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# Execution of Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U, and HPWS for Mahrez

# **Business**

Research Article

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#### Abstract:

The goal of any organization is to be successful and stand in the face of times. As there could necessarily not be a single theory, which can be implemented and claim to be successful. This paper/study explores the use of important theories such as Appreciative Inquiry and Theory U for Mahrez. The following paper is analyzing the situation of Mahrez company, which is Turkish based and was a family business founded in 1950. This study is also trying to see how the Human performance work system (HPWS) could be useful for sustaining Mahrez company success. The study finds out that AI's perception of reasoning was focusing on an organization's positive features and its capabilities to help perceive assets. It also determines what works out best for the business and how to come up with solutions that are best linked to the specific need and environment of each organization. On the other hand, Theory U is an approach of concentrating on organization interior situations, which differs from the usual way of finding a problem solution by observing and analyzing past experiences. Theory U supporters state that a lot of leaders are visionless to the significance of this internal situation awareness that helps solve complex problems. Leaders need to "let go" of everything that is not essential. Then they need to determine what they really need ("let come") their highest possible future self. Finally, through HPWS, the company needs to bring a change by motivating workers towards reaching the company's goal.

Keywords: High performance work system; Appreciative inquiry, Theory U.

#### Introduction

This paper will be using the power of Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U, and HPWS as an intervention in the businesses of Mahrez Company. Mahrez Company is a family business founded in 1960 by Bashir Mahrez and his sister Arousya Mahrez. The company is a Turkish bath or Hamam. It is based on the same principles as the steam bath, but the focus is on water rather than steam. It is like a sauna but is closer to a Roman bath. The company is owned and controlled by Mahrez family members since then and multiple generations of a family, related by blood or marriage members manage it. The business is the result of Bashir and Arousya Mahrez's visionary leadership, along with generations of associates focused on helping customers and communities save money and have better services. The sibling believed in leadership through service. The belief that true leadership depends on offering the best services was the principle on which Mahrez Company was built and guided the decisions the company has made for the past 60 years. So much of Mahrez Company's history is tied to the story of the family itself, and so much of their future will be deep-rooted in the siblings' principles.

Appreciative Inquiry is more interpreted through what it is called a 4-D Process as an intervention in the businesses of Mahrez Company. An Appreciative Inquiry rather than focusing on weaknesses and flaws of an organization, it highlights an organization's positive features and its capabilities. An Appreciative Inquiry is an accommodating exploration for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It consists of methodical discovery of what gives an organization 'life'. Appreciative Inquiry includes "the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential."

Theory U (also called "U" methodology) is an alteration management method aiming at leadership as a process of internal knowing and social innovation developed by Otto Scharmer. Theory U has been a valuable tool in organizational development and social development. Theory U provides topics of reference so that people "disconnect" themselves from their unchanging technique of thinking and reacting. It describes in which approach an individual can increase their involvement to contribute to possible solutions that are in update with what the organization needs. Theory U outlines a new methodology for managing change that puts a strong effort on introspection and self-knowledge to step forward past, uncreative patterns of actions that can repress vision and effective management.

High performance work system (HPWS) is a group of separate human resources, which are interconnected with each other. Some examples of HPWS include training, compensation, communication, job security, flextime, employment tests, etc. These practices are employed for employee's efficacy. Because of dedicated and happy employees, an organization could lead at the top in the market and enjoy low turnover, being counted in the topmost organization list and much more. For an organization to achieve this success, strong HPWS is essential (Aggarwal, J. 2019).

The objectives of this paper are to respond to these questions:

- **1.** What factors give life to Mahrez Company? When it was most successful and effective?
- **2.** What possibilities provide opportunities for more vital, successful, and effective forms of organization?

- **3.** How Theory U can be used as an approach toward solving Mahrez Company problems?
- **4.** How can HPWS help improve Mahrez's situation?

#### I. Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a new perception of reasoning, where the environments in which a business works best is thoroughly evaluated, opposing to the usual reasoning of finding out problems, shortages, and flaws within a business to improve its functioning. In this paper, we will try to discover how we can use the power of Appreciative Inquiry to determine what works out best for Mahrez Company and discover solutions that have already been proven effective. (The Appreciative Inquiry Commons, 2019).

The Inquiry will have the following four phases:

- **Discovery Phase**
- Dream Phase
- Design Phase
- **Destiny Phase**

#### The Discovery Phase

In this phase, we will start with stories and descriptions of strong moments from the past of Mahraz Company. As well known, whether the business is operated in a small community or a large one, word of mouth is more vital than ever for business. Most consumers search for reviews of businesses before deciding where to go, thus building a good reputation is vital to the success of the business. As a young leader, Arousya, worked hard to establish herself and the company in the community. She sold the best cosmetic product available in the market and she made sure that her team was offering the best service too. Besides, she always communicated about how her services were the best in the market and her team as well as to current customers and potential ones. She was proud that she delivers a great service and she made sure everyone knows it. She was an autocratic leader, she was well known for using fear to motivate people to get their work well done and she made sure that everyone understands her vision and values because she claimed that if no one knows it, the business would suffer. She was a passionate advocate for lifelong learning, driving initiatives that help create the company's workforce of the future. However, as too many business owners who sacrifice their friends, mental and physical health, and family relationships, in pursuit of their business objectives and realize their dreams and plans, Arousya decided to step down to take care of herself and family.

After that, Tessa, the wife of Bashir, took over. She followed Arousya's strategies of offering the best product and services and using word of mouth to reach new clients. However, she was a very good communicator. Neither employees nor customers were treated as Arousya used to treat them but as they were her family members and her friends. She had a very good memory; she knows everyone by name. She even has known the names of kids, inlaws, family members or friends.

Tessa and Bashir were Eya M. grandparents from the side. The co-manager position mom's was transferable from one generation to another within her family. Her oldest aunt, co-managed with Tessa for ten years. However, her mother and her youngest aunt did not want to work there. Then, Tessa's granddaughter, the sister of Eya, co-managed with her for several years and decided that she wanted to pursue her dream to be a kindergarten teacher. At the same time, Eya graduated from high school and she was not sure what she wanted to do yet so her grandmother, Tessa, asked her to co-manager with her in the business, as she could not work full time anymore.

She started as co-manager and she learned everything under her grandmother's leadership. Then her grandmother decided to step down to take care of her health. Consequently, she becomes the new manager. She was the youngest manager in the history of the family. Some of the employees were double her age. She followed her ancestors' steps, but she also made several changes. Her Gallup Strength helped her succeed without knowing it at that time. Her five strengths are Adaptability, Empathy, Learner, Competition, and Belief.

She never liked to plan ahead for a long time, because she thinks that it would be too restraining or restricting to her imagination. On the other hand, as a person with Adaptability strength, she needs information and guidelines first and that was one of her grandmother's strengths too. Having all the information helped her to generate her plans, and ideas that were calculated and very productive.

Being a competitor and believer, she was inspiring everyone working with her to do their best, through motivation by offering raises and offering productive forms of measurement. Despite being the youngest one working in the Hamam, she captured other employees' attention because of her drive to succeed and the achievements realized in a short period. As a result, this increased the level of everyone's engagement.

In general, Mahrez's business has many assets to develop and flourish despite the difficulties it may encounter. Unlike other types of companies, as a family business, it brings together individuals with family obligations. These obligations are not limited to ensuring the sustainability of the development of the company's activities, but above all, to guarantee the protection and optimization of the pride of the family. Cohesion and the existence of common interest to defend strong family values are the main strengths of this business. The family business owes its performance to its leaders with unmistakable competence and experience. This rich heritage defines who we are and what we do today. In most cases, the family members prepare and train the future leader from an early age so that he/ she can perform his/ her role reliably and effectively.

As well, the tendency of the company is another asset. The leaders continuously considered the customer experience is more than the service. The products that the company offers equate customer satisfaction with customer service. But then again it is more than that, especially with services, all the employees make sure that every interaction with every customer is positive, the service delivered is exemplary, and always follow up for feedback about the business and employees.

#### **Dream and Design Phases**

In these stages of the 4D cycle, the Dream Phase will be where leaders will support their dreams and ambitions, even further than their current restrictions, so that they can have a brighter future for themselves and the organization. Then, they will offer several ideas and strategies to implement the solutions. All members of the family and some employees will participate in an Appreciative Inquiry 4-D process. A positive change network is the best approach to Appreciative Inquiry that is best suited to the needs of our company. In the past, it was difficult to hold a meeting when most of the members of the family that needed to meet were not local as the members of the family live on three different continents. Web conferencing will offer the chance to host the family business meetings using a computer and Internet service.

Lately, Mahrez Company did not implement managerial and commercial practices adapted to their needs because of the lack of mastery of the theoretical and technical plan. For the first time, conflicts have existed between the family members about who runs the company, and they affected the family and the management. Generally, these issues are due to conflicts between the family and the company. The emotional aspect often dominates the various stages of development of companies such as succession of the company, the and its professionalism related to its growth. In the majority of cases, these conflicts remain between the leader and his successor; however, this time the whole family gets involved. This justifies the importance of the separation between professional and private life. The establishment of an independent unit proves indispensable. This unit ensures at the same time the management of the organization and the management of the treasury. Besides, it should be neutral so the interest of one family member cannot be above the interest of the company. For example, a family member who is a manager may not make his children work in the company if they are not competent and skilled. Hence the need to separate professional life from private life. Additionally, the unit must have special authority to impose sanctions in case of non-compliance with the rules governing the family company.

In the Mahrez family business, the family decides on the manager's strategy and succession. As most of this generation has decided to follow their dreams outside the family business. The only option was two young cousins. The two cousins who managed the business are not doing the job because they want to do it but because it is an obligation for them. The company is losing clients and the competitors are getting fiercer lately. One of the family members always took the position but immediately the company needs to hire someone with experience to lead it. One of the employees worked under Tessa management and Eya. She is an honest, hard worker and proud to work at the company. Moreover, the candidate knows the business and the products and services the company offers. She has an idea about the specific and the nature of the job. Leaders can schedule a Web conference to decide how they will do the recruitment; do they interview her and other candidates and then they decide, or they will decide between then and then inform the one that they choose.

Consistently, the company needs to modernize its strategies. They need to have a website. Today, every business should have a good website. Therefore, when designing the website, they need to put themselves in the shoes of the current customers and the potential ones too. They need to let them know about business strength and successful history. By having a website, the company will feed the curiosity of the customers and facilitate their approach to make contact. They must be able to discover the business through the site whenever and wherever they want it. Through an online catalog, photos of the latest products and services, the customers or potential customers can easily get information. The new generation takes many buying decisions behind the screen. Even before entering the business, they are already predisposed to make their purchase. The final decision will be supported by an online presence. As well, the customers want to know even more about the history, the successful past, the team, and the products and services. Imagine customers who bought 5 years ago from the company and he wants to order again at home, if they can get everything on the website, they will be delighted. It will thus be much easier for the company to retain the customers. The web is an important source of information for any new client but also for those who already trust it.

Two of the members of the family are studying Master of Science in Computer Information Systems with a specialty in Information technology. Therefore, they can create and maintain the website. The leaders can schedule a Web conferencing to choose the design, decide on the texts and images to be used and how and when they will publish the website on the web. Then, they can start by making a

stylish and functional website template that the family can choose to use or modify it as they wish.

As well, the company needs to lower the costs even if this is not an issue faced by the Mahrez business right now. The schedule of the company is like this:

	7:00 to 12:00	12:30 to 18:00	18:30 to 23:00
Men	X		х
Women		Х	

As the number of customers has decreased in the morning and the evening, a new schedule should be introduced. The leaders can schedule an entire Web conferencing to decide about it.

	8:00 to 12:00	12:30 to 18:00	18:30 to 22:00
Men	X		X
Women		Х	

This schedule may be a solution to the excessive increase in the costs.

#### **Destiny Phase**

Destiny Phase is the last phase of the 4D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry and the commencement of a continuing establishment of an "appreciative learning culture." In the future, Mahrez business needs to plan more of those Web conferencing as they increase work efficiency. Several benefits will come with those meetings. The company needs to plan more of those meetings as communication is a key factor in the success of any company. While planning the meeting schedule, it needs to make sure they include their employees' opinions and ideas so they can ask questions, voice their concerns and they need to be more involved to get precision on complex subjects. At this stage of the process, it is crucial to have a great number of alterations taking shape within the company. The most important alteration is the collective effort to bring the company back to the first phase. A full circle should be going on to have a continuous learning and discovering process.

This year the company will be 60 years old. Consequently, they need to celebrate what they have achieved, what they are achieving and what they will be achieved in the future.

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#### U

Theory U provides concrete tools to solve problems uniquely, and consists of changing the problem solver's thinking approach, ways and means. A problem can become worse when managers provide a solution based on routine methods of resolving problems. The organizational system usually may need an update. Several types of research were done concerning what leaders do and how they do it, but few of them explored the inner place, the source from which they operate and it is this source that "Theory U" tries to explore.

This section will describe The Fifth Discipline (Senge, 1990) and Theory U (Scharmer, 2009) as a conceptual framework to solve complex organizational problems that encourage leaders to change their methods of thinking. A literature review will provide an understanding of these approaches.

#### The U: One Process, Five Movements

Otto Scharmer (2007), refers to the U-process as five movements: co-initiating, co-sensing, pre-sensing, co-creating, and co-evolving in his new book, Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges. Scharmer defines this as moving "first into intimate connection with the world and to a place of inner knowing that can emerge from within, followed by bringing forth the new, which entails discovering the future by doing." The following case study demonstrates the five-step process.

Scharmer present Presencing as a journey with five movements:

- **1.** Co-initiating: discovering common intentions and listening to others.
- **2.** Co-sensing: Observing, Observing, and Observing. Seeing reality and listen with mind and heart wide open
- **3.** Co-presencing: connecting to maximum future potential and the Source of Inspiration and Will
- **4.** Co-creating prototyping to learn by doing and to bring the new into reality to explore the future
- **5.** Co-shaping/ Co-evolving: embodying and institutionalizing the new— evolving the larger eco-system.

To move from movement to another, we must get on on a journey.

Seven Theory U Leadership Capacities:

The journey through the U develops seven essential leadership capacities.

- 1. Holding the space to listening
- 2. Observing
- 3. Sensing
- 4. Pre-sensing
- 5. Crystallizing
- 6. Prototyping
- 7. Performing / Co-Evolving

Family organizations, such as the Mahrez Company, have problems in their issue resolution systems. Even though simple problems may be solved by staff working alone, other problems necessitate the changing of the problem solver's philosophy approach as the circumstances around the problems change.

At present, these complicated problems span multiple systems and require issue resolution with multiple family members. Furthermore, the more an organization develops routine systems to perform everyday tasks, the more challenging the change, and adaptation become. In response to the increasing revolution of organizational life, Theory U (Scharmer, 2009) may be capable to help leaders and managers understand these complex and modernized problems that require leaders to change their thinking methodology and develop the knowledge, expertise, and talents to solve complex problems. Correspondingly, this conceptual tool may create new approaches to solving future Mahrez Company problems.

#### **Co-initiation**

In the first step in the agenda, the group should first set up the group, defining its purpose, and beginning to discuss the dialogue process. They need to decide who they will invite to join the working group, and then those participants would suggest other persons who might have a crucial awareness in hiring and maybe expanding the market. In the past, it was challenging to hold meetings when most of the members of the family that needed to meet were not local as the members of the family live on three different continents. Web conferencing will offer the chance to host the family business meetings using a computer and Internet service. Then the group will begin their online dialogue, once all have accepted the invitation.

#### **Co-sensing**

Now and then, it can be hard for a member of my family of different generations to understand each other. Miscommunication and confusion happen frequently between younger members and the older one. Ideas, experiences, and strategies that younger generations try to adapt within the company may seem strange and absurd to those who are older and vice versa. At the core of most of the conflict and misunderstanding that develops between the different employees of generations are communication style core and motivation. Frustration can flow both ways - from older employees with younger employees and younger employees with their colleagues who are senior in age.

Both generations need to observe, observe, and observe to learn from older colleagues and their experiences. Overall, individuals from different generations reflect differently and make unusual choices from other generations because what they value is not the same.

#### Pre-sensing

The company needs to plan more of the online meeting as communication is a key factor in the success of any company. While planning the meeting schedule, they need to make sure that they include our employees' opinions and ideas and that everyone in the process can ask questions, voice their concerns, their thoughts, and feelings. They need to be more involved to get precision on complex subjects. The leaders need to connect to their source of inspiration and come together as one voice to guide the group.

#### **Co-creating**

The co-creation movement of the U journey results in a set of small living examples that explore the future by doing. It also results in a vibrant and rapidly widening network of change-makers who leverage their learning across prototypes and who help each other deal with whatever innovation challenges they face. (Scharmer, 2017)

An online store needs to be on the website, as ecommerce becomes a necessity. Selling online should not require any technical knowledge. Therefore, the company can add the items, the payment methods, configure the settings like delivery and the currencies and put the online store online. The management of the shop should be done in a simple and fast way. As a result, the company can manage the inventory, product categories, taxes, deliveries and currencies in just a few clicks.

#### **Co-evolving**

The final stage of the process will be all staff start working together online and by telephone to share their varied stages in the U-process; they will be learning from each other as they gather information moving toward the objectives planned at the beginning of the process. At the end of resolving these problems, a few key personnel of my family should meet together to make plans and strategies that matter to finalize this process.

#### Seven Theory U Leadership Capacities:

The journey through the U develops seven essential leadership capacities.

#### Holding the space to listening:

People with Empathy strength are "welcoming and provide a safe place for people to express their feelings." (Gallup, 2019) Several customers and most of the employees were telling Eva M. their secrets and asking her to advise them even that she was younger than they were. They told her several times that she can be a good listener. She always encourages them to express their idea and listen to the preliminary capacity of Theory U. By listening to them means, she pays attention to others to oneself and to what arises from the collective effort. Therefore, when they are not at their best, she tries her best to take it easy on them and help them as possible as she could even before they asked. Effective listening calls for the establishment of open space in which others can contribute without fear.

#### Observing

Eya always wants to know how she is doing, and this is one of the main traits of Competition strength. She appreciates having her performance measured so she wanted to know where she is placed among her ancestors who managed the company. She was always asking Tessa to tell her how she was doing. Using this type of measurement is how she gained meaning from what she was doing and even it was proving over the years to be a determining factor to her success. As she has the strength of Competition, she saw the environment of the business in comparison with everyone. Her beliefs and values directed her decisions and influenced her relationships at work. Also, her beliefs and values give her the capacity to interrupt the "voice of judgment" that is fundamental to move from projection to true observation.

#### Sensing and Presencing

The preparation for the experience at the bottom of the U-pre-sensing-requires that leaders on the Mahrez Company turn three instruments: the open mind, the open heart, and the open will. Everyone needs to learn to take constructive criticism and appreciation from each other, guiding the group forward without being prescriptive and to remain mentally and emotionally open to each other's divergent ideas, methods of working, and styles of interpersonal communication. I have noticed though that, it's not about age, it's about core values. The older generation of my family is used to solving problems uniquely, that they are used to doing it for everyday problems and that they are not convinced by the new ways we are trying to use to solve the same problems. Leaders and supervisors need to understand what is important to see together with depth and clarity to be aware of their collective potential to drive the business to new levels of success.

# Crystallizing

Having the strength of a learner, Eya as the leader is "drawn to learn new things" (Gallup, 2019), she was eager to learn everything about my family business. During the journey of learning, she was so excited, and she was very satisfied each time she learned something new. She asked the employees several questions about their daily routines, customers, processes of services, and our products. She felt like she was continuously improving through learning. This process of learning was thrilling because the business was growing as she learned more about it. The more she learned, the more confident she was to lead. Creating a small group of three or two persons that are required to learn more about the purpose and outcomes of the expansion project will give us the power of creating an energy field that attracts people, opportunities, and resources that make the expansion happen if the company decides to do it. This core group functions as a vehicle for the whole to manifest.

# Prototyping

Going down the left side of the U necessitates the company needs to open up and face the resistance of beliefs, reactions, and determination; moving up the right side involves the integration in the context of concrete applications and learning by doing. That's not to say that extending our market inside or abroad will be an easy step but we need to open and seize opportunities.

#### Performing

As an organization needs to perform at a macro level, our company needs to hire the right leaders. One of the family members always took the position but immediately the company needs to hire someone with experience to lead it. The company needs to engage in new strategies that allow us to shift from debating to co-creating the new future.

In summary, the seven Theory U leadership capacities are the enabling conditions that must be in place for the U process and its moments to work. In the absence of these seven leadership capacities, the U process cannot be realized.

# High performance work system (HPWS)

HPWS manages the system practices for employees in an organization and is also dedicated towards employee effectiveness. To ensure that all the employees of Mahrez company are dedicated towards the company's goal, this system needs to be implemented. Now, what company itself can do in order to create this environment is by training employees, giving them compensation, job security, and flextime. For Mahrez business, if the company wants to be successful, they need to care about the needs of their employees. A leader can serve as a coach, as a facilitator, visionary, supportive, and have a positive attitude. When all the employees would know that

HPWS however, is not directly related to the organizational performance Social structure also plays an important role into the organization. In order to do that, Mahrez's company needs to bridge weak ties between employees. Any organization, of any kind, gets success when all workers are happy and are committed to their work. And this commitment comes from what Mahrez company has to offer to their employees. It is completely on a leader what kind of environment he wants to have in his department, what kind of relationship he wants to develop with his team members, how he interacts with the employees, and most importantly, how and why he cares about the whole team. In order to do all this, the leader of Mahrez company has to be strategic about the steps they want to take, confident about them, and to be positive about successfully implementing it.

# CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The Mahrez business is an entity whose capital is owned by members of the same family and of which at least two directors are from the same family. It consists of the father Bashir, the wife Tessa and, their children, and grandchildren, from a succession perspective. The decision-making power belongs to the parents. These decisions mainly concern the company's development strategy and that of the manager's succession. In general, these strategies focus on medium and long-term projects. Compared to other competitor companies in the area that were not family-oriented, the Mahrez business has many advantages to guarantee sustainable development. This need to succeed, and the ability to predetermine success, is what usually energizes this family business. This paper has reviewed how Appreciative Inquiry as a new perception of reasoning where focusing on an organization's positive features and its capabilities helps perceive assets. It also determines what works out best for the business and how to come up with solutions that are best linked to the specific need and environment of each organization. Then this paper has reviewed how Theory U, is an approach of concentrating on organization interior situation, which differs from

the usual way of finding a problem solution by observing and analyzing past experiences. Family organizations, such as the Mahrez Company, have problems in their issue resolution systems. Theory U supporters' state that a lot of leaders are visionless to the significance of this internal situation awareness that helps solve complex problems. Leaders need to "let go" of everything that is not essential. Then they need to determine what they need ("let come") their highest possible future self. Without this perspective, an organization will continue to have the same or similar problems because it only focuses on surface issues. Adapting Theory U alone is not capable to help leaders and managers to understand these complex and modernized problems that require leaders to change their thinking methodology and develop the knowledge, expertise, and talents to solve complex problems if they are not willing to open up to the Seven Theory U Leadership Capacities. Finally, this paper has reviewed how through the implementation of the High-Performance Work System, a leader can bring a change in the Mahrez company by motivating workers towards the company's goal.

In conclusion, this paper is not without limitations. First of all, due to the difficulties of data collection, the description in Destiny Phase and the description in the Co-evolving phase were limited. Additionally, this paper only selects a one-point view and does not conduct a cross-family study. Finally, the Theory U process applies to large innovation projects where the unfolding takes place over a long time. It will be a useful tool for Mahrez Company even though implementation could be difficult if the company decides to opt for international expansion. Therefore, extra researchers may be performed.s

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