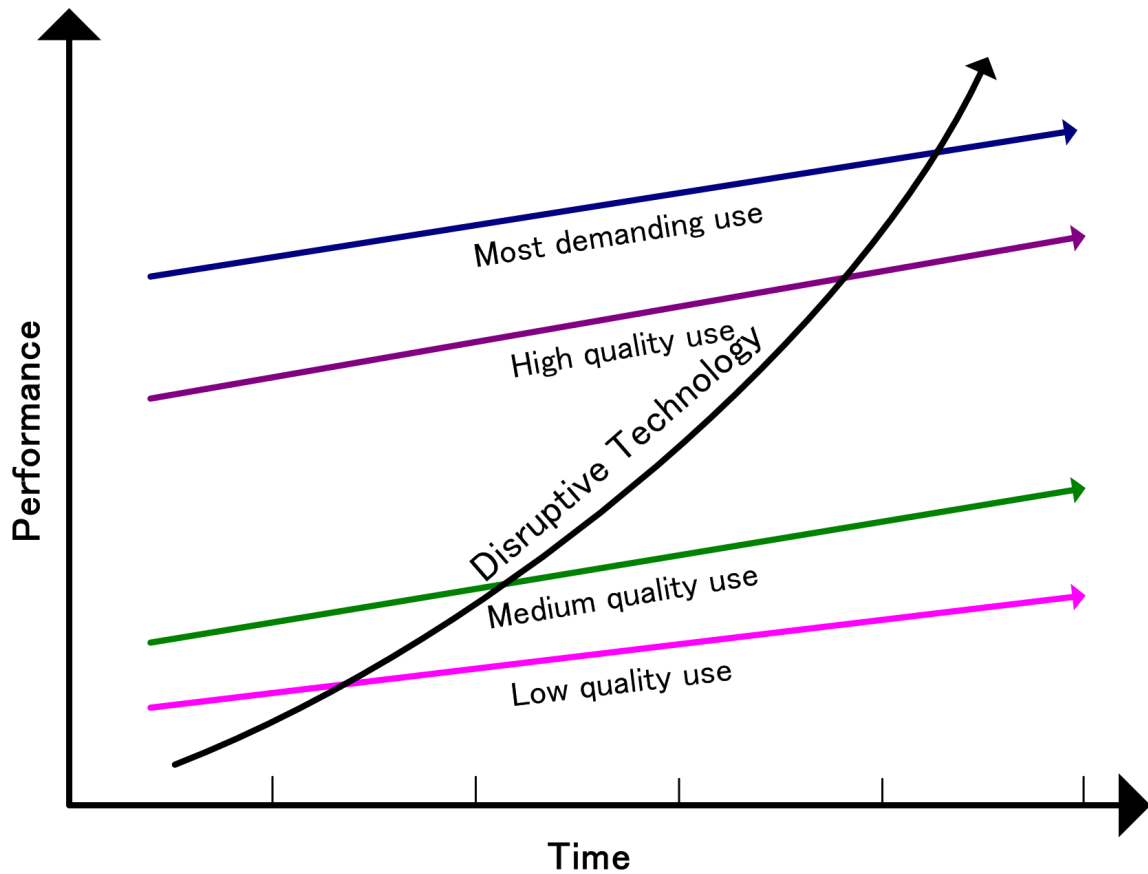
Theoretical Framework

The framework used to guide this present study is the disruptive innovation theory (Christensen, 1997). Harvard business professor Clayton Christensen, a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, developed the disruptive innovation theory in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Green et al., 2020). This business theory centers on innovations that disrupt traditional models or products (Christensen, 1997) (See Figure 1). The main idea behind the disruptive innovation theory is that to enter new markets, businesses must embrace innovation (Yu & Hang, 2010). The term *disruptive* emphasizes the unconventional nature of the innovation that appeals to a market that is dissatisfied with or underserved by old or existing models, products, or services within the field of interest (Flavin, 2021). Therefore, innovation may be initially considered inferior by the mainstream market, but over time or with further improvements, may disrupt the field by appealing to the mainstream market (Si & Chen, 2020).

Such innovation is central to the described phenomenon of seminary principals lived experiences to innovate when there may not be a culture to support it.

Figure 1

Disruptive Innovation



Note. Public domain image.

The disruptive innovation theory has been challenged and reworked multiple times (Si & Chen, 2020), but a simple definition is still possible and applicable for the current study concerning S&I. The key characteristics of disruptive innovation include a focus on neglected or new markets, typically simpler and less expensive innovation compared to established competitors, often considered inferior to dominant models, products, or services, a unique development pattern, and continuous development until it eventually enters the mainstream

market (Erlich et al., 2020; Si & Chen, 2020). Although the theory first emerged in the business context, it has since been applied to different fields and recognized as a process rather than a product, making it a flexible theory in industries that offer services or other nontangible products (Flavin, 2021; Si & Chen, 2020). Researchers have called for the use of disruptive innovation theory beyond the field of business as various changes occur across the world (Si & Chen, 2020). In the present study, disruptive innovation is defined as a process of innovation that interrupts the field and leads to new or modified models, products, or services that may initially be dismissed or disapproved of by incumbents but can serve as an improvement to attract new markets (Ferguson, 2020; Si & Chen, 2020). Although many avenues of literature abound on innovation and disruptive innovation, this section will focus on aspects most germane to S&I and their educational pursuits to innovate.

Related Literature

Following the foundational discussion of disruptive innovation theory above, this section proceeds with an exploration of recent and relevant literature connected to innovation in S&I. The themes discussed include innovation and organizational challenges, organizational culture, organizational priorities, resources, and solutions, context and environment, religion and education, and innovative technologies (Yu & Hang, 2010). In addition, the theme of instructional leadership is explored, following the consensus among past researchers that the role of a principal is vital to improving and innovating in schools (Childress et al., 2020; Dahal, 2020; Ferguson, 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020). Finally, the theme of innovation in religious institutions is detailed, narrowing the discussion down to a specific context and outlining the past progress, current state, and issues related to innovation. The major sections below contain a discussion of these themes.

Call to Innovate

Innovation is particularly salient for S&I due to their call to innovate and do things better than ever before (Panel Discussion, 2021). It is important to note here that S&I is not seeking to increase capacities in well-established areas alone, but rather to establish new approaches and services that have never previously been done (Panel Discussion, 2021). This goal is perfectly in line with how Yu and Hang (2010) described disruptive innovation regarding new services, different from the mainstream services or products. By calling for innovation in this manner, S&I aims to do things that have never been done before. This mission is a challenge for an organization that is traditional and has been in existence since 1912.

It has been established in past research that traditional, well-established organizations will struggle with innovation more than newer, less engrained organizations (Christensen, 2006). This assertion does not mean that older, more traditional organizations cannot innovate; research shows that they innovate but innovation is less likely to occur (Si & Chen, 2020). Because disruptive innovation focuses on attributes that have been neglected in existing models, products, or services, incumbents often overlook their value. As the said innovation gradually improves and becomes more relevant, organizations that fail to adopt such innovations are likely to experience losses (Si & Chen, 2020). For S&I to innovate, it must adapt its operations to the current services and develop entirely new services all together. The administration has called for creating a better experience for students in line with their current situations and worldviews (Panel Discussion, 2021).

The reason smaller, newer organizations have an advantage over older, more established organizations has been highly researched and demonstrated (Macher & Richman, 2004; Walsh et al., 2002). Key reasons for this are that the smaller sizes of the organization make them nimbler,

they have shorter histories that do not bog them down, and they have less commitment to established methods of the past (Macher & Richman, 2004; Walsh et al., 2002). Disruptive innovations involve greater risks compared to adaptive or sustaining innovations, as it involves a destruction of the established social order (Ferguson, 2020; Godin, 2021). As such, it can be a challenge for incumbents to see past the risks and recognize the value of disruptive innovations (Ferguson, 2020). For S&I to successfully navigate the challenges that established organizations have regarding innovating, it must clearly recognize why it is more difficult.

Innovation and Organizational Challenges

Significant research has been conducted to understand how some large incumbent organizations have overcome their challenges and managed to innovate, adapt, and thrive. Four main aspects have been the focal point of such research, including the need for the organization to have an internal perspective, an external perspective of the wider context, marketing perspectives for customer orientation in new landscapes, and technology perspectives and strategies (Ahuja & Lampert, 2001; Christensen & Bower, 1996; Paap & Katz, 2004). Thus, serious effort and commitment are required for innovation to be accomplished. Another important aspect is that disruptive innovation will take time and that the benefit of such innovation may not be immediate (Ferguson, 2020; Green et al., 2020). Disruptive innovation has been purported to follow a pattern of sigmoid curves wherein investments may be flat or decreasing for a certain period before increasing as the innovation is recognized (Ferguson, 2020).

Organizational Culture

Yu and Hang (2010) further noted a few important aspects that organizations must consider if they are to be successful in innovating. They include cultural, resource allocation;

organizational structure; and context and environment. Culture is a powerful force, for good or bad, that helps coordinate and control things without a formal structure being in place (Ferguson, 2020). Culture can be highly destructive for innovation as Christensen and Raynor (2003) observed in their research. They noted that organizational culture creates apathy for change and stops management from making timely and substantial changes (Christensen & Raynor, 2003).

Researchers have observed that S&I has a very strong and conservative culture (Healey, 2019). This is precisely the component that Healey (2019) addressed in the context of seminary principals hearing overall objectives to innovate but sensing a cultural pull that blunted the momentum. For S&I to innovate, it must overcome the cultural pull to maintain the status quo. This significant element has not been explored previously; the current study addressed this aspect. Yu and Hang (2010) also noted that part of overcoming culture requires a reworking of values and standards of the past. Without unlearning entrenched values and standards, innovation will be impossible (Yu & Hang, 2010). This relationship does not mean abandoning key areas but prioritizing different things in the decision-making process.

Organizational Priorities, Resources, and Solutions

The way that resources are allocated shape innovative opportunities. If structured routines, deeply entrenched methodologies, continue throughout an organization, things will not change in a significant way; they must be adjusted or stopped (Si & Chen, 2020). Innovation means change. How leaders of incumbent organizations allocate resources in response to such change can vary (Si et al., 2020). Some may perceive the innovation as a threat and react by allocating excessive resources to their existing model as a resistance. Others may perceive innovation as an opportunity and invest in it (Si et al., 2020). As organizations struggle through how to allocate resources properly from existing models, products, and services to new ones,

they will be better positioned to innovate and adapt in meaningful ways (Si & Chen, 2020). S&I is positioning itself as an organization to reallocate resources and prepare for innovation (Panel Discussion, 2021).

In their proposed solutions for innovation, Christensen and Raynor (2003) argued emphatically for autonomous groups within the organization. This approach, they found, would allow for a large organization to function, at least in part, as a smaller, nimbler organization where innovation can take place (Christensen & Raynor, 2003). With multiple autonomous organizations, innovation can occur without hierarchal blocks. Further, autonomy, but with accountability, was established as pivotal because giving groups unrestricted freedom is imperative for innovation as it allows them to understand the process better and recognize areas in need of improvement (Janka et al., 2020). As of this writing, no major study has been done in S&I regarding innovation and organizational structures, leaving a significant gap in the research.

Context and Environment

Yu and Hang's (2010) final structure for organizational innovation is found in the context and environment of the industry. This structure is deeply interesting with S&I and its religious educational model. Christian churches, in general, have historically viewed innovation in a negative light (Godin, 2021). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is no exception as consistency is highly valued in this group (Kline, 2020; Stapley, 2021). Changes within the context and environment are however sometimes inevitable. Disruptive innovation in this present study must thus be seen in view of the wider Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints context and environment. For example, the average member of the church does not speak English and lives outside of the United States (Olsen & Otterstrom, 2020). This demographic shift has broad application. In the future, more S&I students will be found outside of the United States with

differing needs. There are also implications for the workforce regarding context and environment. If S&I fails to prepare and understand context and environment at a high level, they will be in danger of not innovating enough to adapt to the changing environment.

Religion and Education

Previous researchers have demonstrated examples of how the disruptive innovation theory may be used to explain certain phenomena in the fields of religion and education (Erllich et al., 2020; Esler, 2021; Ferguson, 2020; Flavin, 2021). Esler (2021) and Ferguson (2020) illustrated examples straight from the Bible. For instance, the exodus of Israelites from Egypt was a disruptive innovation to the mainstream enslavement during that time (Ferguson, 2020). Although Moses was initially hesitant, he served as an innovative leader in bringing salvation to the Israelites. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ Himself was an example of disruptive innovation as He brought major changes through His life, death, and resurrection (Ferguson, 2020). People considered Jesus' teachings as disruptive innovations at that time as He introduced new ways of perceiving truth and understanding life that His disciples did not always easily accept (Esler, 2021). His very existence had disrupted the established Jewish faith and begat the Christian church (Esler, 2021). These examples highlight the role of disruptive innovation theory in exploring such religious phenomena.

Innovative Technologies

The use of innovative technology in education is a salient issue within the field (Flavin, 2021). In this British study, the researcher presented university students with the option of submitting assignments in the form of either traditional word-processed documents or blog entries. Although the students indicated that they appreciated the options provided to them, a large majority of the students (89.6%) still chose the traditional word-processed option, with

some students justifying that they had been conditioned since their early education to perform academic work in such traditional ways (Flavin, 2021). In this case, the innovation was indeed disruptive as it introduced the neglected attribute of creativity within traditional academic assessments. The innovation did not appeal to the existing market of university students who were accustomed to the traditional educational model. Over time and with improvements, however, the technology could open a new market in students who value creativity and may possibly eventually enter the mainstream market of students.

On a different note, Erlich et al. (2020) explored the disruptive innovation of hiring Arab teachers in Jewish schools. In their qualitative study, the Arab teachers described generally positive experiences but with challenges related to acceptance of their national and religious identities (Erlich et al., 2020). These experiences show that the innovation of hiring Arab teachers in Jewish schools has been met with resistance from the established Jewish hegemony, but the overall positive experiences described by the Arab teachers could serve as a sign that this disruptive innovation is on its way to the mainstream (Erlich et al., 2020). The field of education is also bound by various traditions and established models that might make disruptive innovation difficult but necessary for the growing needs of society.

In summary, disruptive innovation is a multifaceted process with many elements at play. It is a challenge for all organizations and especially for older, more established groups such as S&I. Challenges regarding innovation can be overcome but must be consciously and carefully approached with commitment. The literature regarding innovation in general is robust. Research regarding innovation in S&I is, however, meager and the current study helps in adding to the body of knowledge and potentially advancing the disruptive innovation theory.

Organizational Culture and Innovation

Culture is an important aspect of any group of individuals. Within an organization, the collective beliefs, values, symbols, and assumptions of the group form the organizational culture (Ziaei Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020). As organizations develop, its members learn to overcome certain challenges and work in a certain way (Ferguson, 2020). These learnings eventually form a pattern, which is considered effective and thus shared within the whole organization and with new members, forming the organizational culture (Ferguson, 2020). In this sense, organizational culture can be defined as informal shared ideals, values, and assumptions that hold an organization together and influence how members think or behave (Carmona et al., 2020; Ferguson, 2020).

The attitudes and performance of each member of an organization are generally reflective of the organizational culture (Azeem et al., 2021). Leaders must therefore understand the organizational culture to ensure that all parts of the organization are aligned with each other, and that innovations are carried out smoothly across the whole organization (Rahman et al., 2020). This process, however, is not always an easy task as organizational culture is a complex concept with elements that are not as visible or clear as others are.

Ferguson (2020) enumerated three main cultural elements within an organization, which are artifacts, values, and assumptions. Artifacts represent the most visible aspects of organizational culture, such as company uniforms or office materials, which can be easily observed and understood but may not fully reflect the organization (Ferguson, 2020). Values require more effort to be visible, but a strong leader would be able to clearly define such values and drive other members to embrace those values within the organization. Assumptions reflect the true nature of the organization but are mostly invisible. These assumptions dictate the

everyday decisions made within the organization (Ferguson, 2020). These elements may vary in degree and essence, leading to a misalignment of organizational culture. An example of such misalignment is the teaching by certain church groups that all individuals are “equally sinners saved by grace,”, but then have leadership teams composed of individuals from a single race or ethnicity (Sendjaya, 2022, p. 4). In this case, the cultural elements are not in alignment with one another, making it difficult to implement innovations across the organization.

Competing Values Framework

To better understand organizational culture, Cameron and Quinn (2011) developed the competing values framework, which comprises categories of organizational culture based on internal/external focus and flexibility/stability. The first type of culture is the adhocracy culture, which is externally focused and flexible (Azeem et al., 2021; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). Organizations that have an adhocracy culture are likely those within fast-paced environments and those that strive to be market leaders (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). This type of culture values creativity, openness, and risk-taking (Azeem et al., 2021; Zeb et al., 2021). The development of unique products and services and adoption of novel methods are central to adhocracy culture, making it ideal for innovation (Azeem et al., 2021).

The second type of culture is the clan culture, defined by an internal focus and flexible nature (Azeem et al., 2021; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). Clan culture often involves supportive and family-like environments (Azeem et al., 2021). Organizations with clan culture value teamwork, commitment, harmony, and engagement (Azeem et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). Their focus is typically to develop their members and foster team spirit (Azeem et al., 2021). Although teamwork and engagement may be valuable for innovation, Shaked (2021) noted that they could be incompatible with

instructional leadership, which is also vital for innovation within the field of education. For instance, some principals refuse to evaluate or criticize their nonperforming teachers, as doing so would damage the harmony within their organization (Shaked, 2021). Concurrently, Zeb et al. (2021), whose study involved employees from the energy industry in Pakistan, found that clan culture was not significantly related to innovation in any way. It appears that, despite its flexibility, clan culture may not be as ideal as adhocracy culture for promoting innovation within organizations.

The third type of culture is the market culture, which is stable and externally focused (Azeem et al., 2021; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). Such cultures are often found in competitive markets and are mainly focused on productivity (Azeem et al., 2021). Organizations with a market culture typically value goal attainment, competitiveness, and consistency (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). Zeb et al. (2021) also found no significant relationship between market culture and organizational innovation. The fourth and final type of culture is the hierarchical culture, which is stable and internally focused (Azeem et al., 2021; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). Key values of hierarchical culture include formal rules and regulations, work standards and norms, and efficiency (Azeem et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). In the study by Zeb et al., hierarchical culture had a negative influence on organizational innovation. The stable nature of both market and hierarchical culture, with their firm abidance to policy and norms, have been purported to hinder innovation as they give little room for members to make their own decisions and be creative (Janka et al., 2020).

As organizations grow larger, they would require more stability to keep their operations in order (Janka et al., 2020; Ziaei Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020). Larger organizations thus tend to

be more hierarchical, having a steady chain of command that allows them to manage a great number of members. Fostering mutual trust, cooperation, and support is difficult in such large organizations (Ziaei Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020). Caliskan and Zhu (2020) observed this phenomenon in their study involving the perceptions of 894 undergraduate students from four public universities in Turkey. They noted that the higher education environment was hierarchical, with a highly centralized system (Caliskan & Zhu, 2020). The researchers attributed the low scores in participative decision-making and supportive leadership within these universities to the hierarchical culture (Caliskan & Zhu, 2020). Even in noneducational settings, the focus on stability has been found to hamper the effects of CEO passion on creativity (Cai et al., 2021). This finding, based on 245 CEOs in China, suggests that a culture of strict control may not be beneficial for innovation regardless of their CEO's passion for innovation (Cai et al., 2021). Thus, it is vital for larger organizations to ensure that members are empowered and given ample flexibility while still promoting accountability to allow them to become more innovative without compromising the risks (Janka et al., 2020).

Aside from the aspects of internal/external focus and flexibility/stability, the strength and timing of organizational culture are also potential factors in innovation (Cai et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). Cai et al. (2021) found an interesting paradoxical moderating effect of flexibility on the relationship between CEO passion and innovation. The influence of CEO passion on top management team creativity, which involves the idea generation stages, was positively moderated by flexibility (Cai et al., 2021). The influence of CEO passion on firm innovation, which involves the implementation stages, was, however, negatively moderated by flexibility. This finding suggests that flexibility may be best promoted during earlier idea generation stages of an organization to encourage innovative thinking but may not be as ideal

during later implementation stages as it could result in misalignment and increased risks (Cai et al., 2021). In terms of culture strength, Xanthopoulou and Sahinidis (2022) conducted a study with 504 employees across 110 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Greece and found a curvilinear pattern suggesting that the optimal culture strength to promote innovation was moderate. Although stronger organizational cultures can foster greater alignment across the organization, it may also impede individual perceptions and ideas (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). A moderate amount of culture strength and properly timing the focus of organizational culture may thus be vital in promoting organizational innovation. As a long-established and growing organization, it is important for S&I to maintain a moderate and balanced organizational culture that can adapt with the changes inside and outside of the organization.

Learning Culture

Outside of the four types of organizational culture, *learning culture* has also been explored and cited in past literature as a potential factor in organizational innovation (Alonazi, 2021; Dixon, 2020). In the current era, organizations across various fields and around the world are met with rapidly shifting environments and intense competition (Dixon, 2020). As such, organizations are challenged to be learning organizations that are constantly developing and adapting to the changes surrounding them. Organizational leaders and members must constantly evaluate their actions and the outcomes they produce. Apostle Paul also encouraged this learning culture in Colossians 3:16 by calling for followers to teach each other so that the word of the Lord would dwell in them richly (Dixon, 2020). Learning culture is thus not only a modern organizational need but also an orthodox Christian principle.

Fostering a learning culture within an organization would require empowerment and support (Alonazi, 2021; Ferguson, 2020; Sendjaya, 2022). Empowering organization members to

participate in shared decision making with accountability would allow them to continuously seek and share knowledge, which then promotes innovation (Alonazi, 2021). Balancing empowerment and accountability can be challenging (Covarrubias et al., 2021). Empowerment requires a safe and supportive environment (Ferguson, 2020; Sendjaya, 2022). Organization members must be given some space to take risks and feel protected while they are exploring innovations (Ferguson, 2020). Concurrently, it is important to ensure that members' innovations do not lead to devastating consequences (Covarrubias et al., 2021). Especially in traditional organizations with established values and beliefs, such as the church, it is important to foster the learning culture where members can be honest without fear of being judged by others while still being held accountable for their actions (Sendjaya, 2022). Covarrubias et al. (2021) thus suggested that, specifically for religious organizations, harsh penalties or repercussions should be given only to members who violate moral principles but not to those with poor performance or other negative actions that did not violate any moral principles. Considering these factors of empowerment and accountability, organizations such as S&I could serve as safe spaces where members can be open and honest, and in turn, learn from each other.

Monitoring and evaluation are also parts of the learning culture that could help in innovation (Alonazi, 2021; Selznick et al., 2021; Srisathan et al., 2020). In a study by Srisathan et al. (2020), they explored open innovation performance within Thai and Chinese SMEs and found that monitoring and evaluation positively influenced organizational sustainability, which in turn, positively influenced open innovation performance. Monitoring and evaluation would help in revealing areas that require improvement or resource allocation, which would encourage innovation (Srisathan et al., 2020). In the field of education, faculty evaluation is a common practice that could be useful for innovation (Selznick et al., 2021). Selznick et al. (2021)

recommended the insertion of innovation-specific items and open-ended questions in such evaluations. Focus group discussions may also be a valuable method for evaluations (Selznick et al., 2021). Indeed, Alonazi (2021) noted that innovation and improvements would require not just individual learning but continuous learning at an organizational level. Organizations, such as S&I, should thus include aspects of monitoring and evaluation within their systems to promote continuous learning at the organizational level.

Collaborative Culture

Another important aspect of organizational culture identified within literature is collaboration. Several past researchers have indicated that having a collaborative culture is vital for innovation (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021; Selznick et al., 2021; Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021). In collaborative cultures, organization members share their ideas, knowledge, and beliefs within an environment of trust (Caliskan & Zhu, 2020). Such organizations value teamwork wherein members work alongside each other and participate in shared decision making (Srisathan et al., 2020). With this type of culture, more ideas for innovation may be developed within an organization.

Examples of collaborative culture within the field of education have been presented in previous research (Arrieta, 2021; Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021; Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021). In a study by Arrieta (2021) on instructional leadership, teachers from the Philippines, the researcher described how principals modeled the collaborative culture by providing opportunities for collaborative work, peer observations, and idea sharing. The researcher further stated that such opportunities had resulted in many positive outcomes, including increased creativity, risk-taking, and innovation (Arrieta, 2021). In a Canadian study, Selznick et al. (2021) observed collaboration in the interdisciplinary learning and problem-

solving between and amongst administrators, faculty, and students from different departments. Such practices were reported to promote innovative thinking and produce novel projects such as food security or gender identification projects (Selznick et al., 2021). Similarly, principals from the United States in Zuckerman and O'Shea's (2021) study shared that they had collaborative decision-making to determine the best paths for innovation, which resulted in new programs such as those for immigrant and refugee students. The collaborative decision-making was purported to increase members' buy-in, allowing them to have a sense of shared ownership over the decisions (Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021).

Other collaborative methods for education include circles and small learning action cells, which involve learning sessions wherein teachers work together to solve problems typically encountered in the school (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020). Such practices were purported to promote innovations in teaching methods and lesson planning (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020). Mestry and Govindasamy (2021) also found that fostering a democratic environment was effective in innovation periods such as when enacting curriculum changes. Apostle Paul, in his letters to the church of Philippi, had promoted such democratic culture as he tasked them to humbly perceive others as superior to themselves (Dixon, 2020). In this sense, Christian leaders are encouraged to listen to members' opinions and ideas with humility (Dixon, 2020). However, participants in a study by Mestry and Govindasamy (2021) emphasized that collaboration requires careful management and continuous practice to succeed. It may not always be easy to consider all members' ideas or facilitate teamwork among members. Fostering a collaborative and democratic culture may thus require considerable effort across the organization.

One of the proposed ways to improve the collaborative culture in an organization is through open communication (Carmona et al., 2020; McLane et al., 2022; Mestry &

Govindasamy, 2021). In a quantitative study involving 587 employees from the Brazilian textile industry, open communication factors had the strongest influence on innovation development (Carmona et al., 2020). These factors included the consideration of all ideas, encouragement of shared learning, good communication between all units, and frequent sharing of information. Through these factors, employees were more motivated to keep themselves updated, and in turn, participate more in innovation development for the organization (Carmona et al., 2020). Employees also cited establishing a formal communication channel where all members of the organization could freely express their ideas and concerns as an effective way to promote innovation, especially when members are reassured that their ideas and concerns would be heard (McLane et al., 2022). At the same time, communicating a culture of innovation across the organization may also be achieved in formal communication systems such as embedding it into the organization's mission and vision (Carmona et al., 2020). With such methods of open communication, ideas for innovation may flow freely within the organization.

Aside from open communication, previous researchers have also emphasized the value of relationships within the organization (Prihantoro & Soehari, 2020; Selznick et al., 2021). Prihantoro and Soehari (2020) reported a similar finding in a study involving 60 employees from the Education and Training Center of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics in Indonesia. The researchers found that the sociability dimension of organizational culture had the strongest positive correlation with organizational innovation. In particular, the item describing “a sense of friendship between the leaders in the place where I work with employees” was the strongest predictor of organizational innovation (Prihantoro & Soehari, 2020). Qualitative evidence from the study by Selznick et al. (2021) supported this correlation, as faculty and students indicated that their close relationships with each other allowed students to freely express

their creative ideas for innovation. One student shared how they were able to recommend directed studies as an innovative assessment method to their professor (Selznick et al., 2021). Having strong relationships within an organization can help in building a sense of community that is essential for shared innovation (Selznick et al., 2021).

A major challenge to the collaborative culture is the tendency towards groupthink (Ferguson, 2020; Sendjaya, 2022). Groupthink is the term describing the phenomenon of individual members agreeing or conforming with the group without critically analyzing the decision (Ferguson, 2020). When group thinking occurs, members of an organization may be unwilling to share ideas or opinions that go against the mainstream or the majority. Some minority views may not be heard or considered, which reduces opportunities for innovation (Ferguson, 2020). Christians have been cited to be especially prone to groupthink or aligning with the majority due to the call to act as peacekeepers (Sendjaya, 2022). In trying to maintain the peace and harmony within Christian organizations, members may simply conform with the majority rather than share innovative views (Sendjaya, 2022). Alternatively, groupthink may also have the opposite effect when organization leaders illogically align with all minority views simply for the sake of pursuing innovation (Ferguson, 2020). Although new and creative ideas may promote innovation, some may go against the organization's mission and vision. As such, it is important for organizations to strive for a healthy balance of majority and minority views, which must all be aligned with the central mission of the organization (Ferguson, 2020).

Rewards and Incentives

Some of the most common artifacts organizations across different fields use are rewards and incentives. When members perceive the organization to be rewarding innovative behaviors, they may be more motivated to adopt such innovations or arrive at their own ideas for innovation

(Heinze & Heinze, 2020). In a study by Carmona et al. (2020), the factor of rewards and recognition positively and significantly influenced creativity and innovation. Heinze and Heinze (2020) further recommended formal and informal rewards systems within the organization to promote innovation.

Unfortunately, rewards and recognition may not always be properly practiced in many organizations. In a qualitative study by Abonyi and Sofo (2021) involving 14 school leaders and assistant leaders within Ghana, only three had reported specific and formal rewards programs for their teachers. The other school leaders merely used verbal praise without any formal rewards for teachers' innovations (Abonyi & Sofo, 2021). One barrier to such rewards and incentives is the clan culture (Shaked, 2021). In a study of schools with clan culture by Shaked (2021), principals stated that they intentionally did not implement a reward system because giving out rewards could disrupt the harmony in their schools as some teachers might become envious. At the same time, the principals also appeared to be lenient with teachers who did not perform according to standards. This type of harmony within clan cultures could demotivate members from innovating, as they believe they would not be rewarded for their efforts nor punished for their non-performance (Shaked, 2021).

The importance of organizational culture and its elements have been explored in this section. Evidence from the literature mostly point to adhocracy culture being the most appropriate for innovation (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022; Zeb et al., 2021). However, maintaining a moderate level of organizational culture, as well as properly timing certain aspects of organizational culture, were cited as critical for ensuring a smooth process of innovation (Cai et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). Having a learning culture wherein members are empowered to share ideas, knowledge, and beliefs while continuously monitoring and evaluating

organizational models, processes, and policies, was commonly cited as vital for innovation (Alonazi, 2021; Dixon, 2020; Ferguson, 2020; Sendjaya, 2022; Srisathan et al., 2020).

Collaborative culture was also purported to be critical in promoting innovation and buy-in from members (Arrieta, 2021; Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Selznick et al., 2021; Srisathan et al., 2020; Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021). Finally, an organizational culture that emphasizes rewards and recognition was also cited to encourage and motivate innovation among its members (Carmona et al., 2020). Although these aspects of organizational culture have been established in the literature, it may be challenging to implement them. Doing so may require strong leadership, which is a topic explored in the following section.

Instructional Leadership and Innovation

Leaders play a significant role in guiding and managing their organizations. Christian educational leaders are expected to be responsible for all aspects of learning that takes place in their organizations (Dixon, 2020). Apostle Paul in his second epistle to Timothy emphasized such leadership wherein he noted that a farmer does not reap a good share of crops without working and an athlete does not receive awards if they do not compete. Similarly, Christian leaders must take on their share of work as good soldiers of Christ (Dixon, 2020). Instructional leadership reflects these ideals, as it involves support for teachers' professional development, close supervision, a shared vision, and an overall focus on improving student learning (Childress et al., 2020; Mushi & Ye, 2021). There are relatively few peer-reviewed academic research articles concerning instructional leadership and innovation in S&I. The lack of empirical research articles, outside of theses and dissertations, exemplifies the work that still needs to be accomplished in S&I and the broader academy with its research. The current study will assist in

this endeavor. Although little work has been done specific to S&I, research from the perspective of other organizations provides a framework for S&I and will be outlined in this section.

Instructional Leaders' Roles

Much of the past work in S&I research has centered on the role of seminary principals as instructional leaders, observing, and giving feedback to classroom teachers. Historically, critics of instructional leadership have argued that principals' roles in schools should be mostly managerial or political rather than instructional (Hallinger et al., 2020). It was not until the 1980s that educational reforms were enacted in the United States and instructional leadership became a point of discussion. The growing popularity of instructional leadership has since reached a global scale in the 21st century as institutions around the world have begun to value accountability and achievement (Hallinger et al., 2020). In this contemporary era, principals are expected to be present at the classroom level and work in close cooperation with teachers while continuously observing, evaluating, and directing the educational programs (Dahal, 2020). Principals are expected to be instructional leaders who constantly aim to innovate and improve student learning within their organizations.

In the wider field of education, principals' roles as instructional leaders are clearly defined as they are tasked to lead with a clear vision and mission, supervise and evaluate teachers, monitor students' learning, motivate, and empower teachers, provide opportunities for professional development, and manage resources and infrastructure, among other roles (Dahal, 2020). Paramount among these roles is clearly defining and sharing the institution's vision (Abonyi & Sofo, 2021; Ferguson, 2020; Janka et al., 2020; Sibomana, 2022). When the vision and common goals of the institution are not clearly defined or communicated consistently, members would not know which direction to take with their actions (Ferguson, 2020). Leaders

themselves may find it challenging to focus on the organization's greater needs if the vision is not clearly defined (Ferguson, 2020).

Supporting the idea of shared clear vision, Janka et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study involving 260 German organizations. They found that communicating organizational beliefs was positively related to managerial innovation and cultural control (Janka et al., 2020). This finding implies that leaders should strive for greater information sharing, transparency, and visibility to get the message across and promote innovation within the organization (Janka et al., 2020). Specifically in the field of education, they found that communicating the school's vision, strategies, and goals increased awareness and improve performance across all members, including teachers, students, and staff (Abonyi & Sofu, 2021; Saoke et al., 2022; Sibomana, 2022). Especially during periods of change, teachers expect their leaders to provide clear guidance on how to proceed with such changes and how it aligns with the vision and mission of the school (Kılıç, 2021). Having a shared clear vision may thus be vital for organizations such as S&I to ensure that all members are aware of and participate in innovation.

A major challenge to the factor of shared vision is the possibility of resistance. Several past researchers have shown the problem of teachers' resistance to changes in the school (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020). Older and more traditional faculty and staff have been reported to be particularly resistant to change (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020). Some principals have even shared how teachers have openly challenged them over changes in the school, stating that the changes were inconsistent with the school's established culture (Rahman et al., 2020). Managing such resistance may indeed be challenging especially for inexperienced

principals (Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021). Thus, it is vital for instructional leaders to articulate the value of innovation and reform within the school (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020).

Another important factor of instructional leadership is providing opportunities for professional development (Arrieta, 2021; Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Parlar et al., 2021; Sibomana, 2022). Sibomana (2022) provided some examples of opportunities for learning were in their study involving secondary school teachers in Rwanda. These include on-the-job training, workshops, seminars, knowledge sharing sessions, and teacher collaboration, which the teachers valued as helpful instructional leadership strategies (Sibomana, 2022). Similarly, administrative leaders in a study by Lincuna and Caingcoy (2020) shared their strategies of teaching innovative strategies and concepts to their teachers according to their needs. A vital element of instructional leadership is that principals observe and dialogue with their teachers to determine their specific professional needs, and subsequently mentor their teachers according to these needs (Arrieta, 2021). Teachers may also learn from each other through collaboration, which was associated with instructional leadership (Parlar et al., 2021). The myriad strategies for professional development may be helpful in improving teachers' ability to innovate within the organization.

In line with professional development, instructional leadership also involves leading by example (Arrieta, 2021; Dixon, 2020; Sendjaya, 2022; Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021). Apostle Paul described a biblical example of such leadership in 1 Corinthians 11:1 when he told Christians to be imitators of himself as he was of Christ (Dixon, 2020). In this example, Jesus Christ and Paul served as leaders who lead by example so that followers can emulate them (Dixon, 2020). Similarly, the principals in a study by Zuckerman and O'Shea's (2021) emphasized the importance of leading by example, stating that one cannot expect others to do something if they themselves are not willing to do it. Leading by example or modeling has been

purported to improve teacher motivation, and in turn, innovation (Arrieta, 2021). Thus, it is important for principals to be visible within the school and display the attitudes, behaviors, and performance that they expect from all other members (Arrieta, 2021; Sendjaya, 2022).

Visibility, though an important factor of instructional leadership, may be challenging for principals as they struggle to balance their administrative and instructional tasks (Ismail et al., 2020; Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020; Sibomana, 2022). When principals become unreachable or invisible, teachers are left to act on their own, which may not always be aligned with the school's vision (Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021). Time management is a valuable skill that may be helpful for such challenges (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020). Previous researchers have also recommended distributive leadership or delegating some administrative tasks to other school leaders to allow more time for principals to attend to their instructional tasks (Ismail et al., 2020; Sibomana, 2022). On a larger scale, Rahman et al. (2020) recommended local educational authorities to set meetings and other programs during school holidays so that principals can focus on instructional work during school days.

It is additionally important for instructional leaders to be not only visible but also actively supervise their teachers (Abonyi & Sofu, 2021; Sibomana, 2022). All the school leaders in a study by Abonyi and Sofu (2021) recognized the value of evaluation and feedback. Unfortunately, the school leaders admitted that supervision and feedback were not constantly practiced due to the overwhelming amount of administrative work they had (Abonyi & Sofu, 2021). Principals in a study by Shaked (2021) also shared that they did not conduct teacher observations and evaluations but for different reasons. Their clan culture prevented them from providing negative feedback to their teachers, even in the form of constructive criticism, as it

may damage their family-like relationships (Shaked, 2021). Clan culture has resulted in the continuation of ineffective practices, which impedes student learning (Shaked, 2021).

Contrary to the idea that supervision can harm principal-teacher relationships, teachers in Sibomana's (2022) study appreciated the interest given by their principals in their work. Through classroom observations, walkthrough visits, and pedagogical document reviews, principals were able to evaluate the instruction and provide feedback through dialogues with the teachers. Notably, the dialogues occurred in a safe environment where teachers were able to reflect on their teaching and share their thoughts freely (Sibomana, 2022). In line with this, leader hospitality, which reflects the members' level of comfort toward the leader and the leader's perceived helpfulness and friendliness, were cited as significant factors for organizational innovation (Prihantoro & Soehari, 2020). Supervision, evaluation, and feedback may serve as vital tools for innovation when conducted in a safe and hospitable manner.

Applying such instructional leadership roles in the specific context of S&I may be challenging. For instance, Johnson (2008), in his dissertation, focused on the role of seminary principals and their perceptions of their role as instructional leaders. Johnson observed that many principals considered the training they received inadequate for their position, they did not understand why they had been chosen as a principal, and they lacked certain capacities to perform their job function. Although many things in S&I are clearly defined, ambiguity exists regarding exactly what the role of a seminary principal is, or should be (Healey, 2019). Although students and educators in S&I were purported to share similar experiences to secular public and private institutions (Porter & Freeman, 2020), the focus on religious aspects within S&I may still call for differences in teaching and learning. Kallemeyn (2009) observed, from a Catholic educator's perspective, that at times it can be a challenge to maintain an inherent spiritual

approach while using secular educational methods and approaches. Furthermore, concrete studies to guide the way with any descriptive tools for how religious educators can use secular instructional leadership methodologies are lacking (Kallemeyn, 2009). This gap in the literature affects S&I in a significant way, as the religious foundation is ever present and yet, secular pedagogy is used universally in the organization.

Complementary Leadership Styles

Content that centers on what effective leadership is can easily be found in abundance in S&I produced manuals but what is considerably lacking is how to achieve it (Healey, 2019). Effective teaching and instructional leadership principles are described in depth but an explanation regarding why the chosen practices or principles are used is lacking (Johnson, 2008). One possible explanation is that each institution or organization is unique and thus requires a different type of leadership (Ferguson, 2020). Indeed, findings from Ferguson's (2020) dissertation on disruptive innovation in church groups indicate that no single universal formula for leadership improves innovation. Hallinger et al. (2020) further noted that, over the years, researchers have formulated and tested various integrated leadership models for innovation within the field of education. In line with this, principals in Zuckerman and O'Shea's (2021) study practiced different types of leadership within their respective organizations, but all of them had reported elements of instructional leadership. For instance, some principals prioritized relational leadership whereas others concentrated on distributed leadership while maintaining instructional leadership elements such as shared vision, professional development, and feedback. Thus, it appears that a single correct type of leadership for leading innovation across various religious and educational organizations is lacking (Ferguson, 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, instructional leadership remains at the core of such integrated models as a leadership model for innovation.

One leadership style that has been prominent in the literature on innovation is transformational leadership (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Ferdinan & Lindawati, 2021; Khan et al., 2020; Putra et al., 2020; Srisathan et al., 2020). Transformational leadership is centered on inspiring followers and motivating them to perform beyond expectations towards a shared goal (Srisathan et al., 2020). Previous researchers have found that transformational leadership is related to innovation through the mediating role of organizational culture (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Khan et al., 2020). On the other side of transformational leadership is transactional leadership, which is centered on principles of exchange with rewards for good performance and punishments for negative performance (Khan et al., 2020).

Interestingly, both Khan et al. (2020) and Putra et al. (2020) found that transformational and transactional leadership both showed a positive relationship with innovative behaviors at work. Contrastingly, Ferdinan and Lindawati (2021) reported a negative relationship between transformational leadership and innovative behavior. The researchers argued that whereas transformational leaders can inspire and motivate followers, they may also increase the stress levels of followers who fail to adapt to the pressures of innovation (Ferdinan & Lindawati, 2021). It should be noted, however, that methodological issues exist in Ferdinan and Lindawati's study, especially as the researchers did not report details of the questionnaires they used to measure the variables. With greater support towards transformational leadership as a leadership style that promoted innovation, it may be worthwhile to consider its common elements with instructional leadership, such as having a shared vision.

In summary, instructional leadership can play an imperative role in the enhancement of teaching and learning, particularly with innovation. The elements of shared vision, supervision, and evaluation, providing professional development opportunities, monitoring student learning, and generally being visible and helpful at the classroom level encompass instructional leadership, and were purported to improve innovation within schools (Mushi & Ye, 2021).

Although previous researchers have suggested that no single correct leadership style exists for all organizations, the elements of instructional leadership have been associated with innovation, suggesting that it could serve as a core leadership style for innovation (Hallinger et al., 2020).

Complementing instructional leadership are both transformational leadership and transactional leadership, both of which have elements that promote innovation within organizations (Khan et al., 2020; Putra et al., 2020). Considering these elements and roles, instructional leadership may serve as a factor for innovation in S&I.

Innovation in Religious Institutions

At this point, the literature review is narrowed down to the context of religious institutions. Specifically, the topic of innovation in religious institutions is discussed in this section. As noted, S&I is a private religious educational organization that is sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The values and culture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints strongly influence S&I and everything that it does. As aforementioned, however, there is a dearth of academic literature, particularly peer-reviewed journal articles on S&I. Because of this gap, much of the literature reviewed in this section focuses on religious institutions in general.

Innovation has been cited as an amoral concept that is neither good nor bad (Ferguson, 2020). For organizations that value tradition, such as religious institutions, however, innovative

opinions and ideas may be met with disapproval. Historically, the term *innovation* was used in a negative light, mostly as propaganda for controlling other people (Godin, 2021). In 1548, King Edward VI had made a proclamation against innovation in the Church of England. As such, the term was typically used during that time as a form of accusation towards other groups or individuals in the church and government. Such negative connotations to innovation have persisted for decades and remain in some institutions until now (Godin, 2021).

Because most religious institutions were established several decades ago, they often value the stability they have fostered, and thus, may resist innovation (Ferguson, 2020). There is also the argument that religious institutions must not change because the word of God itself does not change (Cunningham, 2022). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in particular, is known for its consistency in practices, services, and education across the many different branches (Kline, 2020; Stapley, 2021). Fortunately, the negative connotations of innovation in the church appears to have lessened as several religious institutions are now turning to nonformal training for alternative Christian education (Clark, 2021; Cunningham, 2022). Furthermore, notable institutions associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, such as Brigham Young University (BYU) have taken steps to innovate and use new educational models that prioritize academic excellence while still maintaining its religious foundations through its mission, vision, and overall campus culture (Daines et al., 2022). The example of BYU raises the possibility that religious institutions can innovate and adapt to the changing world.

Many religious institutions have indeed begun to recognize the shifting perspectives of the world and the need to adapt to such changes (Cunningham, 2022; Esler, 2021). The need for innovation became especially pronounced during the Coronavirus 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, when religious organizations had to turn to online tools and alternative ways to spread the word

of God (Covarrubias et al., 2021). Additionally, the need for solid education has become stronger than ever because of the growing list of global issues that affect the youth today, such as climate change and political struggles, augmented by globalization and social media (Rossiter, 2020).

The pressure on educational institutions to be more learner-centric and improve students' academic performance has also increased (Peace, 2021; Rymarz, 2021). These issues and pressures have since become factors for the decision to enroll children into religious institutions (Rymarz, 2021). As such, it is important for religious institutions, such as S&I, to take note of these factors and evaluate their need for innovation.

Technological Innovation in Religious Institutions

The use of technology and various media for instruction has been a prominent topic in secular education. Religious institutions, most of which have operated for decades and some for centuries, may be hesitant to adopt such technologies and media, and may be bound to their long-standing traditional approaches to education (Cunningham, 2022). With the health and safety regulations enacted during the Covid-19 pandemic, educators who relied on traditional methods have struggled to adapt to the online setting (Bledsoe, 2022). Their struggles highlight the need for religious institutions to stay up to date with the latest technology and be prepared for any situation. Although this may seem objectionable to traditional religious educators, Manullang et al. (2022) argued that the use of alternative media in religious education has been present since the time of Christ. Jesus Himself has taught the word of God in various unconventional locations, such as on a hill, in boats, and in people's homes (Manullang et al., 2022). Apostle Paul used distance education in the form of letters to churches (Boaheng, 2022). These examples show that religious education should not be limited to a certain space, medium, or time, and that religious educators should be prepared to teach in any situation (Manullang et al., 2022).

Researchers have also provided some modern examples of technological innovation in religious institutions (Bledsoe, 2022; Peace, 2021; Tran & Nguyen, 2021). Based on interviews with 48 religious' educators in Uganda, Peace (2021) found that the use of technologies, such as power point presentations with options for animations and other effects, has been exciting for students. Rather than traditional lectures, which students may find tedious, these technological features allowed more active participation, reflecting the innovative student-centered education (Peace, 2021). Religious seminaries in Kenya and South Africa have also adopted online technologies for learning (Bledsoe, 2022). Although they were initially hesitant to use such platforms before the Covid-19 pandemic, they have come to realize the advantages of such technologies and plan to continue using them even when health and safety protocols are lifted (Bledsoe, 2022). Although the use of online technology for religious education may have been forced during the Covid-19 pandemic, many religious educators appear to have recognized its value beyond convenience.

Exploring the more advanced technology of artificial intelligence (AI), Tran and Nguyen (2021) found that AI assistants for religious education provided more convenience in processing student information, grading student assessments, and managing finances. They also support the student-centered approach as AI can provide students with personalized study guidelines (Tran & Nguyen, 2021). The AI technology was also purported to bring less biases and more religious tolerance, allowing students to gain a wider perspective on certain sensitive matters such as issues related to sexuality. The diverse perspectives brought by AI technology may allow students to practice critical thinking without the influence of educators' biases (Tran & Nguyen, 2021). That is not to say that technology should completely replace human educators. Although student-centered learning is important, educators still play a significant role in promoting student

engagement and ensuring that students do not take advantage of the freedom brought by technology and become passive (Boaheng, 2022). The activeness of educators in online learning reflects the activeness of their students (Boaheng, 2022).

Previous researchers have also cautioned against the dehumanizing factor of technology in education (Diaz, 2021; Tran & Nguyen, 2021). Few of the senior high school students (36%) in Diaz's (2021) American study who attended religious institutions found digital technology to be helpful in their critical thinking regarding religious faith. This idea was echoed in Tran and Nguyen's (2021) study where participants noted that AI technology may not provide spiritual guidance, as it lacks human experience and emotion. Some participants have argued that AI technology, which is a human product rather than a direct creation of God, may not have the spiritual power necessary for religious education (Tran & Nguyen, 2021). Although technological innovations may serve as a helpful tool for religious education, educators are advised to be careful in relying too much on technology on the verge of idolatry (Bledsoe, 2022; Diaz, 2021). Educators have been warned not to emulate the excessive pride of those who constructed the Tower of Babel and used their technology to challenge the limitations set by God (Diaz, 2021). In using technological innovations, religious educators must remember that such technologies are merely tools for teaching.

Curriculum Changes

A more controversial innovation in modern religious education is the inclusion of pluralism in the curriculum, which involves the teaching that all religions are valid and all individuals are free to select any religion or none (Arifianto et al., 2021). Although such teachings may appear to contradict Christian exclusivity, Jesus Christ Himself displayed pluralism in His acceptance of the Gentiles as well as His example of the Good Samaritan

(Arifianto et al., 2021; Esler, 2021). Some religious educators in the modern era have thus followed Jesus' example and have taken a phenomenological approach to religious education wherein one takes a step back from lessons of Christianity to teach or learn about the experiences of other religious groups (Zembylas, 2022).

The need for such pluralism was exemplified in Nelson and Yang's (2022) qualitative study involving 11 religious education teachers in Uganda who reported that their students had limited knowledge regarding world religions. To compound the problem, the little knowledge that these students had regarding other religions were mostly based on negative stereotypes from the media (Nelson & Yang, 2022). Unfortunately, the teachers also reported that parents and some students did not accept their teaching of pluralism. Some of the teachers, however, have taken such negative perspectives as a challenge and further indication for the need for pluralism in religious education (Nelson & Yang, 2022). Mayhew and Rockenbach (2021) further noted that teaching pluralism should involve religious appreciation rather than religious tolerance. This approach means that learning about world religions should not only be purely information but also involve respect, openness, and empathy toward other religious groups (Mayhew & Rockenbach, 2021).

Aside from world religions, past researchers have also emphasized the need for including 21st-century skills in religious education (Clark, 2021; Peace, 2021; Rossiter, 2020). Twenty-first-century skills are lifelong skills that individuals need to survive in the modern workplace (Peace, 2021). These skills include critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication, literacy, problem solving, flexibility, leadership, productivity, initiative, and social skills, among others (Peace, 2021). In a study involving 96 religious seminaries across 57 countries, Clark (2021) found that the seminaries offered various skills training programs and courses. The

programs and courses included, but were not limited to, counseling and psychology, organizational leadership, women in ministry, holistic child development, Islamic studies, translation and linguistics, media leadership, and sign language (Clark, 2021). Additionally, the seminaries offered some vocational skills, such as mechanical work and tailoring. These skills were purported to be useful for aspiring pastors and missionaries in addition to their religious knowledge (Clark, 2021). Although such programs may not be fully feasible in released-time seminaries, such as S&I, these 21st-century skills could be incorporated into existing lessons and curricula.

In this section, I have discussed several examples of innovations within religious institutions. These institutions considered technological innovations, such as online learning and the use of AI assistants, useful, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic (Bledsoe, 2022; Peace, 2021; Tran & Nguyen, 2021). Previous researchers have also called for a greater focus on social issues as a form of innovative thinking in religious education (Haltinner & Sarathchandra, 2022; Kline, 2020; Ross et al., 2022). Finally, I presented innovative curriculum changes to meet the needs of modern students, including pluralism and 21st-century skills (Clark, 2021; Esler, 2021; Mayhew & Rockenbach, 2021; Nelson & Yang, 2022; Peace, 2021; Zembylas, 2022).

Summary

There is a strong body of research dealing with innovation and how to foster it from the perspective of the business world (Christensen, 1997). Research specific to innovation in S&I is sparse and insufficient. Although some studies allude to innovative failures in S&I, no work currently exists to validate or challenge those assertions (Healey, 2019; Johnson, 2008). As such, much of the literature reviewed in this chapter involved innovation within secular education and

other fields. Much research is still needed to examine innovation in S&I. The current study assists in this regard.

In general, organizational cultures focused on adhocracy, continuous learning, collaboration, and rewards and incentives have been associated with increased innovation across different types of organizations (Alonazi, 2021; Carmona et al., 2020; Selznick et al., 2021; Zeb et al., 2021; Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021). Despite such evidence, a significant gap exists in the literature in terms of the organizational cultures of religious institutions, such as S&I. Although evidence that larger organizations tend to be more hierarchical (Janka et al., 2020; Ziaei Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020) and educational institutions have embraced the collaborative culture (Arrieta, 2021; Selznick et al., 2021; Zuckerman & O'Shea, 2021) exists, it is uncertain if the S&I, with its unique position as released-time seminary programs, fall under such categories, and how they may influence innovation within S&I. This gap in the literature represents a significant issue addressed in the current study.

Instructional leadership from a secular perspective, and how it influences innovation, is a vibrant body of information. The instructional leadership roles of having and sharing a clear vision, providing opportunities for professional development, leading by example, and supervising were cited as catalysts for innovation (Abonyi & Sofo, 2021; Arrieta, 2021; Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020; Sendjaya, 2022; Sibomana, 2022). At the same time, past researchers have suggested that modern educational leaders rely on integrated leadership models with instructional leadership at its core (Ferguson, 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020). What is lacking in the literature is greater clarity on how instructional leadership practices apply to religious or private educational entities. Once again, the current study may help better establish how religious educators can become more effective instructional leaders.

Overall, this literature review has been conducted as an attempt to shape and establish a basis for a study of innovation in S&I in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Innovation has been called for in the S&I to adapt to modern needs and potentially increase enrollment numbers (Panel Discussion, 2021). Yet, evidence shows that S&I culture may not be conducive for innovation (Healey, 2019). With the literature firmly establishing the framework and foundation for the current work, this study contributes to the body of knowledge and hopefully adds a unique perspective to the literature that was previously unfulfilled.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it (Healey, 2019). In this research, the phenomenon was defined as a call for innovation within a culture that may not be prepared to support it. This chapter includes the research design, settings and participants, researcher positionality, interpretive framework, philosophical assumptions, researcher's role, procedures, data collection, data analysis, data synthesis, trustworthiness plans for this study rooted in phenomenological research methodologies and the latest literature, and a chapter summary.

Research Design

The methodology used for this work was a qualitative approach, which is appropriate to provide in-depth data regarding a specific phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research design centers on the human experience that cannot be comprehended through a quantitative approach (Moustakas, 1994). In a qualitative research design, the observer is placed in the world, noticeable in a transformational approach to deduce phenomena through the meanings that individuals bring to them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the aim of this work was to describe the experience of instructional leaders as they attempt to innovate in their natural setting, a qualitative approach was appropriate consistent with Urcia's (2021) suggestion. A quantitative approach would not have been appropriate for the current study, as it does not involve the establishment of statistical relationships between variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Furthermore, the research design adopted for this qualitative study was a phenomenological approach, which served as the central feature of the study to describe instructional leaders' attitudes, beliefs, and desires concerning the phenomenon of a call to innovate in an environment that may not support it. Phenomenology is a useful design for deeply understanding individuals' lived experiences and the wider assumptions behind them (Gill, 2020; Urcia, 2021). As the phenomenon is evaluated, the researcher can describe its essence. A phenomenological approach is a valid methodology for a study to describe the lived experiences of participants (Moustakas, 1994), who, for this study, were seminary principals.

I used the seminal work of Moustakas (1994), along with the more recent works of Gill (2020) and Urcia (2021) to guide and direct this study in a transcendental phenomenological approach. This design is intended to, as Moustakas (1994) noted, perceive, and describe the phenomenon in a "fresh and open way" (p. 34). I employed a survey, semistructured open-ended interview process, and journal prompts in this study to explore the phenomenon.

Research Questions

The research questions were focused on the lived experiences of seminary principals in S&I as they have been called to innovate in an environment that may not support it. Key questions centered on the lived experience of principals as instructional leaders, the role of instructional leaders in the growth and progress of an organization, and how middle management works in this environment. Innovation was the foundational element that underpinned all of the research questions.

Central Research Question (CRQ)

What are the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of instructional leaders (seminary principals) in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may or may not support it?

Sub-Question One (SQ1)

How do seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints perceive their organizational culture about innovation?

Sub-Question Two (SQ2)

What are the perceptions of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding their own and others' roles in promoting innovation in their program?

Sub-Question Three (SQ3)

What catalysts and barriers to innovation are perceived by seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

Setting and Participants

Due to the nature of this transcendental phenomenological study, participants had to be chosen in a highly inspected way to ensure that, as Gill (2020) and Moustakas (1994) advised, only those with experience with the described phenomenon are recruited. Eligible participants had to be seminary principals in S&I and have sufficient time in their positions to interact with a call to innovate in a culture that may or may not support it. The setting of this work was a highly centralized location where participants could be accessed easily, including those operating in diverse sections of the organization. This section of this work includes a description of both the setting and the participants in in this study.

Site (or Setting)

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion is highly concentrated in the Mountain West region of the United States that is most condensed in Utah. The participants who contributed to this study were from the Wasatch Front of Utah including Davis, Salt Lake, Tooele, and Utah counties. I selected seminary principals from multiple S&I regions within this geographical location. Including multiple S&I regions in this study ensured representation of a wide range of vantage points and at the same time provided convenience for data collection.

Although S&I is a global entity, release-time seminary, with fully employed faculties are found only where there is a high concentration of students desiring this option. Therefore, 98% of release-time seminary programs are offered in the Mountain West region of the United States (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2021). Furthermore, diversity can easily be achieved within this sample setting. The Salt Lake valley contains four seminary regions alone, with an additional two in neighboring Utah county, and another in Davis County. Region leadership plays a significant role in a principal's experience of feeling supported to innovate; thus, multiple regions were included.

The organizational hierarchy of S&I consists of faculty, a principal, a region director, an area director, and the central office administrative staff. The region and area directors are essentially middle management, with the central office consisting of the top administration in the organization. Seminary principals oversee their faculties and guide and direct local programs with the support of a region director, who oversees 10-15 faculties. An area encapsulates 3-5 regions. I selected principals from within these organizations for participation.

Participants

Participants for this phenomenological study were from the population of seminary principals from the multiple regions found in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, described in the previous section. The sampling method was purposive sampling, which is used to ensure that participants have rich and diverse lived experiences regarding the phenomenon (Urcia, 2021). Moustakas (1994) and Urcia (2021) both prescribed a relatively small pool of participants, between 12-15 individuals. This sample size should be sufficient as in-depth interviews and journal entries make up the rich and comprehensive set of data (Urcia, 2021). Therefore, participants in this study consisted of 12-15 seminary principals from multiple regions along the Wasatch Front (Moustakas, 1994). I made a conscious effort to recruit participants from different regions, age groups, and genders. The criterion for participation was having experienced the phenomenon; this means the individual had to be a seminary principal during the last 2 years when the call for innovation occurred.

Recruitment Plan

This work included the recruitment of 12-15 participants for this study; a sample of this size is congruent with qualitative research and phenomenological design (Moustakas, 1994). I first selected potential participants from a database of S&I seminary principals. The next step was sending a recruitment letter (Appendix C) to the participants via e-mail to invite them to participate. With the nature of a phenomenological study, a homogenous sample is permissible (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and was implemented based on convenience of data collection. All recruits, by necessity, had to be individuals who experienced the previously described phenomenon and able to describe their lived experiences. Upon agreeing to participate, another e-mail containing details of the study, including the confirmation that their participation and

personal information would remain confidential throughout the study and that they could withdraw at any time, as well as a consent form (Appendix D) were sent. Participants electronically signed the consent form and sent it back to me, signifying their agreement to the terms.

Researcher Positionality

As a researcher, my motivation for this study is to understand the lived experiences of seminary principals who have been called to innovate in a culture where innovation may not be fully supportive. I have worked full-time as a seminary principal in the past and am familiar with the challenges that are outlined. I have experienced the call to innovate in keyways outlined by the S&I administration and have been fully immersed in the culture of the S&I workforce for over a decade (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2021). I desire to more fully understand these issues and the phenomenon outlined to assist in improving conditions for innovation to flourish within this organization.

Interpretive Framework

As a researcher, I am positioned as a social constructivist with that framework guiding my interpretive lens or viewpoint (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2019). The phenomenological approach adopted for this study also lends itself to a social constructivism framework where a desire to understand the lived realities of others is facilitated (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although social constructivism played a significant role in building a framework for this study, it was accompanied by my worldview rooted in a belief in God and his role in discovering and revealing truth.

Philosophical Assumptions

In this section, I will outline the philosophical assumptions that underpinned this study. First, I will outline and address the ontological assumptions. A discussion of epistemological assumptions will follow. Finally, this section will conclude with the axiological assumptions. These three areas, ontological, epistemological, and axiological, reflect a comprehensive view of my philosophical assumptions that directed and guided this study (Burr, 2015).

Ontological Assumptions

My ontological assumption is that God is the source of all truth, and all truth can be traced back to God's revealed truth. As noted in the interpretive framework, my social constructivism positionality also allows multiple realities to be constructed from lived experiences. In the case of this study, a seminary principal's experiences informed and shaped, and ultimately helped each participant construct their own unique reality, thus allowing for multiple beliefs. Within the context of a phenomenological study, the lived experiences of the individual principal make up the core of this work, which requires openness and flexibility (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, the social constructivist framework was helpful in this regard.

Epistemological Assumptions

From a social constructivist vantage point, the epistemological assumptions for this study are that reality is constructed as a researcher and the researched formulate individual experiences into a cohesive narrative. In other words, for this work, reality was constructed as this study was being undertaken, as Schwarz and Williams (2020) explained. This approach was particularly needed within the phenomenological approach to study a shared, lived phenomenon.

Axiological Assumptions

My axiological assumptions are that individual values must be respected and formulated with active participant contributions. Again, this assumption is rooted in the social constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This does not mean that no ultimate sources of truth directing values; rather, it suggests that within the social constructivist model, there must be a space for values to be negotiated and formulated. This study, with its phenomenological approach, requires space for individual lived experiences and values to shape and inform conclusions and findings (Moustakas, 1994).

Researcher's Role

As the human instrument in this study, it is important to outline my relationship to S&I and to the potential participants, as Moustakas (1994) recommended. I am a full-time religious educator in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion and worked as a seminary teacher, a seminary principal, and currently as an institute teacher. The participants were my peers. I must also clearly note that I had no authority over any of the participants.

I have experienced the questions presented to the participants concerning their desires, beliefs, and attitudes regarding the previously outlined phenomena. Because of my personal experience with the described phenomenon, I had to set my bias aside when collecting the data, as Moustakas (1994) suggested. My positioning allowed me to collect, process, and analyze data with a comprehensive scope without bias, more judiciously (see Moustakas, 1994).

Procedures

In this section, I will outline the procedures of this work comprehensively to enable future researchers to replicate this study. The procedures outlined include the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and the need to be fully compliant with IRB principles. Next, I will

outline permissions in detail, including those who provided permission within the organization. A recruitment plan will follow along with an outline of the data collection and analysis and how the information was triangulated.

Data Collection Plan

The data collection plan for this work involved a survey, semi structured open-ended interviews, and journal prompts. These methods ensured comprehensive data collection and allowed triangulation. Each method is described in detail in the subsections below.

Individual Interviews

The core of this phenomenological study centered on the lived experiences of individuals who had experienced this phenomenon. Therefore, individual open-ended interviews were vital not only for obtaining the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of participants but also for observing their nonverbal behaviors that may be relevant to the study (Gill, 2020; Moustakas, 1994). Interviews were intensive and comprehensive to establish quality data sets set forth by research design theorists (Moustakas, 1994). This format allowed me to collect expansive and qualitative data. Interviews allow data to arise to the surface as questions are asked, answers are given, and core elements are solidified amongst the participants.

Individual Interview Questions

1. How do you feel concerning the mandate to innovate in S&I? CRQ
2. What are your feelings and perceptions regarding the need to innovate? CRQ
3. What do you perceive is the source of urgency around the need to innovate in S&I?

CRQ

4. In what ways do you perceive the S&I promotes or hinders a culture of innovation?
SQ1
5. Why do you think some might express that S&I does not have a culture of innovation? SQ1
6. How would you describe S&I's culture regarding innovation? SQ1
7. In what ways do you think a seminary principal can contribute to innovation within a local setting? SQ2
8. How would you describe the role of your region director in promoting the culture of innovation in your local setting? SQ2
9. What has been your experience with attempts to innovate in S&I? SQ3
10. What personal experiences have you had in successful and unsuccessful attempts to innovate? SQ3
11. What in your estimation needs to change regarding S&I's culture to innovate more effectively? SQ3

The interview began with the first three questions based on the CRQ that set the foundations for the rest of the interview. They were prompts, in line with the present study's purpose, to obtain a general idea of the participants' beliefs, attitudes, and desires regarding the call to innovate in a culture that may not support it. These introductory questions were vital to see if the participant seminary principals have accepted and begun to address the call to innovate just as some leaders of other religious institutions have (Cunningham, 2022; Esler, 2021).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which sponsors the S&I, has been known to practice consistency and may thus not be as welcoming of innovation (Kline, 2020; Stapley, 2021). Some progress has, however, been reported in this field as some institutions

associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, such as BYU, have begun to embrace innovation while still maintaining their religious foundations (Daines et al., 2022). I included interview questions 4-6 in the present study to obtain firsthand information from seminary principals regarding their perceptions of the innovative culture of S&I or lack thereof.

Questions 7 and 8 are centered on instructional leadership and the associated roles. The role of principals in educational institutions has evolved over the past decades, with instructional leadership being the current paradigm in most institutions (Dahal, 2020). Under this paradigm, principals are expected to promote and practice the elements of shared vision, supervision, and evaluation, providing professional development opportunities, monitoring student learning, and generally being visible and helpful at the classroom level (Mushi & Ye, 2021). I inserted question 7 to confirm or disconfirm the importance of these elements in seminary principals' roles and question 8 to determine if the regional directors, or the middle-tier, also contribute to promoting these elements.

Questions 9 and 10 draw from the lived experiences of the participants regarding their attempts to innovate, which is central to phenomenology (Gill, 2020; Moustakas, 1994; Urcia, 2021). Responses to these questions helped in identifying the catalysts and barriers to innovation based on firsthand experiences. Allowing participants to share their actual experiences helped confirm and understand their beliefs and perspectives from the previous questions. The interview ended with Question 11, which allowed the participant to share their thoughts and ideas regarding innovation in S&I. This question allowed not only a conclusion to the previous questions but also an opportunity for participants to produce recommendations that could be explored in practice, policy, and theory.

Interview Data Analysis Plan

Moustakas (1994) and Saldaña (2021) suggestions guided data analysis plans for all data sources in the current study. Each individual interview was recorded to obtain participants' responses word-for-word. The next step entailed transcribing and collating the recordings. I used NVivo to assess the responses and formulate codes and themes. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software used to organize data from text or multimedia information. I used this instrument to identify patterns or similarities across participants' responses to arrive at themes. I selected significant statements from participants in line with the topics and the disruptive innovation theory (Christensen, 1997) to support these themes. The corresponding themes helped answer the research questions.

Journal Prompts

Journal prompts further assisted in gathering key statements to describe the lived experiences in this study. Journal prompts differ from individual interviews in that participants can describe their answers carefully in written form. This process allowed participants to carefully choose their descriptions and think more profoundly in their responses. I used the following journal prompt questions:

1. The thought of innovating in S&I makes me feel....
2. The role of the region director to promote innovation in S&I is....
3. The role of the seminary principal to promote innovation in S&I is....
4. The level of trust that I feel from S&I to innovate is....

All journal prompts served as supporting data for the interview and research questions. The first journal prompt supported the CRQ and the first three interview questions. This journal prompt helped generate responses regarding the participants' beliefs, attitudes, and desires

regarding the call to innovate in a culture that may not support it. The second and third journal prompts were parallels to interview questions 7 and 8, and the second research question. I used the fourth and last journal prompt to describe participants' perceptions and feelings toward the organizational culture of S&I in terms of innovation, which is in line with the first research question and interview questions 4-6. Although these journal prompts may appear similar to the interview questions, the allowance of time in answering these questions in written form helped induce more reflection and deeper responses from the participants.

Journal Prompts Data Analysis Plan

Analysis of the journal entries followed that of the interview responses and was guided by Moustakas (1994) and Saldaña (2021). This analysis process entailed encoding and collating all journal entries. I also used NVivo to assess the journal entries together with the interview responses and formulate codes and themes. I used the codes and themes from the journal prompts to support those from the interview responses and to answer the research questions.

Surveys/Questionnaires

The surveys/questionnaires assisted in the process of gathering clarity regarding the phenomenon of interest. Whereas the interview questions and the journal prompts assist in describing the experiences, surveys/questionnaires helped ascertain the stance of the participants regarding the topics. The survey helped triangulate the phenomenon and its descriptions by clearly describing what the experience is. This section yielded a much-needed component to data collection.

Survey/Questionnaire Questions

1. Do you believe there is an urgent need to innovate in S&I? CRQ
2. Do you feel S&I promotes a culture of innovation? SRQ1

3. Do you feel that region directors help innovation to take place? SRQ2
4. Do you feel that seminary principals are uniquely positioned to innovate in their local programs? SRQ2
5. What cogs in the system do you feel exist in reference to S&I promoting innovation?
SRQ3

The survey/questionnaire items served as an introduction to the research questions and the other data collection methods. All items allowed a straightforward answer from participants to determine their positionality regarding innovation in their respective institutions and S&I as a whole. The first item directed the CRQ, the first three interview questions, and the first journal prompt. The second item directed the first research question, interview questions 4-6, and the fourth journal prompt. The third and fourth items directed the second research question, interview questions 7-8, and the second and third journal prompts. The fifth and final item directed the third research question and interview questions 9-11.

Survey/Questionnaire Analysis Plan

I used the survey/questionnaire responses as preliminary data to determine the participants' positionality regarding the research questions. The first four items generated binary data (yes/no), whereas the last item generated nominal data. No quantitative analyses were needed for these data as they were simply used to support the interview and journal entry data. I encoded binary and nominal data in a spreadsheet to demonstrate the participants' positionality. The next step was grouping the nominal data into the corresponding themes from the interview and journal entries to support them. Together, these data helped observe the phenomenon in clearly defined terms.

Data Synthesis

The first step was synthesizing the data collected into a cohesive description of the lived experiences. The analysis of the interviews to obtain key descriptions and common themes (Moustakas, 1994) followed. The approach to processing of journal prompt section of the data collection was similar to that of the interviews. The survey and questionnaire served as a balancing force in the data to ensure that the participants had experienced a common phenomenon. I combined these three elements into a narrative description to triangulate the data collected in a fair manner.

Data Analysis

Coding of all responses occurred as outlined by Moustakas (1994). This analysis also closely followed the outline provided by Saldaña (2021). The first step was transcribing interview data from the recording. I then combined journal and survey data together with the interview data. The software for data cleaning and analysis was NVivo. I thoroughly read, reread, and organized all the data collected, took notes, and developed initial codes with the help of the NVivo software (Saldaña, 2021). I derived the codes from relevant statements and similar words and phrases that indicate key concepts. As the process of coding continued, I developed themes from the emerging patterns. I then refined the themes and aligned them with the research questions. The resulting themes represented the main findings of the study.

Trustworthiness

In this study, data collection methods followed basic qualitative research designs (Moustakas, 1994), which ensured the trustworthiness of the research. Key elements used focused on credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical considerations.

These combined elements helped prove the trustworthiness of data collection, synthesis, and findings.

Credibility

Theoretical triangulation took place based on the different theories and concepts used to guide the study, as Stahl and King (2020) indicated, establishing credibility. These include the disruptive innovation theory (Christensen, 1997) and the concepts of organizational culture and instructional leadership. Peer debriefing also occurred after obtaining and compiling the data, as Stahl and King (2020) suggested. Finally, member checking also ensured credibility. Combining peer debriefing and member-checking helped provide a comprehensive credibility check on the data and the interpretations. These techniques are in accordance with the work from Stahl and King (2020).

Transferability

As I sought to obtain thick descriptions of the phenomenon studied, I accomplished transferability in line with circumstances outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This chapter of the study was vital in providing a detailed outline of the methodologies and interpretive framework that drove this work. Giving detailed descriptions of the approaches undertaken ensured clarity and transferability.

Dependability

An audit from Liberty University occurred to review the data and findings and ensure that dependability had been achieved. This audit served as a meaningful step to ensure that the data and findings were sound and in accordance with the strict qualitative methodology outlined in previous literature (Moustakas, 1994). By establishing dependability, the trustworthiness of this study increased, which assisted in the overall value of this work.

Confirmability

Confirmability for this work followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model of confirmability audits, audit trails, and reflexivity with data and analysis. The triangulation of the data and findings helped establish confirmability. I also acknowledged and reported my role within the research for reflexivity, as Stahl and King (2020) suggested. Establishing confirmability increased and solidified the overall trustworthiness of this study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations within this work centered on the participants and potential challenges within their organizational structure. For example, a seminary principal may face potential risk by describing their lived experience, which may be negative, and have their supervisors know about their critiques. The need to secure anonymity for each participant is paramount for qualitative research, specifically phenomenological studies (Moustakas, 1994). Although the sample comprised no minors, or subgroups of individuals who may be inherently vulnerable, the ethical considerations for this study focused on the power structure of seminary principals within the organization of S&I.

I recruited participants in a snowball approach, following IRB guidelines and institutional procedures as Moustakas (1994) recommended. I also sought formal permission from individual participants. Before their participation, each participant received information clarifying that their participation was confidential and voluntary. The consent form (Appendix D) also contained a detailed explanation of the procedures, including the use of pseudonyms, the recording and encoding of their responses, the secure storage of their data in a password-locked computer or a locked cabinet that only I could access, and deletion of all data 5 years after the completion of the study. Participation in any of the procedures did not commence until the participant signed

and submitted their informed consent form. I stored written copies of all signed consent forms in a secure location together with the data. Participants were free to halt or move on with the interview, or withdraw from the whole study, if they experienced any discomfort or distress.

Permissions

The permission required for this study was IRB approval (Appendix A). Utilizing a snowball approach for participant recruitment required no permissions from S&I leaders for site selection. The permission document for the participants is included in the Appendix C of this work. All permissions followed IRB guidelines and institutional procedures, consistent with Moustakas's, (1994) suggestion.

Summary

This work was rooted in qualitative research design. I sought to describe the experience of instructional leaders as they attempt to innovate within their in their natural setting. As such, a qualitative approach is appropriate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Furthermore, the specific research design adopted for this qualitative study was a transcendental phenomenological approach, as the central feature of the study was to describe instructional leaders' attitudes, beliefs, and desires concerning the phenomena of a call to innovate in an environment that does not support it. The works of Moustakas (1994), Gill (2020), and Urcia (2021) guided this study in a transcendental phenomenological approach. The central feature of the design was a semistructured open-ended interview. The coding and analysis process of Saldaña (2021) guided thematic analysis and the development of the main findings for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the results of findings from the analysis of the data collected from 13 seminary principals who stated their lived experiences regarding innovation in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The problem investigated in this study was that S&I principals have significant reasons to innovate but may be hindered by a culture that is not conducive to innovation where it matters most: the local seminary programs. In recent years, the S&I administration has called for innovation to address the decreasing enrollment percentage trend (Panel Discussion, 2021). The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it.

The central research question was “What are the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of instructional leaders (seminary principals) in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call to innovate in a culture that may not support it?” I also responded to three sub-questions: Sub-Question 1: How do seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints perceive their organizational culture about innovation?; Sub-Question 2: What are the perceptions of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding their own and others' roles in promoting innovation in their program?; and Sub-Question 3: What catalysts and barriers to innovation are perceived by seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

This chapter includes a participant description and a recap of the methodology applied in data collection and analysis before presenting the results. The results are introduced in the order of the research questions. I will then provide the themes that emerged after the study of the data using Giorgi's (1985) protocol. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings, indicating how the researcher responded to the research questions.

Participants

The participants for this study were recruited based if they met the qualifications to participate in this study. They had to have served as a principal during the last few years when a call for innovation was made and be 18 years or older. The following participants come from different seminary programs on the Wasatch front in the state of Utah. They range in experience from nearly thirty years in the seminary program to eight years. The group includes mostly males but does have one woman, this reflects the general demographics in the seminary program.

Bernie

Bernie is a young principal who thinks that it is super important to engage in innovation, indicating that the world is changing so quickly and there is a need to keep up with such. In addition, Bernie noted that the drive to innovate in the seminary is because being innovative in the seminary helps in connecting and effectively teaching, communicating with the students. Failure to do this would make them seek other places where they are accommodated. Bernie is one of the seminary leaders who accepted that they are losing many of the students not because these are bad but because they find information from sources that are not connected to God.

Brent

Brent is one of the seminary principals who accepted that the seminaries are not showing innovative behavior. This principal noted that teachers have a huge role to play in promoting

innovation. He demonstrated a clear understanding of what innovation is, indicating that the mere change of desks and boards does not amount to innovation, but rather adds value to what is already known. The middle-aged Brent also agreed that teachers have a role to play in innovation, and they need to get it right from the definition. Brent believed that being innovative is a personal initiative where one needs to think of how one can be better in certain areas and become independent. This principal also alluded to the need to innovate in the changing world.

Chris

Chris is a middle-aged male principal, who agrees that they are making significant attempts to become innovative within the seminary. However, Chris also noted that there is no clear consensus on what innovation means to them as a seminary. This participant indicated that the issue of innovation, kind of came out 1-2 years ago, and they wrestled with it. The participant noted that they are trying to identify what innovation means to S&I. The participant's assertion that they are "wresting with it," is an indication that they are struggling to become innovative. When asked what the drivers of innovation are, the participant indicated that it is essential when dealing with a different generation. Chris is a strong believer that there is a need to become innovative, talk about it, and share ideas, and opinions. The participant noted that with the changing world, there is a need to do something different.

Gary

Gary is a male principal in his 50s. This participant indicated that innovation is important, yet accepted that they are not innovating at the S&I seminary. The participant was even skeptical that they may not attain their innovative objective. One key barrier to being innovative is the lack of a clear mandate. Gary noted that innovation is driven by the fact that they are mandated by nature and there is a need to do something different from what they are doing. According to the

participant, the world is changing, and the youth are different. The technology change is also a cause for innovation, even in the seminary, as noted by Gary. One of the key barriers that hinder the seminary from being innovative is the lack of a principal's ability to use a budget in the way he sees fit for his program and meet the needs of his students.

Daniel

Daniel, a 46-year-old male principal, thought that the word innovation is sometimes misconstrued. Daniel believed that the word innovation should be used to mean adapting better. In contrast to most of the participants who believed that the seminary is not innovative, Daniel noted that they adapt much better. Daniel believed that the seminary is making adequate efforts to emerge better and adapt to meet the best for the population. Daniel explained that innovation is also necessitated by the desire to adapt to new technology and meet the needs of the population. In the seminary, different cultural dimensions and needs necessitate innovation. In addition, the change in the population demographics also necessitates innovation. To his understanding, innovation does not necessarily mean doing something new but rather adjusting to adapt.

Jacob

Jacob is a 47-year-old male in the seminary who has worked as a principal for the last 12 years. Jacob noted that there is a distinction between being innovative and practicing good teaching practices in the seminary. He is a strong believer that improving the quality of teaching may help in alleviating the need to innovate. Jacob highlighted that the current generation is more techno-savvy and hence there is a need to ensure they do not adopt practices that are against the church. On this note, Jacob emphasized the need to adapt and innovate in response to the changing demographic and environmental landscape. While delving into the practices of the

current and older generation of people, Jacob indicated that access to information has led to a more questioning attitude among the newer generation.

James

James is a middle-aged principal who has been a seminary principal for the last 6 years. James understands that they are not innovative, but they have a strong desire to change and reach out. However, the participant noted that they are making good steps towards innovation. James noted that in the institution there is ambiguity, frustration, and lack of autonomy. The participant noted, "I don't always feel like I'm given the reins and trust to innovate." Another challenge that is associated with being innovative is the struggle to balance innovation and the existing processes. The participant noted that if they want to be innovative, they must be ready to take drastic steps and measures. James also noted that the need to be innovative is based on the rapid changes in the world and hence the need for adaptation. In regard to the urgency of innovation, James noted that due to the contemporary challenges, there is increased urgency.

Toby

Toby is a 43-year-old principal who worked as a principal in the seminary for 4 years. Toby expressed concern that there is confusion and uncertainty relating to the concept of innovation. Toby noted that he has not heard the term innovation in the seminary, noting that the organization should first address the doctrinal mastery. The participants noted that there is complexity and ambiguity relating to innovation. The participants indicated that it is important to be innovative; emphasizing that it would improve training on practical application to effectively address the educational needs and weaknesses in the seminary. The urgency for innovation in the seminary is pegged on the need to accommodate growth in the community.

Luke

Luke is a 52-year-old male principal who has worked in the seminary as a leader for 8 years. Luke expressed that there is a need for innovation, which should be coupled with a proper definition of the boundaries. Luke was particular about the need to show innovation in enrollment and outreach. Concerning the definition, Luke noted that innovation encompasses deviation from the existing structure. As such, this participant indicated that despite being innovative, there is a need to ensure that it does not affect the day-to-day operations. This participant noted that the necessity to change is based on the need to leverage technology. Further, there is a need to innovate in the seminaries to boost enrollment and attendance. The urgency to innovate is due to the reduction in enrollment in the seminaries.

Rupert

Rupert is a 50-year-old male who was in his twelfth year as a principal. This participant embraced innovation, indicating that it is an avenue to address local needs effectively. He emphasized the need to continuously evaluate the established practices. Rupert also highlighted the importance of understanding the rationale behind them to get meaningful change that meets the current needs. Rupert identified several factors as the cause for the urgency of innovation in the seminary. Innovation is also necessitated by the evolving needs of the youth and the ability to enhance their learning experiences. The continued needs of the youth necessitate innovation, and it would be imperative to ensure that they are addressed. The participant said, "I would be open and excited...need to further make changes to meet the needs of youth...ongoing needs to innovate...there's urgency...continuing to make changes to meet the needs...further things to further meet the needs of the youth." The participant has a passion for innovation to address the changing needs of the youthful students and enhance enrollment.

Matt

Matt is a middle-aged man, who has served as a principal for 5 years. Matt is seen as a key player who is deeply connected to the local needs of the seminary, necessitating innovation. The principal stressed the need for innovation, stating that it is suited to navigate and provide responses to the varying needs of the youthful population. Concerning the urgency of innovation, the need to be competent in the assignment among the students necessitates rapid action. The participant also believed that the desire to meet the needs of the students, faculty, and the community led to urgency in innovation. The participant was candid in noting that the need to have greater competence among the students promoted the need for innovation. The participant also noted that innovation requires being sensitive to the local circumstances and broader objectives.

Kaylie

Kaylie is a 37-year-old participant with 5 years of experience working as a seminary principal. The participant underscored the importance of innovation in the education context, noting that it positively impacts the organization and individuals. The participant indicated that innovation is tied to the ability of teachers to bring the best for the learners. The participant indicated that innovation means enhancing the teaching experience, engaging with students effectively, and conveying ideas more compellingly and creatively. The participant further noted that innovation is portrayed as an avenue for seminary teachers to foster a deeper connection with the students and ultimately enhance their learning beyond the conventional methods. This meant going beyond normal routine and seeking better approaches that benefit learners and institutions. The participant noted an urgent need for innovation due to the decline in the rate of student enrollment in the seminaries.

Pete

This 49-year-old principal has worked as a principal for 3 years. The participant noted that innovation is thinking outside the box, stating, "The thing that comes to mind is that innovating is like thinking outside the box, including others. Is that what it is? I don't mind us I don't know if I've ever heard that term." The participant opined that even though they have not yet been innovative, they are making significant efforts. The participant said that they are trying to get there. The participant said he felt that they are trying to do it with students, and getting better at it with students. Regarding the need for innovation, Pete strongly believes that the seminaries should show innovation. The participant stated that he felt like they are so far behind and need to do many things for employees who need to be brought to order. The urgency for innovation is based on dwindling numbers of enrollees in the seminaries.

Results

The analysis of the interviews followed Giorgi's (1985) protocol, which led to the realization of eight themes that responded to the central research question and the sub-questions. This research was a transcendental phenomenological study following the six steps suggested by Giorgi (1985). In the first step, I reached the sense of the whole statement from the participants. This process entailed reading the entire description from the participant to develop a general idea of the whole statement. I read the texts freely to grasp the statements as a whole. The second step was the discrimination of the meaning units focusing on the phenomenon to be studied. Having captured the essence of the whole statement, I started to read the text, focusing on the specific aim of discriminating meaning units that are focused on the phenomenon being studied, the lived experiences of seminary principals. The third step encompassed the transformation of everyday expression into an appropriate language in the context of the phenomenon being studied. In this

process, I developed meaning units from the statements through a coding process aided by using *vivo*. This process also entailed reflection and imaginative variation. In the third step, I regrouped the meaning units by clustering them to have a fuller understanding of the responses from an interviewee. In the fourth step, I transformed the meaning units into descriptive expressions, regarded as emergent themes. This process entailed understanding, making judgments on the relevance, and organizing the constituents coherently regarding the described experience. In the fifth step, I synthesized and integrated the findings. This entailed synthesizing the convergent and divergent responses regarding the phenomenon under study. Table 1 shows a summary of the meaning units and the respective themes.

Table 1

Meaning Units and Themes

Research Question	Meaning units	Participants	Theme
What catalysts and barriers to innovation are perceived by seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?	Lack of clarity in vision	6	Lack of clarity and vision is a barrier to innovation, as perceived by seminary principals.
	Resistance from other leaders and stakeholders	8	Principals face resistance from their superiors in innovation
	Proper guidance and recognition of other stakeholders	6	Proper guidance and recognition of other stakeholders promotes innovation in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
	Involvement and Communication among stakeholders	8	Effective Communication and involvement of other stakeholders is a catalyst perceived by the Seminary in promoting innovation.

a hierarchical organizational structure. Different meaning units were clustered to form this theme. The meaning units included philosophical-based, bound innovation, leader-centric, and policy-based. This theme comprised a cluster of meaning units that represented the hierarchical organization structure.

Luke indicated that the organization demonstrated a bounded innovation culture where seminary principals were restricted in how they acted. Luke said, "I feel like there's kind of a promotion of that culture of innovation, innovation within bounds in the sense that, like shame. They will ask me to put together a plan for how we are going to do recruitment." On a different dimension, nine participants indicated that leaders and administrators influenced the innovation culture they demonstrated in the organization. For example, Matt explained how restricted he was by the leader and even pushed back,

I specifically remember times when I would sit in a Region Council. We would be given very clear direction that we were supposed to do something we were expected to do. It wasn't, what do you think? It is that you should do this. I would go back, take it to my program, and try to implement it with faith, trust, encouragement, and optimism, and not speak anything negatively. And I would hear some pushback from those I worked with.

Like Matt's sentiment, Pete demonstrated that a top-down approach was evident in the organization. The participant said,

Then we toured the three areas in the Salt Lake Valley, and 2 of them accepted the desire to teach the principals how we taught him. We went to the third area, we taught it, and then the area director said, we are not going to do this and shut it all down. And I asked him, how come? We are not going to do that, he says, because it is not coming from the top down.

Daniel also resonated with Pete on the issue of the top-down approach when he said, "I think S&I is very innovative-minded from the top like they want to innovate from the top." Due to the leader-based organizational culture, sometimes even the leaders would hinder innovation, as narrated by James, who said,

It was kind of cumbersome to show up change for, you know, change my clothes for a couple of hours and then ... so I was dressed like I was going to play with the youth. Still, my director showed up, and instead of telling me right then hey, this is good that you're trying something new. Let us see how it goes. Let me know how you feel about it. He just looked me up and down and then sent me a passive-aggressive e-mail the next day telling me that I needed to dress appropriately.

The hierarchical nature of the organizational structure at S&I was demonstrated by the huge reliance on policies and regulations. Nine participants espoused this view; they explained their experiences and perspectives that showed support for regulations and policies in decision-making. Brent explained how rules and regulation affected innovation, saying,

But because of rules and laws, or whatever have you? I? They seem to be pretty hesitant in, and things I know of teachers that have come up with some ideas, and they got their hands slapped pretty hard, only to have those ideas come back around about five years later.

Similarly, James noted that the leaders were prescriptive on what to do. James said, "Then they ask you to innovate. Here's how it is: they ask you to innovate, and then they prescriptively tell you how instead of being able to be a little more agile."

This theme presented the lived experience of seminary principals who explained how their organization showed a hierarchical-based organizational culture. This culture was

demonstrated using a top-down approach to innovation, being leader-centric, using rules and regulations, and being philosophical. The theme addressed the first Sub-question by describing the lived experiences of seminary principals concerning the organizational culture applied.

Theme 2: Principals Perceive that they Apply Conventional Organizational Culture for Innovation

Ten of the 13 participants contributed to this theme. They indicated that S&I still demonstrated the use of conventional traditional old cultures. The conventional ancient cultures encompass a cluster of the following meaning units, defined as the old ways of doing things, rigidity to change, conformity, and restrictions to innovation. From the participants' responses regarding their experiences, it was evident that, indeed, there was reluctance to deviate from the old way of doing things. Matt indicated that there was a feeling of conformity. He said, "I feel like they're more maybe worried about people conforming. I do not know exactly why. I maybe it's, you know, they feel like there's safety and doing what we've done and staying with traditional." Similarly, six participants whose statements contradict Matt's view indicated that the organization's leaders and employees had an old mentality. For instance, Daniel said, "What I just said is that there are a lot of people just kind of stuck in the ways, we have always done it this way. I think S&I is viewed as a being a very conservative organization." Jacob narrated,

I think that tradition, we stick to that very much is a seminary teacher who has been part of the process. I think maybe a lot of our leadership and staff were there. We see these different generations of teachers come in, and, this is how it has always been done.

Talking of the old ways, Luke said,

Maybe the old way works well enough where we are. So I am not under the impression that, oh, some innovation is just desperately needed in Seminary. Do you know what I

mean? Other than maybe? You know the church's overall vision to bring the world as truth. Sure, you know, like, perhaps there is more to be done there. But yeah, I do not know.

Participants expressed restrictions to remain in the old ways and hence limiting innovation. For example, Pete said,

Suppose you try to do something innovative. You either do it quietly to see if it'll work so you don't get in trouble, or you do, you need to know some protocols. It would help if you saw some broadcast of our leadership.

To demonstrate the conventional culture evidenced at S&I, three participants indicated that the rigidity exhibited in the organization hindered innovation. For example, Rupert said,

And so I try to find a balance in alignment and being innovative in adapting some directives to the local need when the way it's presented or at least the way I perceive it's presented. There was no flexibility or room for adaptation or innovation.

This theme represented the lived experiences of the seminary principals who noted that the organization demonstrated a conventional traditional culture. The theme was an aggregation of the following meaning units: rigidity, conformity, the old way of doing things, and restrictions hindering innovation. Ten participants contributed to this theme, making a strong theme that addressed to the first sub-question.

Theme 3: Principals Role to Evaluate Existing Practices and Needs for Innovation and Promote Better Collaboration

Four participants contributed to this theme. The theme emerged from a cluster of two major meaning units that led to the formation of this descriptive expression. The first meaning

unit was that the seminary principal evaluated existing practices to determine the need for innovation. For example, Rupert said,

I'm personally making some little changes so that I can try to meet some needs, and I feel like I may be a little bit out of alignment. But it is a significant local need, significant enough local need that I'm trying hard to meet the needs in this area.

Similarly, talking about understanding the needs of the people in Seminary, Daniel said,

And so I felt my role was to make sure that I understood. I called downtown. I had an interview via Zoom, and I talked to HR. My job was to understand as clearly as I could what professional development is and communicate that to teachers. So they feel like they understand when they understand. And sometimes that takes an individual going through.

Concerning facilitating collaboration, Luke said,

And so using that same messaging thing, you know, compiling numbers and then reaching out to parents, like again, I feel like that is an example of a welcome innovation to be able to stay on top of enrollment needs and communicate with parents and to help them get those scheduled changes made, and it did.

Four participants contributed to this theme. The theme was a cluster of two related meaningful units: the evaluation of the innovation needs and the facilitation of collaboration between various groups in the seminary. This theme represented the experiences of participants when they evaluated gaps to identify areas that need innovation, such as low enrollment, and subsequently promoted collaboration to reverse the situation.

Theme 4: The Role of the Region Director to Support in Promoting Innovation

Eight participants contributed to this theme. They noted that region directors support the seminary principals in various ways to enhance innovation. This theme was developed by clustering two meaning units: approval and decision-making, and facilitating seminary principals. Two participants indicated that the region directors were engaged in approving and making decisions. Concerning decision-making, Daniel said, "I think if a region director has much other than their role of setting parameters and either giving you the go-ahead or telling you to pull back." Kaylie also commented on their role in decision-making, saying, "There are only so many budget things. But it's still so weird that we have to have liked everything approved through a region director, and I'm like they're not here all the time, they don't know."

Regarding the second meaning unit, I identified the various ways that the region director supported innovation. For example, Chris noted that they engaged in conversation with the region director on how to do things better:

I think my new regional director is good. We are having conversations. What are you doing differently? What have you tried? Different ideas to get the kids out gathering? They're talking. We are talking more about gathering places. The emphasis on teaching is almost taking a back seat to gathering and being together in activity, which I think is the start.

Another form of facilitation was the provision of resources, as noted by Toby:

And what can we do to get it to happen and ensure that their ideas and their desires are met with resources and resources and encouragement? I push back on everything to say, here's a potential thing here. Here is a concern I have here. But if you can justify to me

why this is not going to be a problem for me. Administratively, I want to support you with resources, he has come back, and others have come back with all kinds of things.

This theme was a cluster of various meaning units that represented the lived experiences of the seminary principals. The theme covered multiple forms of support and decision-making that the regional director undertook. The notable meaning units that were clustered to develop the descriptive statement here were approval, decision-making, and providing support to seminary principals.

Theme 5: Lack of Clarity and Vision is a Barrier to Innovation

Six participants contributed to this theme, noting a clear vision on what to do was lacking in S&I. This theme was developed directly from the initial codes that were developed into meaningful units before the development of the descriptive statements. Taking of lack of clarity, Chris said,

I think we are trying, but I do not. I think we are confused more than anything, you know. What is that? Every time you ask somebody, they say, well, try to fail. What does that mean? Am I trying? I do not have a clear understanding of what we are trying to do. But the need is there. I know that with this rising generation, but it is not clear.

Jacob also talked of the lack of clarity, saying,

How much do they want? That is when I used that mandate at the beginning about innovating for me; that seems so broad. I do not even know where to begin. I do not even know where they want to go with that.

Similarly, Toby talked of a lack of clarity in vision, saying,

I think where we inhibit it is that we don't give enough vision that these things are possible. I don't think that we give the message intently to say if you guys feel like you want to try this, go for it.

Six participants identified this theme, indicating that clarity on issues relating to innovation was lacking. This was a major theme that was identified from a single-meaning unit: lack of transparency and vision. From this theme, participants noted that S&I may not innovate effectively because the leaders do not share the image and expected undertakings with clarity.

Theme 6: Seminary Principals Face Resistance from Their Superiors in Innovation

Eight participants identified this theme who noted that resistance from other stakeholders was a major barrier to innovation at S & I. This theme was developed from one meaningful unit (resistance), indicating that it was a major issue in S&I. Participants indicated facing resistance from leaders and other stakeholders. For instance, Bernie said, "I've got to be careful there most of the time when I would try something new or different. It was it was met with resistance."

Brent gave an example of the resistance that they faced, saying,

We piloted Apple TV boxes in my class, we had them going and kids were doing all kinds of things. They said, well, we're not ready to go that route yet. We need to back off only to have, like a few years later, say, hey, we are putting Apple TVs and smart TVs in all the classrooms. And we are like, but we had tried and you refused. I think you would have found out that we would be farther ahead than we currently are.

The experience of Chris also showed resistance:

Well, I think we hinder it. You know we talk about it. A year or two ago, I had a sharp seminary faculty, and so we were asked to share some thoughts. We had the things we were doing differently with scriptures and kids, and as we did that, my faculty and I were

pleased with how it went, but the way it was received, we were mocked. There were some comments. So I think, any time we think outside the box and share, you know, I will be a little hesitant to share some ideas cause of the way that was received over the summer.

Daniel also confirmed the issue of resistance from teachers, especially those of higher age:

Teachers, the natural reaction is to resist a little bit. Among the older teachers, who have been around. I have even had one or two here because they have done something for a long time, and they are a good teacher. They do not feel a need to change, and they have a difficult time going, why should I change? And so there is some resistance from teachers.

This theme represented the experiences in which seminary principals faced resistance.

The resistance was emanating from leaders and teachers. This theme was a major theme because eight participants indicated having experienced resistance. The theme provides one barrier that is hindering the attainment of innovation at S&I.

Theme 7: Effective Communication and Involvement of Other Stakeholders is a Catalyst in Promoting Innovation

This theme represented the responses from participants that with effective communication between stakeholders at the S&I, there would be greater innovation. Eight seminary principals contributed to this theme. This theme was developed from two major meaning units: involvement of employees and listening to stakeholders.

Concerning the involvement of employees, Daniel narrated how effectively communicated and engaged teachers:

We requested I have two teachers that have a little lighter load, one with 5 stakes and one with 4, then I have one, and we spend a significant amount of time communicating with stakes. They are the only person that communicates with that stake at all. Anything we send gets sent by them. We put it together, and then we format how we want to say it. But that representative sends everything to that stake.

Jacob also narrated how they involve others in planning:

Can we plan something during this time, or after school, or resort to the way we always have to resort to? We have to stay strictly to what we have been told with this. Where are those things? Where can we? Where can we break with that culture and be OK?

Gary and other participants noted how they listened and sought feedback from other participants to catalyze innovation. Gary said,

We have put in just chairs. We have tried to create a culture of asking questions. We were meeting the students, and they were letting them know. That is our focus. That all of that has been very successful. And when I did a survey, I got feedback from the students last year on it across the board. The students loved the new classroom environment. They loved the new direction and what we were trying to do.

Similarly, James noted the need to value and acknowledge employees:

I think the very first thing is to value and acknowledge employees. When you have somebody in front of you who honestly has an idea, they ought to be heard. It does not matter how stupid the idea is, and it needs to be heard because you never know what kind of encouragement hearing this of the person does with the notion that three or four ideas away from actually showing up, that idea might be the golden one.

Eight participants identified this theme who noted the need to involve other stakeholders and communicate effectively with them as a catalyst for innovation. This theme was developed after clustering two meaning units: involving different stakeholders and listening to each other. This theme addressed the second research question by providing a key catalyst for enabling innovation.

Theme 8: Proper Guidance and Recognition Of Other Stakeholders Promote Innovation

This theme represented the lived experiences that the provision of guidance and recognizing other stakeholders would help to catalyze innovation. The theme was developed from two meaning units: proper guidance, collaboration, and recognition of different stakeholders.

Concerning proper guidance, participants noted that if appropriate guidelines were offered to them and teachers, it would be easier to innovate. For example, Jacob pointed out that the provision of a policy manual would help in catalyzing innovation. Jacob said,

Well, the policy manual says this, and then like, oh, you are right, then we are feeling restricted. So greater lines of Hey, we know this is where the policy manual says this, this is where we think you could take it and go from there so that distinction of where we're allowed to open up at and where to try it. So I think that the culture of what we are doing is OK.

Similarly, Matt noted the need to have a clear vision:

If that region director has an idea and allows, you know, will enable programs, will help principals to feel freedom. To make changes, to innovate, to do new things that, like, unleashes it in my mind, but I do not think like that. Freedom is felt.

Toby and two other seminary principals noted the importance of recognizing and

encouraging employees to become innovative. Toby said,

He addressed with me some boundaries where he said, be careful of this, but I felt like, man, I had all the support in the world. So I think with many of the come-and-see things that we have tried, the cautions have just been, make sure that the Board of Education knows about it, and that they understand what you are doing, and that we are not trying to compete, but be a resource and so go for it. I felt the availability to do some unique, fun things.

Similarly, James noted that there is a need for leaders not to condemn failures in innovation but rather encourage them. James said,

When I have tried things in poor classrooms, but it's a one-time like, oh let's try something new ... let's try something new, and that's the nature of innovation means creating, I don't know, what a thousand ways how not to make a light bulb until you make one so the nature of trying new things means someone they're going to fall on their face and it's the role of every leader in S and I to create an environment where that is OK, man it's OK, that you messed up that class that's fine losing means learning.

This theme represented the perspectives and lived experiences of the participants who noted that through proper guidance and recognition of other stakeholders, it is possible to promote innovation in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This theme was developed from two meaning units: proper guidance, collaboration, and recognition of other stakeholders. The theme included ways that organizations can catalyze innovation, hence responding to the third research question.

Research Question Responses

The analysis led to the emergence of eight themes. The lack of clarity and vision is a barrier to innovation, as perceived by seminary principals. In addition, principals face resistance from their superiors in innovation. Proper guidance and recognition of other stakeholders promotes innovation in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Effective communication and involvement of other stakeholders is a catalyst, as perceived by the seminary principals, in promoting innovation. Seminary principals perceived that they apply conventional organizational culture for innovation. Further, they perceive that they apply a hierarchical organizational culture for innovation. In addition, the role of seminary principals includes evaluating existing practices and needs for innovation and promoting better collaboration. The role of the regional director is to support seminary principals in promoting innovation.

Central Research Question

The central research question was “What are the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of instructional leaders (seminary principals) in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call to innovate in a culture that may not support it?” Several themes addressed this question. For example, regarding the beliefs, participants believed that a lack of clarity and vision is a barrier to innovation. They also believed that principals face resistance from their superiors in innovation. Participants also believed that two major catalysts that promote innovation are (a) proper guidance and recognition of other stakeholders and (b) effective communication and involvement of other stakeholders. Seminary principals also showed the attitude that they have towards applying conventional organizational culture as a method of fostering innovation. They are also inclined to use a hierarchical

organizational culture for promoting innovation. Seminary principals desire to be involved in evaluating existing practices and needs for innovation and promoting better collaboration. They also desire the regional director to support seminary principals in promoting innovation.

Sub-Question One

The first sub-question was “How do seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints perceive their organizational culture about innovation?” In this research question, the researcher sought to understand the lived experiences of the seminary principals on their perception of the organizational culture regarding innovation. From the analysis results, two themes were identified. The first response to this question was that seminary principals perceive that they apply hierarchical corporate culture for innovation, which means that seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints apply a hierarchical organizational structure. In response to this sub-question, Matt said how the organization showed a hierarchical structure:

Then we toured the three areas in the Salt Lake Valley, and two of them accepted the desire to teach the principals how we taught him. We went to the third area, we taught it, and then the area director said, we are not going to do this and shut it all down. And I asked him, how come? We are not going to do that, he says, because it is not coming from the top down.

Another organizational culture that emerged was the use of conventional organizational culture for creation, which suggests that seminary principals follow the conventional ancient cultures. This finding is supported by some of the participants such as Jacob who narrated the reliance on traditions. He said:

I think that tradition, we stick to that, very much, is a seminary teacher has done who has been part of the process. I think maybe a lot of our leadership and staff were there. We see these different generations of teachers come in, and, this is how it has always been done.

The participants showed that they followed both a hierarchical and conventional culture. Although the participants were interested in understanding the organizational culture that was evident, the responses from the seminary principals portrayed both hierarchical and conventional cultures. The two themes addressed the first sub-question.

Sub-Question Two

The second sub-question was “What are the perceptions of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding their own and others' roles in promoting innovation in their program?” In this research question, I was interested in understanding the lived experiences of participants on the roles of the seminary principals and that of others. The first theme that addressed this research question was that it is the role of seminary principals to evaluate existing practices and needs for innovation. In response to this research question, participants explained that in their lived experience, they found that it is the role of seminary principals to conduct a proper evaluation of the existing practices and needs for innovation. For example, Luke said,

And so using that same messaging thing, you know, compiling numbers and then reaching out to parents, like again, I feel like that is an example of a welcome innovation to be able to stay on top of enrollment needs and communicate with parents and to help them get those scheduled changes made, and it did.

Another experience the participants shared thereby responding to the second sub-question was that it is the role of the regional director to support seminary principals in promoting innovation. Under this research question, participants indicated that in their experiences as seminary principals, they perceived that the regional director should support the seminary principals in promoting innovation. For example, Chris noted,

I think my new regional director is good. We are having conversations. What are you doing differently? What have you tried? Different ideas to get the kids out gathering? They are talking. We are talking more about gathering places. The emphasis on teaching is almost taking a back seat to gathering and being together in activity, which I think is the start.

These two themes captured the perceptions of the seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding their roles and those of others in promoting innovation in their program. The role of the seminary principals was to conduct a proper evaluation of the existing practices and needs for innovation. On the other hand, it also emerged that it is the role of the regional director to support seminary principals in promoting innovation. These two responses addressed the second research question.

Sub-Question Three

The third sub-research question was “What catalysts and barriers to innovation are perceived by seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?” Regarding Sub-question 3, the researcher was interested in understanding the catalysts and barriers to innovation based on the lived experiences of the seminary principals. This research question had two components: barriers and catalysts to innovation.

Regarding barriers, the analysis revealed that a lack of clarity and vision is a barrier to innovation as perceived by seminary principals. This theme meant that seminary principals faced a challenge characterized by a lack of clarity and vision, thereby hindering them from being innovative. On this point, Chris said,

I think we are trying, but I do not. I think we are confused more than anything, you know. What is that? Every time you ask somebody, they say, well, try to fail. What does that mean? Am I trying? I do not have a clear understanding of what we are trying to do. But the need is there. I know that with this rising generation, but it is not clear.

Another barrier identified from the analysis was the resistance and lack of adequate support by their superiors in innovation. For example, Daniel stated facing resistance in an innovative journey. Daniel said,

Teachers, the natural reaction is to resist a little bit. Among the older teachers, who have been around. I have even had one or two here because they have done something for a long time, and they are a good teacher. They do not feel a need to change, and they have a difficult time going, why should I change? And so there is some resistance from teachers.

Two themes emerged as barriers to innovation. The two barriers were the lack of clarity and vision by the different stakeholders and resistance and the lack of support from superiors. As the two themes provided key barriers that participants faced in promoting innovation, they addressed to the second research question.

To respond to the third research question, the analysis results showed that proper communication between stakeholders is a catalyst perceived by the seminary in promoting innovation. This theme meant that when seminary principals engaged in proper communication

with other stakeholders, they promoted innovation. An example of one of the participants who showed this was Gary. Gary explained that creating an avenue where students could ask questions would help in promoting innovation:

We have put in just chairs. We have tried to create a culture of asking questions. We were meeting the students, and they were letting them know. That is our focus. That all of that has been very successful. And when I did a survey, I got feedback from the students last year on it across the board. The students loved the new classroom environment. They loved the new direction and what we were trying to do.

A second catalyst that emerged from the thematic analysis was the use of proper guidance, recognition, and collaboration to promote innovation in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This finding meant that with the provision of proper guidance and recognition for other stakeholders including the employees, it is possible to promote innovation. For example, Toby noted,

He addressed with me some boundaries where he said, be careful of this, but I felt like, man, I had all the support in the world. So I think with many of the come-and-see things that we have tried, the cautions have just been, make sure that the Board of Education knows about it, and that they understand what you are doing, and that we are not trying to compete, but be a resource and so go for it. I felt the availability to do some unique, fun things.

These two responses provided responses relating to the catalysts that could help in promoting innovation. The two catalysts are (a) proper guidance and recognition of other stakeholders and (b) effective communication and involvement of other stakeholders. These two catalysts addressed the third sub-question.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it. I collected data using interviews and analyzed the data using Giorgi's (1985) method to respond to three research questions. Regarding “Sub-Question One: How do seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints perceive their organizational culture about innovation?” two themes emerged that demonstrated the corporate cultures. These are Theme 1: Seminary principals perceive that they apply hierarchical organizational culture for innovation and Theme 2: Seminary principals perceive that they use convectional organizational culture for innovation.

Regarding “Sub-Question Two: What are the perceptions of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding their own and others' roles in promoting innovation in their program?” two themes also emerged. These are Theme 3: It is the role of seminary principals to evaluate existing practices and needs for innovation and promote better collaboration and Theme 4: It is the role of the regional director to support seminary principals in promoting innovation.

For Sub-Question 3, I sought to understand how seminary principals perceive catalysts and barriers to innovation in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I identified two barriers: (a) the lack of clarity and vision is a barrier to innovation as perceived by seminary principals and (b) seminary principals face resistance and is not adequately supported by their superiors in innovation. I also identified two catalysts that promote innovation: (a) effective communication and involvement of other stakeholders and (b)

proper guidance and recognition of different stakeholders in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it. The lived experiences of seminary principals in this context were the phenomenon studied. The results revealed eight themes that will be analyzed and discussed in this chapter. The chapter consists of the following sections: (a) an overview of the chapter, (b) a summary of the findings, (c) a discussion of the findings and the implications in light of the relevant literature and theory, (d) an implications section (methodological and practical), (e) the study delimitations and limitations, and (f) recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it. The nature of the findings necessitates that distinct sections be organized for the discussion. The Discussion section is organized into three sub-sections: Summary of Thematic Findings, Interpretation of Findings, Implications for Policy and Practice, Empirical and Theoretical Implications, Limitations and Delimitations, and Recommendations for Future Research. Each section is addressed individually below.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The key findings from this study in the context of innovation in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reveal a complex landscape.

Seminary principals hold diverse beliefs, attitudes, and desires concerning innovation within their programs, with the overarching challenge being that they are called to innovate in an environment that may only partially support such changes. These findings underscore the complex nature of innovation within religious education and the need for an innovative approach to address the intricate interplay of cultural, organizational, and leadership factors affecting the introduction of innovative practices in seminary programs.

Two distinct themes emerged in response to Sub-Question 1 about how seminary principals perceived their organizational culture regarding innovation. Theme 1 reveals that seminary principals view their organizational culture as primarily hierarchical, indicating a structured and top-down approach to innovation. This hierarchical approach suggests that decisions and directives may predominantly originate from higher authorities within the organization, which could impact the autonomy of seminary principals in driving innovative practices. In contrast, Theme 2 highlights that seminary principals also use a conventional organizational culture where established and traditional practices are upheld. The presence of a conventional culture implies a preference for adhering to well-established methods, potentially posing a challenge to the introduction of novel and innovative approaches within their programs.

Two key themes emerged that addressed Sub-Question 2, which focused on the perceptions of seminary principals regarding their own and others' roles in promoting innovation. Theme 3 indicated that seminary principals evaluate existing practices, recognize the need for innovation, and foster better collaboration within their programs. This revelation suggests that seminary principals understand the importance of their active involvement in identifying areas for improvement and promoting innovative solutions. Theme 4 suggests that regional directors play a pivotal role in supporting seminary principals in their efforts to promote innovation. This

theme underscores the significance of leadership at higher organizational levels in providing guidance and support to seminary principals and facilitating the implementation of innovative practices.

Two notable barriers emerged for Sub-Question 3, which focused on how seminary principals perceive catalysts and barriers to innovation. First, seminary principals expressed that a program that lacks clarity and vision significantly hinders innovation. This lack of clarity may result in uncertainty regarding the direction and goals of innovation initiatives, potentially hindering their progress. Additionally, they lack support from their superiors, obstructing their innovative endeavors. The resistance from higher authorities can create challenges for seminary principals as they attempt to introduce and sustain innovative practices, potentially due to conflicts in priorities or perspectives on the direction of innovation.

On the other hand, two catalysts were identified as promoting innovation in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The first catalyst involves effective communication and active involvement of various stakeholders in the innovation process. Effective communication and stakeholder engagement promote collaboration and shared understanding, facilitating the successful implementation of innovative ideas. The second catalyst pertains to the importance of providing proper guidance and recognition to different stakeholders, facilitating a more supportive environment for innovation. Acknowledging and valuing the contributions of various stakeholders creates an atmosphere that encourages and sustains innovative practices by recognizing the efforts of those involved.

Interpretation of Findings

Theme 1: Seminary Principals Perceive That They Apply Hierarchical Organizational Culture

For Innovation

This theme reflects the experiences of seminary principals in the context of released-time seminary programs within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where they predominantly apply a hierarchical organizational structure. This theme emerged based on clustering various meaning units, such as philosophical-based, bound innovation, leader-centric, and policy-based elements. Collectively, according to Zeb et al. (2021), these meaning units indicated the presence of a hierarchical organizational culture. This perception by seminary principals aligns with the characteristics of hierarchical culture, as described in the reviewed literature, where it is typified by internal focus and stability (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Organizations often emphasize strict adherence to established rules, regulations, and norms in hierarchical structures and cultures, prioritizing internal consistency, efficiency, and well-defined procedures.

The hierarchical organizational structure may pose a challenge in supporting innovations. The findings from the current study indicate that aligning with a hierarchical culture may not foster innovation, as reported previously (Cai et al., 2021; Zeb et al., 2021). These findings are consistent with the challenges associated with hierarchical cultures in the broader organizational literature. The dominance of established norms and the emphasis on internal stability can hinder creative thinking and flexible decision-making due to increased change resistance to change (Cai et al., 2021). The theme highlights the potential barriers to innovation within an organizational culture that strongly emphasizes internal control and stability. It underscores the need for adaptation to create an environment that encourages innovation, especially in the unique context of seminary programs in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Theme 2: Seminary Principals Perceive That They Apply Conventional Organizational

Culture for Innovation

The participants' responses regarding their experiences indicate that there was reluctance to deviate from the old way of doing things. The conventional ancient cultures encompass a cluster of the following meaning units: the old ways of doing things, rigidity to change, conformity, and restrictions to innovation (Ferguson, 2020). The second theme, which highlights the perception of seminary principals regarding conventional organizational culture for innovation, resonates with the broader concept of organizational culture development outlined in the literature.

The study's findings suggest that seminary principals view their environment as being characterized by a conventional organizational culture regarding innovation. This alignment is consistent with the idea that organizations tend to develop patterns of behavior that are perceived as effective and subsequently shared across the organization, eventually forming the organizational culture (Ferguson, 2020). Within this cultural framework, organizations adopt specific values, symbols, and assumptions that become integral components of their culture (Ziaei Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020). This alignment between the study's findings and the literature underscores the idea that established norms and conventional practices shape the organizational culture perceived by seminary principals.

It is essential, however, to note that although this conventional culture may have some benefits regarding stability and order, it may also pose challenges. For instance, when fostering innovation, established cultures can be resistant to change and less adaptable to new, creative ideas (Ferguson, 2020; Ziaei Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020). Thus, the findings suggest that within the context of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' released-time seminary programs, there may be a need to carefully examine and, if necessary, adapt the conventional aspects of the organizational culture to create a more innovation-friendly environment.

Again, although researchers have associated conventional organizational culture with established values and shared norms that may not be conducive to innovation (Ferguson, 2020; Ziaei Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020), the findings from the current study suggest that some seminary principals perceive a conventional organizational culture as ideal for innovation. This contrast highlights a potential divergence between the expectations based on literature and the actual organizational culture within the context of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Theme 3: Role to Evaluate Existing Practices And Needs For Innovation And Promote Better Collaboration

The third theme, which addressed the role of seminary principals in promoting innovation, aligns with the literature's emphasis on empowerment and support within organizations. Alonazi (2021) made similar claims. The study's findings suggest that seminary principals play a vital role in evaluating existing practices and identifying the need for innovation. This revelation resonates with the broader concept of fostering a learning culture conducive to innovation (Alonazi, 2021). It is well documented that empowerment and support for members are crucial in creating a learning culture that promotes innovation (Alonazi, 2021; Ferguson, 2020). This alignment underscores the importance of seminary principals empowering and supporting their team members to foster an environment where knowledge-sharing and innovative thinking are encouraged.

Furthermore, the literature underscores the need for organizations to balance empowerment and accountability. This balance is required to facilitate knowledge sharing and innovation (Covarrubias et al., 2021). The study's findings, which highlight the role of seminary principals in evaluating practices and promoting collaboration, align with this concept. In conclusion, the alignment between the study's findings and the literature emphasizes the

importance of seminary principals' role in creating an environment that encourages innovation. By providing empowerment, support, and a balance between empowerment and accountability, seminary principals can contribute to developing a learning culture that fosters innovation in the context of released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Theme 4: The Regional Director's Role Is To Support Seminary Principals In Promoting Innovation

The fourth theme focused on the role of regional directors in supporting innovation. The results aligned with the broader concept that organizational leaders must understand the organizational culture to facilitate a smooth implementation of innovations (Rahman et al., 2020). The study's findings concur with those of Ziaei Nafchi and Mohelská (2020) by emphasizing that it is the responsibility of regional directors to support seminary principals in promoting innovation within the context of released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This alignment underscores leadership's critical role in shaping the organizational culture and ensuring that innovations are effectively embraced and implemented, as Heinze and Heinze (2020) found. In summary, the study's findings reinforce the idea that leadership support and understanding of the organizational culture are essential for fostering innovation in the given context.

The study indicates that the role of regional directors is to support seminary principals in promoting innovation. The findings contradict some of the literature, emphasizing the importance of leadership understanding organizational culture to ensure that innovations are carried out smoothly (Rahman et al., 2020). In the study's context, this contradiction means that regional directors are more active in innovation support. It suggests a nuanced perspective on the leadership dynamics that drive innovation within this specific organization.

Theme 5- Lack of Clarity and Vision is a Barrier to Innovation, as Perceived by Seminary Principals

The fifth theme highlights the need for more clarity and vision as a barrier to innovation. Unclear roles and poor vision emerged as challenging innovations at the seminary. Therefore, it resonates with the broader idea that stable cultures, such as the hierarchical culture, can pose hindrances to organizational innovation (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Zeb et al., 2021). This theme underscores the significance of maintaining organizational framework strength and timing balance to effectively promote innovation (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2022). This alignment between the study's findings and the literature suggests that a lack of clarity and vision within the organizational culture can impede innovative thinking and creative decision-making. In environments where culture tends to influence stability and adherence to established norms, the absence of a clear, forward-looking vision can hinder innovation. This theme underscores the importance of fostering a culture in which clear roles are valued and a shared vision and clarity are actively promoted to drive innovation forward.

Theme 6: Seminary Principals Face Resistance From Their Superiors in Innovation

The sixth theme revealed results on the barrier of facing resistance from superiors. It concurs with the assertions that hierarchical cultures, emphasizing formal rules and regulations, often hinder innovation (Zeb et al., 2021). This theme underscores the challenges of fostering innovation in environments where resistance to change is prevalent and room for creative decision-making is limited (Cai et al., 2021). The findings illuminate the difficulties seminary principals face in released-time programs when their superiors resist or are unsupportive of innovative initiatives. According to Cai et al. (2021), resistance from higher organizational levels can stifle creative thinking and is a significant barrier to introducing new approaches and

methods. The theme highlights the need for leadership and cultural shifts that encourage open-mindedness and a more supportive attitude toward innovation to overcome these barriers effectively.

Theme 7: Effective Communication and Involvement of Other Stakeholders is a Catalyst Perceived by the Seminary in Promoting Innovation

The seventh theme highlighted the significance of effective communication among stakeholders at S&I for more significant innovation. It strongly resonates with the notion that open communication can be a powerful driver of innovation (Carmona et al., 2020). The findings emphasize the importance of involving employees and listening to stakeholders, such as management teams, in fostering a collaborative culture that encourages the free flow of information and ideas. This claim aligns with the concept that promoting a collaborative and democratic culture can be challenging and often requires substantial organizational effort (Mestry & Govindasamy, 2021). It underscores the critical role of communication and relationships in creating an environment where innovative ideas can thrive. This theme reflects the need for organizations to prioritize open and effective communication channels to enhance innovation within their culture.

Theme 8: Proper Guidance and Recognition of Other Stakeholders Promote Innovation in Released-Time Seminary Programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

The final theme addressed the importance of providing proper guidance and recognition to stakeholders as catalysts for innovation. The findings closely align with the concept of Alonazi (2021) who claimed that guidance and recognition are vital elements in encouraging knowledge sharing and fostering innovation. The findings also align with Ferguson (2020) who emphasized the need for organizations to create a safe and supportive environment where

members can take risks and feel protected while exploring innovative ideas. This theme underscores the critical role of leadership and recognition in driving innovation. It reinforces the need for organizations to actively empower and recognize their members to create a culture that nurtures and promotes innovation effectively.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have potential significant policy implications, including supporting the initiation of legal and regulatory changes at the highest levels. Equally, the study's findings could be applied under different general circumstances to improve those situations. The implications for policy and practice are discussed in the subsections below.

Implications for Policy

This study could influence cultural adaptation in educational policies. The study's findings highlight the importance of acknowledging and adapting to the cultural complexities within religious educational settings (van Leeuwen et al., 2021). Policies at the state and federal levels may be formulated to incorporate the diverse cultural frameworks present in religious educational institutions and support adaptability in educational management (Ammerman, 2020). The new policies may encourage flexibility in educational practices, allowing innovation that aligns with the cultural context while maintaining educational standards.

The study could also impact leadership training and support programs. Policies aimed at higher-level organizations, such as school districts, might need to consider implementing leadership training and support programs (Heffernan & Wilkinson, 2020). These programs would specifically target leaders within religious educational institutions, emphasizing the significance of understanding and navigating the nuances of organizational culture to foster

innovation. Support initiatives could include mentorship programs or workshops focusing on navigating hierarchical structures and encouraging innovation within such frameworks.

This study may also influence communication and collaborative initiatives. New educational policies may advocate for enhanced communication strategies and relationship-building approaches in religious educational settings (Ammerman, 2020). The approaches can involve establishing forums for stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and principals to share ideas and concerns openly. By fostering effective communication channels, these policies can facilitate an environment conducive to innovative thinking and shared knowledge within religious educational institutions.

Policy guidelines could support and encourage further research exploring innovation in faith-based educational institutions. Funding grants and initiatives targeting these settings can enhance understanding of the unique cultural and leadership dynamics that influence innovation (van Leeuwen et al., 2021). These initiatives could incentivize and sponsor researchers conducting cross-contextual comparative studies, examining innovation in various religious and secular educational institutions to derive general principles and contextual distinctions.

Implications for Practice

The practical implications of this study are multifaceted. For seminary principals and regional directors, the findings suggest that a deeper understanding of the organizational culture can lead to more effective leadership and innovation strategies. To promote innovation, these leaders may need to carefully navigate the coexistence of hierarchical and conventional elements, adapting their approaches to align with the prevailing cultural norms while introducing innovation-supportive practices. Furthermore, the importance of open communication and

relationships within a collaborative culture emphasizes the need for leaders to establish forums where stakeholders can freely share ideas and concerns.

For policymakers and educational administrators, these findings underscore the importance of acknowledging the specific cultural nuances within religious educational settings. Policymakers may consider more flexible approaches to educational management, encouraging innovation in areas that align with the cultural context. Lastly, for researchers, this study highlights the need for further exploration of innovation in faith-based educational institutions, as these settings present unique cultural and leadership dynamics that influence innovation.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The study's findings have both empirical and theoretical implications. This section explores implications for administrators in religious educational programs, as well as specifics for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The implications will extend to seminary principals and region directors. Organizational culture will also be addressed with the accompanying implications. The sections will be divided into empirical and theoretical implications below.

Empirical Implications

From an empirical perspective, the study's findings offer practical insights for leaders and administrators in religious educational programs. Recognizing the existence of hierarchical and conventional cultural elements can guide decision-makers in adapting organizational structures to be more conducive to innovation. For instance, understanding the coexistence of hierarchical and conventional elements may encourage leaders to adopt tailored strategies to balance stability and flexibility. Additionally, the identification of seminary principals and regional directors' roles in fostering innovation in this study provides practical guidance for optimizing leadership dynamics within religious education institutions. Empirical implications also extend to the

potential development of more effective communication strategies and relationship-building approaches to facilitate innovation.

Theoretical Implications

The study's findings have several theoretical implications for understanding organizational culture and innovation within the context of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' released-time seminary programs. First, the identification of hierarchical and conventional organizational cultures suggests that within religious organizations, unique cultural elements that diverge from the broader organizational culture literature may exist. This scenario underscores the need for nuanced examinations of subcultures within religious institutions, as they may demonstrate distinct patterns of values and norms that impact innovation differently. Furthermore, the identification of two distinct roles—seminal principals and regional directors—in this study provides insights into the complexity of leadership structures within religious organizations. These findings expand the understanding of leadership roles and their influence on innovation in faith-based educational settings.

Limitations and Delimitations

Research studies encompass a set of delimitations and limitations that define the study's boundaries and acknowledge potential weaknesses or restrictions. Delimitations are the conscious and specific choices made by researchers to establish the scope and focus of the study (Akanle et al., 2020). They highlight the intentional exclusions or constraints within the research. In contrast, limitations encompass the potential shortcomings or constraints that researchers face, which might restrict the study's reliability or generalizability (Akanle et al., 2020). This study had a set of delimitations and limitations, as illustrated below.

Limitations

In addition to the defined delimitations, this study is subject to several inherent limitations. The issue of generalizability arises due to the research's specific focus on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' released-time seminary programs. Although the research findings offer valuable insights within this context, their applicability to other religious or educational settings may be limited due to their setting dynamics. The seminary programs' distinctive cultural and organizational characteristics can restrict the broader generalizability of the results of this study.

The sample composition, predominantly comprising seminary principals and regional directors, restricts the breadth of perspectives included. The research did not directly capture the viewpoints of other vital stakeholders within the seminary programs, such as teachers, students, or parents. This limitation may result in an incomplete understanding of the multifaceted interactions between organizational culture and innovation. The insights from these underrepresented perspectives are essential to comprehensively addressing the research question.

The qualitative nature of this study inherently relies on the subjective interpretations of the participants. Despite rigorous data analysis procedures, the potential for subjectivity, bias, or misinterpretation in participants' responses remains. Researchers should remain vigilant in acknowledging these potential limitations and exercise caution when concluding qualitative findings.

Delimitations

In this study, I made several deliberate delimitations to define and focus the research scope effectively. The primary delimitation was the selection of the released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the specific organizational

context. The aim of this decision was to facilitate an in-depth analysis of innovation within this unique religious and educational setting to facilitate comprehensive understanding of the organizational culture's impact on innovation within this environment. It is essential to acknowledge that my intent in this study was not to generalize its findings to other religious or educational institutions, as the distinct cultural and organizational elements of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may not represent broader contexts.

Furthermore, this research focused on the perspectives of seminary principals and regional directors within the released-time seminary programs. Although these leadership roles are central to the context of the study, other stakeholders within the organization, such as teachers, students, or parents, were not directly included as primary participants. This was a purposeful delimitation to concentrate on the roles most directly responsible for promoting innovation within the organization. However, recognizing that other stakeholders may have valuable insights, future research is needed to encompass broader perspectives within the seminary programs.

Finally, the methodology for this study was a qualitative research approach to explore participants' perceptions and experiences. Qualitative research was selected to gain in-depth insights into organizational culture and innovation. Nonetheless, it is essential to note that the findings may only be widely generalizable in the specific context of the released-time seminary programs. The unique nature of the organization and the qualitative methodology limit the extent to which the results can be applied to other settings or populations.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers in organizational culture and innovation should consider a more expansive approach by conducting cross-contextual comparative studies. This approach would

help explore how organizational culture influences innovation in various settings beyond this study's specific religious and educational context. Investigating the transferability of findings to secular educational institutions and different religious organizations can provide a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships' universality or context-specific nature. By conducting cross-contextual research, scholars can uncover general principles and distinctions related to the interplay between organizational culture and innovation.

Additionally, to gain a more comprehensive view of how organizational culture impacts innovation, future research should incorporate the perspectives of a broader range of stakeholders within the organization under study. Beyond examining leaders' perspectives, involving teachers, students, and parents in the research is important. Employing mixed-methods approaches, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, can facilitate a more thorough exploration of the complex dynamics between culture and innovation within educational institutions. Including diverse stakeholders' voices and experiences can provide deeper insights into how culture influences innovation.

Longitudinal studies are another promising avenue for future research. These studies allow for an examination of the long-term effects of organizational culture on innovation. Researchers can investigate how culture evolves over time and its sustained impact on innovation practices. Longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into the stability and adaptability of an organization's culture, shedding light on how culture may continue to support or hinder innovation as organizations undergo transformations and changes.

Finally, future research may benefit from comparative analyses of organizational cultural strength. Researchers might also delve into the timing of cultural influences on the different stages of the innovation process. This approach can inform strategies for adapting organizational

culture better to support innovation at various points in the innovation process, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of culture's role in innovation.

Conclusion

This transcendental phenomenological study delved into seminary principals' beliefs, attitudes, and desires in the released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints concerning their mandate to innovate in a culture that may not entirely support innovation. The study uncovered eight significant themes that provide a comprehensive view of innovation within this unique organizational context. Two distinct organizational cultures emerged from the study findings: hierarchical and conventional. Seminary principals perceive a hierarchical culture characterized by internal stability and conformity, aligning with the literature's portrayal of hierarchical cultures as resistant to change. They also identified a conventional culture emphasizing established norms and practices, which can hinder innovation. This dual cultural context within seminary programs challenges traditional expectations set by organizational culture literature.

Seminary principals play pivotal roles in fostering innovation by evaluating existing practices, promoting collaboration, and recognizing the need for innovative change. Their recognition of the barriers posed by resistance from superiors further emphasizes the importance of leadership support in promoting innovation. They perceived effective communication and stakeholder involvement as catalysts for innovation, highlighting the organization's need for open communication and collaboration. Providing guidance and recognition to stakeholders also emerged as a catalyst, underscoring the importance of empowering and acknowledging members' contributions.

The implications of this study are far-reaching. The findings emphasize the need for nuanced examinations of subcultures within religious organizations, as they may demonstrate distinct patterns of values and norms impacting innovation. Practically, leaders in religious and educational programs should navigate the coexistence of hierarchical and conventional elements to balance stability and flexibility effectively. Moreover, policymakers and administrators should consider flexible approaches that allow innovation in areas aligned with the organization's cultural context.

Some key insights from this research include recognizing that organizational culture and innovation are complex and multifaceted. The study revealed that unique cultural elements that can challenge traditional assumptions about how culture influences innovation, even within a religious educational setting. Understanding the coexistence of hierarchical and conventional cultures underscores the need for tailored strategies to navigate this nuanced cultural landscape effectively. Additionally, the study underscores the pivotal role of leadership in promoting innovation and challenges traditional expectations about the barriers posed by superiors. This research adds depth to the current understanding of how organizational culture shapes innovation and underscores the need for adaptable strategies in complex and unique contexts such as religious educational programs.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

Date: 3-5-2024

IRB #: IRB-FY22-23-1335

Title: THE CULTURE OF INNOVATION IN SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTES OF RELIGION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Creation Date: 4-3-2023

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Griffin Sorenson

Review Board: Research Ethics Office

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt - Limited IRB
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Appendix B

Site Permission

Dear Administrator,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research to better understand the culture of innovation in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion. The title of my research project is The Culture of Innovation in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion: A Phenomenological Study and the purpose of my research is to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it.

I am writing to request your permission to contact members of your organization to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to complete a survey, undergo an interview, and write journal entries. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Griffin D. Sorenson

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research to better understand the culture of innovation in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion. The purpose of my research is to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be or have been a seminary principal during the last two years. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete the attached survey (15 minutes), write journal entries (1 hour), and undergo an interview (1 hour). Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please complete the attached survey and return it by replying to this email along with your preferred schedule for the interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Griffin D. Sorenson
Institute Instructor

Appendix D

Consent Form

Title of the Project: The Culture of Innovation in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion: A Phenomenological Study

Principal Investigator: Griffin D. Sorenson, Doctoral Candidate, in the School of Education at, Liberty University.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be or have been a seminary principal during the last two years. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of seminary principals in released-time seminary programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding a call for them to innovate in a culture that may not support it.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Answer the attached survey that will take no more than 15 minutes.
2. Participate in an in-person, audio-recorded interview that will take no more than 1 hour.
3. Write journal entries based on the attached list of prompts that will take approximately 1 hour, but you may take your time with the journal entries.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Participant responses will be kept confidential by

replacing names with pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After five years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for five years and then deleted. The researcher and members of his doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University [Include the name(s) of any other institution(s) associated with your study from whom you had to gain permission or IRB approval.] [or ____]. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Griffin D. Sorenson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [phone number and/or email]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [name], at [email].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study

after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date