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The Relationship of Some Personality and Individual Characteristics with an Individual's Commitment to an Ideal Vision for Performance Improvement

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships among specified personality and individual characteristics of university students with their level of commitment to a measurable, results-focused statement of an Ideal Vision. The study examined variables (including locus of control, generativity, self-efficacy, values, and risk taking) to determine their relationship with an individual's commitment to an Ideal Vision. Concurrent assessments of individual differences and commitment were utilized to investigate the relationship these variables may have with an individual's commitment to the pragmatic leadership and management practice of using an Ideal Vision as the starting place for strategic planning, needs assessment, performance improvement, and decision making.

Introduction

Since the 1960s, the concept of commitment has been in vogue in discussions of individual and organizational behavior (e.g., Becker, 1960; Kanter, 1968; Kidron, 1978; Vardi, Wiener, & Popper, 1989). And much has changed since Kanter (1968) stated that the concept of commitment had undergone little utilization in organizational research. Recent decades have been marked with increased research addressing commitment, especially in the organizational setting. While the concept of commitment has attracted a great deal of attention in past decades, the primary focus of research has historically emphasized individual commitment to organizations or individual performance goals (e.g., Alutto, Hrebiniak, & Alonso, 1973; Dubin, 1975; Hollenbeck, 1987; Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Kidron, 1978; Locke, 1968, 1984; Steers, 1977; Vardi, 1989). This research emphasis on organizational commitment has been more than adequate for CEOs, managers, and decision makers as long as the rules of the game—or paradigms—remained unchanged. However, the paradigms in which organizations and individuals function are shifting (Barker, 1989; 1992; Drucker, 1993a; 1993b; Toffler, 1990).

The developing paradigm is one of social responsibility and contribution (Arlow & Gannon, 1982; Kaufman, 1992, 1998, 2000; Maynard, 1993; Popcorn, 1991). Positive societal contributions are becoming an essential consideration for organizations and individuals alike (Arlow & Gannon, 1982; Kaufman, 1976,

1983, 1992, 1996, 1998, 2000; Kaufman, Herman, & Watters, 1996; Popcorn, 1991; Senge, 1990). A commitment to society and future generations, likewise, has become no longer an individual or organizational option but a requirement (Popcorn, 1991). Further, Pava and Krausz (1995) provide evidence that socially responsible organizations indicate equal or greater financial performance than those which are not socially responsible. This shift in paradigms changes the rules of the game, and a new line of research is likely to be required for the examination of individual commitment to results-focused societal vision.

If individuals and organizations are not careful, past success may block their path to a successful future (Barker, 1989). For when paradigms shift, they not only change the rules of the game, they also remove the advantages of past success. Barker describes this effect of paradigm shifts with the "going back to zero rule." He states that "no matter how good you are at the old paradigm, when a paradigm shifts everyone goes back to zero." For the proactive individual, though, the "going back to zero rule" may identify opportunities and not problems or obstacles. Individuals and organizations which discern and move into the new paradigm early on enjoy the greatest opportunities for success (Barker, 1993).

To survive and succeed in the new paradigm of social responsibility and contribution, professionals are likely to require the skills to identify both a) the value they add to today's society, and b) the society they are working to create for tomorrow's children. The research emphasis of past decades—individual commitment to organizations or individual performance goals—does not seem to meet the requirements of professionals who wish to align their decisions with positive societal contributions. In order to develop these value-added linkages, professionals are likely initially to require an understanding of individual differences that are related to varying levels of commitment to a societal vision. Information regarding these relationships may be valuable in the development of environments that foster the delivery of positive societal consequences.

In response to the emergence of this new societal value-added paradigm, two primary questions require answering: 1) What are the relationships of personality and individual characteristic variables with an individual's commitment to an Ideal Vision (i.e., a societal vision)?, and 2) Are there personality and characteristics differences across groups of individuals with comparatively high and low levels of commitment to an Ideal Vision?

Variables

Commitment research of previous decades does provide a starting place for identifying those personality and characteristic variables that may be related to an individual's level of commitment to an Ideal Vision. Past research has shown significant relationships of such variables as *self-efficacy*, *values*, morals, work ethic, *age*, *gender*, marital status, religious affiliation, and education with an individual's level of commitment to either organizational or individual performance goals.

Creating the future we want to achieve first requires that we define

that future. Visions, and vision statements, are mental models of the future (Nannus, 1992) that can be utilized by decision makers as guides to success and the achievement of societal results in this emerging paradigm as they have been in previous paradigms (Nannus, 1992; Senge, 1990; 1994; Wall, Solum, & Sobol, 1992). A vision "expresses what you and others who share the vision will be working hard to create," and "in fact, a vision is the only form of mental model that people and organizations can bring into being though their commitment and actions, and therein lies its usefulness and its power" (Nannus, 1992). One genre of individual and organizational vision is an *Ideal Vision*. An Ideal Vision is a measurable results-focused statement of the world an individual and/or organization is committed to creating, or moving ever closer to, for tomorrows' child (Kaufman, 1996; 1998). This statement of the measurable societal results an individual or organization commits to create is stated without the identification of the means (processes and resources) that will be utilized in order to achieve the Ideal Vision.

Positive societal contributions are becoming an essential for organizations and individuals alike.

Useful individual and organizational visions have properties that include measurability (Kaufman, 1998; Kaufman et al., 1996), providing shared purpose (Wall et al., 1992), striving for an ideal state or utopia and offering a view of the future which is clearly better for individuals, organizations, and/or society (Nannus, 1992). While a single shared vision statement is advisable (Peters, 1982; Senge, 1994), a shared commitment to the achievement of positive societal results is desirable and likely to be essential for individual and organizational success in an organizational culture or paradigm focused on societal consequences.

S*elf-efficacy* refers "to the individual's self-referent appraisal of his/her performance" (Durr, 1985). Individuals are classified by their perceived performance as compared to their internal standards. A closely related personality construct of personality is *locus of control*. *Locus of control* (Rotter, 1966) refers to an individual's attribution of perceived performance (or lack of performance) either to themselves (internal control) or to external forces such as luck, chance, or powerful other (external control). This dichotomous continuum of perceived control is based on cause and effect relationships. Both variables, *self-efficacy* and *locus of control*, have been shown in previous research to have significant relationships with decision making and commitment (e.g., Locke, Fredrick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984; Miller, DeVries, & Toulouse, 1982; Phares & Lamiell, 1975).

The research of Rokeach (e.g., 1989) has advanced the study of *values* and provided a hierarchical framework. Rokeach's work has provided *values* research with a defini-

tion that differentiates both beliefs as *values* or attitudes and a *values* system which separates "instrumental" (means, modes of conduct) and "terminal" (end-states) *values* (Braithwait & Scott, 1991). *Values* are representations of an individual's desires into a socially acceptable form, and, unlike attitudes, they are single beliefs that transcend objects or situations (Grube, Mayton, & Ball-Rokeach, 1994). Dubin, Champoux, and Porter (1975), Kidron (1978), and Vardi et al. (1989) have supported the relationship of values to organizational commitment in research. Beyond the personality variables of past commitment research (*locus of control*, *self-efficacy*, and *values*), this study explored the possible relationships of *generativity* and *risk taking* with an individual's level of commitment to an Ideal Vision. *Generativity* (i.e., a concern for posterity) is closely related to the *values* of an individual. Providing guidance for future generations is the focal point of *generativity*. Implicit to the construct of *generativity*, identified by Erikson (1950), is the relationship between self and society. Though previous commitment research has not explored the relationship of *generativity* and commitment, the linkage of self and society is likely essential to the research of an individual's commitment to an Ideal Vision.

Commitment to an Ideal Vision is not without possible psychological and/or organizational risks for the individual. By definition the Ideal Vision is ideal and not likely to be achieved in one's lifetime and therefore presents a high risk of perceived failure for an individual committed to its attainment. Thus, *risk taking* was identified as the fifth personality variable for this research. *Risk taking* is an individual's decision making process, which involves the identification, and weighing of alternatives in terms of their likelihood and desirability compared to the results they will achieve. The degree to which people are willing to take risks was hypothesized to have a significant relationship with their degree of commitment to an Ideal Vision.

Additionally variables for this study included: age, gender, *number of children*, *member of a formal religious organization*, *active in a formal religious organization*, *member of a civic organization*, *active in a civic organization*, *grade point average (GPA) in college*, *major*, *years of full-time work experience*, and *years of part-time work experience*. Though past research has not examined each of these specific characteristic variables to determine if their relationships with commitment to goals or visions that transcend organizations and/or individual performance goals, the demonstrated relationships established the expectations of this study.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were derived from the rationale of the research:

1) It is hypothesized that the subject scores on measures of *self-efficacy*, *generativity*, *age*, *number of children*, *GPA*, *years of part-time work experience*, and *years of full-time work experience* will each have statistically significant positive correlations (at or beyond the .05 level) with the level of individual commitment to an Ideal

Vision as measured on the modified Hollenbeck et al. (1989) scale.

2) It is hypothesized that the subject scores on measures of *locus of control* and *risk taking* will each have statistically significant negative correlations (at or beyond the .05 level) with the level of individual commitment to an Ideal Vision as measured on the modified Hollenbeck et al. (1989) scale.
3) It is hypothesized that the *values* (Rokeach, 1967) of those individuals whose scores on the modified Hollenbeck et al. (1989) measure of individual commitment to an Ideal Vision are greater than one standard deviation above the mean will differ from the *values* of those individuals whose commitment scores are greater than one standard deviation below the mean.
4) It is hypothesized that subject differences in *gender*, major, membership in a formal religious organization, active in formal religious organization, membership in a civic organization, and active in civic organization will each produce statistically significant differences (at or beyond the .05 level) in mean scores on the modified Hollenbeck et al. (1989) measure of individual commitment to an Ideal Vision.
5) The mean scores on measures of *locus of control*, *self-efficacy*, *generativity*, *risk taking*, *age*, *years of full-time work experience*, and *years of part-time work experience* will each be significantly different for those subjects who scored greater than one standard deviation above the mean on the modified Hollenbeck et al. (1989) measure of individual commitment to an Ideal Vision than those who scored greater than one standard deviation below the mean on the modified Hollenbeck et al. measure.

When paradigms shift, they not only change the rules of the game, they also remove the advantages of past success.

Participants

The participants for the research were undergraduate students enrolled in a fundamentals of business statistics course. Class enrollment for the course was approximately 181 students. Of the participants, 53.5% were female. While participation in the research was voluntary, students did receive minimal "extra credit" towards their course grade for participating in all aspects of the research. All students enrolled in the course (n=181) were offered the opportunity to participate in the study, and 70% of those offered the opportunity to participate provided the required data for the investigation of the research hypotheses (n=128).

Measures

The Internal-External *Locus of control Scale* (LCS) is an assessment of a person's belief in his/her responsibility for the reinforcements experienced (Rotter, 1966). The assessment is 29 forced answer items (with

six items being fillers), with participants choosing between two answers (A or B) for each question. Internal statements are paired with external statements in each item. One point is given for each response connected with an external statement. The scores range from 0 to 23, with the degree of external perception of control increasing in accordance with the scale.

Rotter's (1966) assessment instrument (the IE Scale: "internal" and "external" locus of control) was the preferred measure of *locus of control* in previous organizational and goal commitment literature. From a sample of college students, Rotter established evidence for the reliability of the IE Scale. A Kuder-Richardson coefficient of .70 demonstrated the internal consistency of the IE Scale, while a test/retest coefficient of .72 (one month after initial test) confirmed the stability of the scale. Hollenbeck, Williams, and Klein (1989) reported an alpha coefficient of .88 for the IE Scale. Evidence for the validity of the IE Scale is available in Rotter (1966) and Lefcourt (1991), demonstrating evidence of validity and reliability across decades.

The *Self-Efficacy Scale* (SES) was developed to assess an individual's expectancies of *self-efficacy*. The scale has two subscales: a general *self-efficacy* and a social *self-efficacy* subscale. Both subscales have adequate reliability coefficients with Cronbach alphas of .86 and .71 respectively. Assessments of both criterion and construct validity have been positive. The scale consists of 30 questions (17 questions for the general *self-efficacy* subscale, six questions for social subscale, and seven filler questions), traditionally on a five-point Likert scale (Mueller, 1986). For the *Self-Efficacy* Scale in the research, the Likert scale was expanded to seven points to assist in the identification of variance across responses.

The *Value Survey* (VS) assesses goals in life (terminal *values*) and modes of conduct (instrumental *values*) in terms of their relative importance as guiding principles in life (Braithwaite & Scott, 1991). For the application of the survey in the research, only the terminal *values* dimension of the instrument were utilized.

The *values* identified by Rokeach (1967) capitalized on the emerging consensus of the 1960s and were largely intuitive, but subsequent literature has identified few omissions (Braithwaite & Scott, 1991). Further, the ranking of *values* has remained stable across time, with studies done from 1968 to 1981 (Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). The survey consists of eighteen *values* which are listed in alphabetical order for the terminal dimension. The respondent is then instructed to prioritize the *values* based on their importance to the respondent as guiding principles in her or his life.

The *Loyola Generativity Scale* (LGS) was developed by McAdams and St. Aubin (1992) at Loyola University to assess an individual's *generativity*. The LGS is a 20-item questionnaire with questions being scored on a 4-point Likert-type scale. The Likert-type scale ranges from "0 = the statement never applies to me" to "3 = the statement applies to me very often." To add variance to the scores, the Likert-type scale was expanded to seven points. The scores for the individual are then added to

obtain a *generativity* index. The LGS was found to have high convergent validity and an alpha coefficient of .82 for college students. Further, the LGS was found to have a low correlation (r .21, p<.05) with social desirability scales while having relatively high correlations (r=.66 and .67, p<.001) with other *generativity* indices (McAdams & St. Aubin, 1992).

The *Choice Dilemmas Questionnaire* (CDQ) was developed by Wallach and Kogan (1959) in their research of gender differences and judgement processes. Though the Choice Dilemmas Questionnaire has been applied in research (e.g., those identified in Kogan, 1964), the establishment of evidence for the validity and reliability of the questionnaire do not exist. This lack of evidence supporting the validity and reliability of instruments is unfortunately the norm in *risk taking* research. With no measure of *risk taking* being appropriate for both the context of the research and with empirical evidence of validity and reliability, the Choice Dilemmas Questionnaire was chosen by the researcher on the basis that the items in the questionnaire appear to be more applicable to the student subjects than those of alternative *risk taking* measures.

A questionnaire of individual characteristics (e.g., gender, age) was developed by the researcher as a self-report measure of individual characteristics of subjects. As noted in the research limitations, we were dependent upon the honesty of subjects for the accuracy of the information attained in the questionnaire.

The *Goal Commitment Survey* (GCS) is a seven-item assessment designed by Hollenbeck, Williams, and Klein (1989). The assessment was designed to determine the strength of the commitment an individual has to a goal. In this study, the assessment was amended to read "an Ideal Vision" in replacement of "a goal" to measure commitment to an Ideal Vision. The original assessment utilizes a four-point Likert-type scale, but the scale was expanded by the researcher to a seven-point Likert-type scale to assist in the identification of variance across responses. The scale offers a high degree of reliability with an alpha coefficient of .88 (Hollenbeck et al., 1989). Construct validation has also been shown with statistically significant correlations with student performance. Hollenbeck, O'Leary, Klein, & Wright (1989) additionally provide evidence for the test/retest reliability and discriminant validity of the survey.

An Ideal Vision is a measurable results-focused statement of the world an individual and/or organization is committed to creating, or moving ever closer to, for tomorrows' child.

A Commitment Description Survey was developed by the researcher to determine the self-description subjects would have for their commitment to an Ideal Vision. The sur-

vey consists of nine terms which could be used to describe the level of commitment an individual has to an Ideal Vision: commitment, enrollment, genuine compliance, formal compliance, grudging compliance, active non-compliance, passive non-compliance, sabotage, and apathy. Each term is accompanied by a short characterization of an individual with the corresponding level of commitment. Seven of the self-describing terms and their accompanying characterization come from the "possible attitudes toward a vision" (Senge, 1990). The additional terms were generated from the amendment of "non-compliance" into terms of passive non-compliance and active non-compliance and the insertion of sabotage as a possible attitude.

Procedures

On the first day of class, students were offered the opportunity to participate in the research project. The measures were divided into two packets (A and B), and students were randomly provided with either research packet A or B (including the modified Goal Commitment Survey and the Commitment Description Survey for all participants). Instruments in each packet were counterbalanced to assure that the order in which the instruments appeared did not cause any variations in responses. The instruments were divided among the two packets based on the length of time each instrument takes to complete. Neither assessment packet should have taken participants longer than 35 to 45 minutes to complete, but no time limit was given. The completion of the instrument packet during the first week of class was the first research activity for participants.

During the second class seminar, Roger Kaufman presented the concepts of Mega Planning and Ideal Visioning he had developed. Kaufman's presentation provided the background necessary for students to participate in the research's intervention. For the second research activity, students were asked to create their own Ideal Vision. The research activity provided students with a copy of the minimal Ideal Vision (Kaufman, 1998). The following week, the third, and final, research activity was the completion of the modified Goal Commitment Survey and the Commitment Description Survey for the second time.

Results

This study was designed to provide valid and reliable data to individuals desiring to work with an Ideal Vision (results-focused societal vision) as a starting place for organizational or personal planning, needs assessment initiatives, and/or continuous improvement efforts. The analysis of the research participant data provides insights into selected personality and individual characteristic variables which have statistically significant relationships with a person's commitment to an Ideal Vision. Although the evidence does not support strong relationships between all of the many hypothesized personality or individual characteristic variables and individual commitment to an Ideal Vision, the statistically significant relationships of several variables does provide baseline evidence for the factors which may have a defining role in the development of individual commitment to an Ideal Vision.

The applicable descriptive statistics and the resulting scatter plots for

all research variables were examined for data analysis. Reviews of scatter plots were utilized to identify a) potential violations of required assumptions for statistical analysis, and b) likely non-linear relationships among variables. From the descriptive statistics, possible violations of required assumptions for statistical analysis were identified to assure validity of conclusions (i.e., homogeneity of variance, normality, and independent observations). Each of the hypotheses examined in the research was then examined with the appropriate data analysis procedures. The decision model for the type of analysis performed on the data provided in the research was based on: 1) apparent possible violations and robustness of required statistical analysis assumptions, and 2) the level of measurement for each of the independent and dependent variables (Tuckman, 1994).

By definition the Ideal Vision is ideal and is not likely to be achieved in one's lifetime, and therefore presents a high risk of perceived failure for an individual committed to its attainment.

The mean *locus of control* value for participants was 11.1 (*SD*=3.8) on a scale ranging from 0 to 23 (see Table 1). The mean *locus of control* score for male participants was 10.5 (*SD*=4.2), while the mean for female participants was 11.6 (*SD*=3.4). Scores at the lower end of the scale (0-11) denote students who have an internal *locus of control*, while scores at the upper end (12-23) denote an external locus.

Student *risk taking* scores averaged 71.3 (*SD*=13.5) on a scale ranging from 0 to 120 (see Table 1). The mean *risk taking* score for male participants was 70.2 (*SD*=15.4), while the mean for female participants was 72.1 (*SD*=12.3). Greater scores on the scale identify participants who have a comparatively greater tendency to take risks.

The *generativity* scale utilized in the research identified scores ranging from 0 to 140 (with greater scores indicating greater commitment to future generations), with research participant scores averaging 99 (*SD*=14). The mean *generativity* score for male participants was 95.2 (*SD*=13.7), while the mean for female participants was 100.9 (*SD*=14).

The *self-efficacy* scale ranged in scores from 0 to 161 (with greater scores indicating greater *self-efficacy*). The mean participant score on the *self-efficacy* scale was 117.6 (*SD*=13.4). The mean *self-efficacy* score for male participants was 118.1 (*SD*=12.2), while the mean for female participants was 116.9 (*SD*=15).

Commitment to an Ideal Vision in the study was measured with two scales. The first scale, Hollenbeck et. al. (1989), measured an individual's commitment to an Ideal Vision ranging from 0 to 49, with greater scores representing greater commitment.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables

	Mean	*S.E.* Mean	*SD*	Range*	*n*
Personality					
Locus of control	11.1	.5	3.8	19	64
Risk Taking	71.3	1.7	13.5	70	63
Generativity	98.7	1.8	14	58	60
Self-Efficacy	117.6	1.7	13.4	62	62
Characteristics					
Age	20.1	.2	2.2	14	127
Number of Children	.02	.01	.1	1	123
GPA	2.9	.04	.5	2.2	126
Years Part-time Work	3.3	.2	2.1	10	126
Years Full-time Work	.8	.2	1.9	14	126
Commitment					
Commitment (time 1)**	35.3	.5	5.9	30	128
Commitment Description (time 1)**	7.1	.1	1.1	4	115
Commitment (time 2)***	32.9	.6	6.5	33	128
Commitment Description (time 2)***	6.9	.1	1.2	8	118

* Range was calculated by greatest value minus the least value identified in participant data.
** Time 1 values came from participant data in Research Activity One.
*** Time 2 values came from participant data in Research Activity Three.

In the first application of the Hollenbeck scale in the first research activity, the mean score of participants was 35.3 (*SD*=5.9). The mean score in the second application of the Hollenbeck scale in the third research activity was 32.9 (*SD*=6.5).

The second commitment instrument applied in the study (the self-description of commitment) utilized

a scale developed by the researcher from 1 to 9, again with greater scores representing greater commitment to an Ideal Vision. The mean score in the first application of the self-description commitment scale was 7.1 (SD=1.1). In the second application of the self-description commitment scale the mean was 6.9 (SD=1.2).

Additionally, research participants were asked to rank eighteen "terminal" *values* from Rokeach's (1967) *values* survey. The participants ranked the *values* according to their importance as a guiding principle to the participant's life. When participants ranked their most important *values*, 16 (12.5%) of the participants choose "salvation (saved, eternal life)," 14 (10.9%) choose "happiness (contentedness)," and 10 (7.8%) choose "family security (taking care of loved ones)." The least important of the *values* to participants were "salvation" (15, 11.7%), "a world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)" (14, 10.9%), and "equality (community, equal opportunity for all)" (9, 7%).

Hypothesis 1

The correlation coefficient of *self-efficacy* participant data with values of an individual's commitment to an Ideal Vision (as measured in the third research activity, or second application, by the Hollenbeck et al. assessment) was 19 (p=.14; n=62) and not statistically significant. Correlation coefficients denoting the relationships of individual commitment with *age* (r=.03; p=.77; n=127) and *years of part-time work experience* (r=–.13; p=.15; n=126) variables were also not statistically significant at or beyond the .05 level.

However, the participant data regarding the variables of *generativity* and commitment did provide evidence for a statistically significant (at or beyond the .05 level) correlation relationship (r=.45, p<.001, n=60), thus providing support for one element of the research hypothesis. The remaining variables in the research hypothesis (number of children and years of full-time work experience) were removed from analysis due to evidence of extreme kurtosis.

Hypothesis 2

The analysis of participant data denoted no support for research Hypothesis 2. The correlation coefficient for the variable of *locus of control* with an individual's commitment to an Ideal Vision (as measured in the third research activity by the Hollenbeck et al. assessment) was –18 and not statistically significant (p=.16; n=64). Similarly, the correlation of the variables regarding individual commitment and *risk taking* did not indicate statistically significant support for the hypothesis (r=–.01; p=.93; n=63).

Hypothesis 3

Though statistical analysis procedures do not provide a parametric measure suitable for the analysis required of the third research hypothesis, the descriptive statistics identify few significant differences among the *values* of individuals indicating the greatest and least commitment to an Ideal Vision which could be tested utilizing Chi-squared statistical analysis procedures. The Chi-squared analysis provided evidence that the difference in *values* was not statistically significant (C^2=2.21) for the *values* with the greatest percentage difference

across groups. Since the frequency differences among these two *values* represented the greatest difference across any two *values* for a specified priority ranking and the Chi-squared procedures indicated that the difference was not statistically significant, then it was derived that there were no statistically significant differences in the *values* of highly committed and less committed participants.

Hypothesis 4

ANOVA [analysis of variance] procedures were utilized to determine if the participant data supported the research hypothesis. The ANOVA analysis of commitment based on the gender of participants identified a statistically significant (at or beyond the .05 level) difference between the mean commitment scores of male (mean=31.73) and female (mean=34.66) research participants. The *F*-ratio of the gender groups commitment difference was 6.49 (p=.01). The assumption that the two groups came from populations with equal variances was confirmed by the Levene's test for homogeneity-of-variance (p=.45) (Norusis, 1992). Additional significant differences were identified between research participants who indicated that they were or were not *active in a formal religious organization*. Those participants who signified that they were *active in a formal religious organization* had a mean commitment value of 34.66, while those who were not active had a mean of 31.73. The *F*-ratio of the two group's commitment difference was 6.49 (p=.01). Levene's test for homogeneity-of-variance confirmed the assumption that the two groups came from populations of equal variance (p=.82). Similarly, mean differences between participant groups identifying if they were a) *active in a civic organization*, and b) a *member of a civic organization* were statistically significant (*F*-ratio=8.19, p=.01; and *F*-ratio=4.89, p=.03 respectively). ANOVA analysis of the mean differences of groups based on the remaining variables (*member of a formal religious organization* and student *major*) did not indicate statistical significance.

Variables with the strongest (statistically significant) relationships with an individual's commitment included gender, generativity, active in a formal religious organization, and membership in civic organizations.

Hypothesis 5

Of the variables analyzed, only *generativity* indicated a statistically significant difference across the means of the two groups (comparatively high- and low-committed individual participants). The less committed participants had a mean *generativity* score of 94.82, while the

highly committed participants had a mean score of 112.5 (F-ratio=8.04; p=.01). Statistical significance was not indicated between group means for participant scores on assessments of *age* (F-ratio=.01, p=.93), *self-efficacy* (F-ratio=3.62, p=.07), *risk taking* (F-ratio=.17, p=.68), *locus of control* (F-ratio=1.05, p=.32), and *years of part-time work experience* (F-ratio=3.66, p=.06). Thus, one element (*generativity*) of research Hypothesis 5 was supported by the evidence derived from participant data. This finding also parallels the findings supporting research Hypothesis 2.

Conclusions

The results of the research partially supported the hypothesized relationships of student characteristics with commitment to an Ideal Vision. Variables with the strongest (statistically significant) relationships with an individual's commitment included gender, generativity, being active in a formal religious organization, and membership in a civic organizations. These findings provide preliminary evidence supporting the development of continued research regarding the variables which correlate with an individual's level of commitment to an Ideal Vision and the development of a dynamic profile of individuals with high and low commitment. It could be that an understanding of the variables that demonstrate statistically significant relationships with an individual's level of commitment to an Ideal Vision may allow planners, decision makers, and others to develop performance improvement interventions that effectively bring organizational members to agreement on a shared Ideal Vision.

An Ideal Vision is the most practical starting place for organizational or individual planning and decision making (Kaufman 1992; 1996; 1998; 2000). For only after agreement is reached on the positive societal consequences to be achieved is it practical to identify and define an organizational mission and individual goals/tasks aligned with that vision. This process of rolling-down from an agreed-upon Ideal Vision to develop missions and tasks is the first step to pragmatic strategic planning and needs assessment initiatives (Kaufman, 1992; 1998).

Earlier research, from disciplines including performance management, psychology, and leadership, provided evidence that such relationships exist between identified personality and individual characteristic variables and an individual's level of commitment to performance goals and organizational missions. The transfer of these relationships to commitment to an Ideal Vision was explored in this study. The research findings indicate that several individual characteristic differences (specifically *gender*, *activity in a formal religious organization*, *membership in a civic organization*, previous work with an Ideal Vision), and personality variables (specifically *generativity*) demonstrate statistically significant relationships to an individual's level of commitment to an Ideal Vision.

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