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# How All In Are We Really?: An Examination of Eastern Illinois University's "All In" Branding Campaign's Impact on Tenured Faculty Members' Organizational Identification and Commitment

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How All In Are We Really?: An Examination of Eastern Illinois University's "All In" Branding

Campaign's Impact on Tenured Faculty Members' Organizational Identification and

Commitment

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**Abstract**

Organizations are constantly putting out messages to the world, and many of these external messages speak on behalf of the organization's internal members. While organizations often thoroughly examine whether these messages have the intended effect on target audiences, current research lacks answers to how internal members perceive and are impacted by these messages. To gain greater insight into the relationship between an organization's external messages and the impact those messages have on internal members, this thesis examines Eastern Illinois University's "All In" branding campaign and its perceived effect on tenured faculty members' organizational identification and commitment. Ten tenured-faculty members were interviewed about their lived experience with the branding campaign. Analysis revealed three themes regarding organizational identification and two themes regarding organizational commitment. Theoretical and practical implications for organizational communication research are discussed, and recommendations for future research are presented.

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**Chapter I**

**Introduction**

Organizations are constantly communicating. Whether to internal or external audiences, every action taken by an organization sends a message that others need to interpret. It goes without saying an organization's external messages have an impact on its internal members but interesting questions arise around the extent of that impact and how such messages influence members' interpretations of their organizational life. According to Du Gay (1996), organizational life greatly impacts how people define and identify themselves. Understanding how organizational members make sense of external messaging allows us to get a deeper look into interpretations of organizational life. This thesis examines Eastern Illinois University's "All In" branding campaign in order to determine the impact an organization's external messaging has on internal organizational members. The goal of this study was to determine in what ways the "All In" branding campaign's messages affected tenured faculty members' perceptions of their organizational identification and commitment.

Located in Charleston, Illinois, Eastern Illinois University is home to 7,806 students – 6,252 undergraduate students and 1,554 graduate students (Eastern Illinois University, 2019, p. 11). Eastern is also ranked in the top third of Midwest universities in its class by U.S. News and World report (2019 Best Regional Universities Midwest Ranking, 2019). On July 1, 2015, Illinois' state government entered a budget impasse that affected many public universities – including Eastern. Without a state budget, Eastern could not receive state funding, and this lack of funding had a drastic impact on the university: scholarship cuts, lower funding across all departments, and employee layoffs. By the end of the crisis, the university would lay off more than 400 employees (Engel, 2019).

To combat the effects of the budget impasse, Eastern took steps to ensure the university's future success. In 2017, Eastern's President, Dr. David Glassman, introduced the Vitalization Project with the goal of assessing "the viability and operation efficiency of [Eastern Illinois University's] array of academic programs; student services; enrollment management practices; facilities; intercollegiate sports; and university marketing and branding strategies, and recommend appropriate actions" (Vitalization Project, n.d.). The Vitalization Project was led by nine workgroups comprised of university staff, faculty, and students. Workgroup 6 was "tasked with identifying opportunities in gained efficiency and opportunities for growth" for university marketing and branding (University Marketing and Branding Workgroup #6, 2016, p. 1). In their final recommendation report, Workgroup 6 emphasized the importance of having a strong brand on and off campus for recruiting and maintaining students (University Marketing and Branding Workgroup #6, 2016, pp. 7-11). According to Glassman (2017) during a town hall presentation, Workgroup 6 recommended that Eastern Illinois University hire an outside marketing group to help revamp their marketing and branding efforts.

Through Workgroup 6's recommendation, Eastern Illinois University teamed up with The Thorburn Group in the spring of 2017 and then in October 2017, Eastern launched its first significant branding campaign since the budget crisis. According to Glassman's 2017 State of the University Address, the goal of this campaign was "to expand awareness of our extraordinary and unique EIU story to a broader audience of prospective students and families" (Glassman, 2018, para. 43). The branding project introduced four brand pillars to help achieve these goals: 1) active community of opportunity; 2) fully engaged faculty, staff, and administration; 3) sized for success, and 4) an accessible and inclusive experience. The Thorburn group also introduced new brand character (the feel that the branding should take on) and a new centering idea

("extraordinary investment in individuals"). A new brand declaration was also introduced: "All

In." The Thorburn Group explains this declaration as:

> When we welcome a student, we're all in. We're committed to helping them achieve. To
> lift them up so they can see what they can become. We make an extraordinary, personal
> investment in each student that most schools would never consider. Faculty members
> here are incredibly invested in you as a person, well beyond imparting knowledge. Most
> are longtime members of our close community and can't imagine doing it any other way.
> While the size is personal, there are also plenty of opportunities to grow, from engaging
> in clubs and sports, to community service and networking with our dedicated alumni.

Since the "All In" branding campaign was released, Eastern Illinois University has updated its

website, décor around campus, social media, and more to reflect this new brand image. The "All

In" branding campaign is still ongoing, with Eastern Illinois University actively accepting

overall thoughts, complaints, suggestions, and unique stories to help continuously improve the

brand. This study examines how the messages communicated by the "All In" branding campaign

have impacted tenured faculty member's perception of their organizational identification and

commitment.

Mael and Ashforth (1992) define organizational identification as the perception of

oneness with, or belongingness to, an organization. Organizational identification is essential to

the success of organizations (Pratt, 1998) and can lead to many positive outcomes based on the

extent to which an employee defines him or herself in terms of the organization(s) that he or she

belongs to (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Pratt (1998) writes, "organizational identification occurs

when one comes to integrate beliefs about one's organization into one's identity" (p.172).

Identification can also be considered to be "the tendency of individuals to perceive themselves

and their groups or organizations as intertwined, sharing common qualities and faults, successes

and failures, and common destinies" (Mael & Tetrick, 1992, p. 813).  Dutton, Dukerich, and

Harquail (1994) demonstrate the importance of organizational identification by explaining how

employees with a sense of organizational identification feel less alienated and have increased job satisfaction – in addition to being more likely to remain with the organization and expend effort on its behalf.

Organization identification is also positively related to individuals' organizational commitment (O'Reily & Chatman, 1986). Similar to organizational identification, there are a plethora of definitions found in the research on organizational commitment. Buchanan (1974) viewed organizational commitment as "a partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of an organization, to one's role in relation to the goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental work" (p. 533). It is the willingness of an employee to exert high levels of effort on behalf of an organization, a strong desire to stay with an organization, and an acceptance of an organization's major goals and values (Porter, 1968).

It is no secret that organizations want to have high performing employees, and one of the main factors in determining a worker's performance is their commitment to the organization (Ali, Rehman, Ali, Yousaf, & Zia, 2010). In fact, Kantor (1968) defines it as the willingness of a social actor to give energy and loyalty to an organization. Therefore, it is important for organizations to be aware of what influences their employees' commitment. Some factors that have been found to inspire commitment include: leadership style (Lo, Ramayah, & Min, 2009; Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Shastric, Shashi, & Sinha, 2010), organizational fairness (Ponnu & Chuah, 2010), corporate social responsibility (Ali et al. 2010), and organizational culture (Dex & Smith, 2001). Irefine and Mechanic (2014) state that "employees with high commitment to an organization see themselves as an integral part of the organization […] Such employees become creatively involved in the organization's mission and values, and constantly

think of ways to do their jobs better. In essence, committed employees work for the organization as if the organization belongs to them" (p. 34).

Albert and Whetten (1985) consider universities to be "holographic organizations" which is where members share a common organization-wide identity and so are less likely to deal with competing demands from department level identities. As members of holographic organizations, university members are expected to be onboard with the messages that the university puts out since those messages are often speaking on behalf of its members. Looking at a higher education organization, such as Eastern, allows this thesis to get a unique point of view about how branding messages impact organizational members.  Previous research studies of higher education institutions' campaigns examine the impact on potential/incoming students or how donation/giving campaigns attempt to persuade organizational members to donate. For example, Grant (2011) examined how Arizona State University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences released three campaigns in an attempt to increase enrollment while Kim et al. (2016) compared the ways that the United States and South Korea promoted their giving campaigns to external and internal organizational members. Mael and Ashforth (1992) found that when alumni had greater identification with their alma mater, they generated greater financial contributions for the institution. While many researchers have looked at promotional or giving campaigns, the author is aware of none that examined a branding campaign such as the "All In" campaign which was launched with the goal to "expand awareness of our extraordinary and unique EIU story to a broader audience of prospective students and families" (Glassman, 2018, para. 43).

Organizational identification is important to explore in this thesis because Eastern quite literally makes the claim that Eastern – inclusive of all organizational members, such as faculty members, – are "all in" for their students. Pratt (2000) explains that employee identification

translates directly into how organizational employees represent company products and services to the public. Organizational commitment was also essential to explore concerning the branding campaign because, once again, its premise is essentially claiming that employees are fully committed to Eastern and its students, mission, etc. In a practical sense, the findings of this study expand our current understanding of the impact an organization's external messages have on its internal audiences.

The following chapter provides a review of literature that outlines a framework for understanding organizational identification, organizational commitment, and organizational branding. Chapter III discusses the methods used to gather data for this study and explains the analysis process. Chapter IV provides an in-depth analysis of the data gathered during interviews with ten tenured faculty members at Eastern regarding their experiences with the "All In" branding campaign. Finally, chapter V provides a discussion of the significance of the findings, limitations, and implications, as well as suggestions for future research.

**Chapter II**

**Literature Review**

In order to understand the ways in which an organization's external messaging, such as Eastern's "All In" branding campaign, affects internal members, this chapter reviews existing literature in order to build a base understanding of the organizational topics. First, literature regarding organizational identification is examined. Then, literature regarding organizational commitment is discussed. Lastly, organizational branding is explored. Each review will also specifically address issues related to higher education institutions. First, organizational identification is examined.

**Organizational Identification**

Defined as "the perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failure as one's own" (Mael & Ashforth, 1992, p. 104), organizational identification is essential to the success of organizations (Pratt, 1998).  It can lead to many positive outcomes based on the extent to which an employee defines him or herself in terms of the organization(s) to which he or she belongs (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). However, individuals may also engage with the process of organizational identification by adopting or assuming the identity of an organization that they wish to belong to as well (Dallimore, 2017). This process tends to result in an alignment among an individual's personal values and beliefs and the values and beliefs embodied by the organization as a collective (Dallimore, 2017). The process of organizational identification can occur both formally and informally and is deeply embedded in the communication of an organization. It is important to note that organizational identification is not simply a component of general work-related attitudes, such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment. Instead, Yu (2017) suggests that organizational

identification serves "as a causal basis from which these job attitudes stem, underscoring the important of this construct" (p. 1114).

Bullis and Bach (1989) note that organizational identification is an outcome of organizational socialization. Organizational socialization is "the process by which a person secures relevant job skills, acquires a functional level of organizational understanding, attains supportive social interactions with coworkers, and generally accepts the established ways of a particular organization" (Taormina, 1997, p. 29). Taormina's (1997) definition of organizational socialization implies that it plays a major part in helping employees become successful in their organizational roles. Through the socialization process, organizational newcomers are able to understand the values, norms, and expectations associated with being a member of a given organization. The organizational socialization process occurs "through communication with existing members and involves both surprise and sense-making as a newcomer's expectations are violated; this subprocess is called organizational assimilation" (Dallimore, 2017, p. 1163). This process often includes orientation activities and mentoring opportunities that demonstrate how the process of socialization, and thus organizational identification, assumes reality is socially constructed through communication.

Research also suggests that organizational identification is positively associated with a wide range of employee role behaviors (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008). Organizations, as a whole, experience different positive outcomes from identification such as decreased turnover and turnover intention (van Dick et al, 2004), increased job satisfaction (Carmeli, Gilat, & Waldman, 2007), and increased job motivation (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). In addition, organizational identification is shown to have an impact on organizational members' self-perception and decision-making (Dallimore, 2017). It is important for scholars to study

organizational identification and for organizations to utilize this research "because it is the process by which people come to define themselves, communicate that definition to others, and use that definition to navigate their lives, work-wise or other" (Ashforth et al., 2008, p. 334).

Pratt (1998) writes, "organizational identification occurs when one comes to integrate beliefs about one's organization into one's identity" (p.172). This can also be considered to be "the tendency of individuals to perceive themselves and their groups or organizations as intertwined, sharing common qualities and faults, successes and failures, and common destinies" (Mael & Tetrick, 1992, p. 813). However, this could also include one's dis-identification from, or indifference toward, the organization. Zavyalova (2016) states that "the perception of connectedness, detachment, or lack of connection between people and the organization affects how much attention they pay to the information about the organization and how they interpret this information" (p. 531). Ahmad and Islam (2018) suggest that "an organization's effectiveness is directly associated to its employees' level of identification" (p. 112). When employees perceive that their own goals and career objectives align with their organization's goals and objectives, their organizational identification grows stronger (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Perceived organizational prestige also plays a role in employees' organizational identification. Mael and Ashforth (1992) suggest that the more prestigious an organization appears the greater the employee's potential for raising their self-esteem due to organizational identification.

Organizational identification is also correlated with extra-role performance behaviors. Extra-role behavior is defined as "behavior that attempts to benefit the organization and that goes beyond existing role expectations" (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006, p. 33). Simply put, employees who identify strongly with their organization tend to engage in more extra-role

performance behaviors – which further benefits an organization. Another benefit that

organizations reap when their employees' have high organizational identification is how those

employees talk about their organizations. For example, Humphreys and Brown (2002) found that

when students perceived that their values aligned with their university, they were more likely to

speak positively about it and were more likely to demonstrate positive citizenship behaviors.

Employees with high organizational identification have also been found to make sacrifices on

behalf of the organization (Gibson & Papa, 2000). On the other hand, employees with weak

organizational identification have been found to make little attempt to communicate their

relationship with their organization in addition to contributing little to improve organizational

success (Chang, Taylor, Kuo, & Su, 2013). Individuals who report low identification with an

organization are also far less likely to support the organization if it has been accused of wrong-

doing, while individuals with a higher level of identification will still stand with and support that

organization regardless of the accusations (Zavyalova, Pfarrer, Reger, & Hubbard, 2016).

**Organizational Identification in Higher Education Institutions**

Research on organizational identification has wiggled itself into a wide range of areas.

Some examples include corporate social responsibility (Dutton, Dukerich, & Haequail, 1994),

company culture (Pratt, 2000), organizational reputation (Zavyalova, Pfarrer, Reger, & Hubbard,

2016), message characteristics (Tanis & Beukeboom, 2011), and organizational partnerships

(Cornwell, Howard-Grenville, & Hampel, 2018). However, many gaps in the research still

remain – specifically when looking at higher education institutions. The issue of identification is

particularly relevant in professional organizations – such as universities – where professionals

can sometimes be more identified with their own profession than with the organization they work

for (Hekman, Steensma, Bigley, & Hereford, 2009; Russo 1998). Scholars who have examined

higher education institutions and organizational identification have covered a broad range of

topics. For example, Tsui and Ngo (2015) examined how four organizational antecedents –

organizational distinctiveness, interorganizational competition, intraorganizational competition,

and organizational prestige – impact organizational identification. Mael and Ashforth (1992)

found that when alumni had greater identification with their alma mater, those alumni gave

greater financial contributions. Eury, Kreiner, Trevino, and Gioia (2018) investigated how

university alumni may have a "legacy identification" which allows them to continue defining

themselves in relation to organizational values and ideals after graduation – even after a scandal.

It is important to note that legacy identification is not limited to former members of an

organization. Eury et al. (2018) explained that current organizational members could also

experience legacy identification when they reflect on how they previously identified with said

organization – before leadership change, merger, scandal, etc.

Additional research on organizational identification and higher education institutions

found a variety of effects that organizational identification could have on students. Grant (2011)

examines how Arizona State University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences released three

campaigns in an attempt to increase enrollment amidst budget cuts – similar to the budget cuts

Eastern faced before launching the "All In" branding campaign – and found that a different

approach to marketing their summer courses was an effective way to increase enrollment. A

study by Newbold, Mehta, and Forbus (2009) suggests that commuter students were less likely to

identify with their universities, were less involved in university-sponsored events, and were less

likely to join alumni associations after graduation. Myers, Davis, Richardson, and Seibold (2016)

found positive relationships between students' organizational identification and trust and

satisfaction with the university – satisfaction also being a key component of organizational

commitment. Little research has been done regarding faculty members' organizational

identification – a gap this thesis intends minimize through its findings.

**Organizational Commitment**

Organizational identification is often mistakenly used interchangeably with other

organizational communication concepts – particularly organizational commitment (van

Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). While both concepts reflect a psychological linkage between an

individual and an organization, identification and organizational commitment offer organizations

unique benefits. Van Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006) state, "while commitment refers to a

relationship in which the individual and the organization are separate entities psychologically,

identification implies that the individual and the organization are one in a sense that the

organization is included in individual's self-conception" (p. 574). Simply put, organizational

identification deals with how an individual views themself as the organization while

organizational commitment is viewed as an attitude towards the organization. However, despite

the difference in these two concepts, Yu (2017) states that organizational commitment has the

strongest positive relationship with organizational identification as opposed to other job attitudes

– such as job satisfaction or involvement. This demonstrates the importance and relevance of

examining these two concepts together.

Early definitions of organizational commitment vary considerably. However, these

definitions all understood organizational commitment to involve an employee's relationship with

their organization and how that relationship influences an employee's intention to stay with an

organization (Allen, 2017). Over time, these definitions have expanded. Buchanan (1974)

explains organizational commitment as "a partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values

of an organization, to one's role in relation to the goals and values, and to the organization for its

own sake, apart from its purely instrumental work" (p. 533). Baba (2017) states that organizational commitment may involve recognition with, tendency to stay in, and willingness to exert efforts for an organization. However, it is important to note that organizational commitment goes beyond just simply being willing to do the work that you have been assigned. Christensen, Nesbit, and Stritch (2018) suggest that organizational commitment is a "necessary social process" (p. 646) that is more than simply engaging in organizational activities. It is the beliefs and feelings formed internally, or as a set of intentions, that enrich an employee's desire to remain with an organization and to accept its major goals and values (Porter, Crampton, & Smith, 1976).

Meyer and Allen (1991) distinguished three components of organizational commitment in their three-component model (TMC): affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to employees staying with their organization based off their emotional attachment to the organization; continuance commitment refers to when employees choose to stay with their organization based off of the balance of risks and rewards of leaving; and normative commitment refers to employees staying with an organization due to obligations such as loyalty and obedience (Ahuja, Padhy, & Srivastava, 2018). All three components are essential to consider when discussing organizational commitment. However, researchers have demonstrated that affective commitment provides the most enduring sense of loyalty and continued commitment (Evanschitzky, Iyer, Plassmann, Niessing, & Meffert, 2006). Additionally, affective commitment to an organization has been linked to a wide range of positive outcomes, such as decreased job turnover (Almutairi, 2016), increased job satisfaction (Folorunso, Adewale, & Abodunde, 2014), increased organizational citizenship behavior (van Gelderen & Bik, 2016), and increased job performance (Zayas-Ortiz, Rosario, Marquez, &

Gruñeiro, 2015). Meyer and Allen (1991) found that when employees have higher levels of organizational commitment, there is also an increase in organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

In order to measure organizational commitment, researchers and practitioners often assess commitment using a multiple-item questionnaire that gets administered directly to employees (Allen, 2017). Steers, Mowday, and Porter developed a 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) the 1970s in order to assess identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to organizations (Steers, Mowday, & Porter, 1979). Allen (2017) states that the OCQ is a "psychometrically sound measure of desire-based (affective) commitment" (p. 1084). Overall, the evidence shows that the OCQ – and other measures of organizational commitment – are reliable, assess the three distinct components, and correlate with other variables in order to measure organizational commitment (Allen, 2017). However, this thesis will not be measuring participant's organizational committed through the OCQ. This thesis specifically focuses on understanding participants' perception of their own organization commitment through the telling of organizational narratives.

Research done on organizational commitment has identified a range of factors – both individual and organizational – that have an impact on organization commitment (Ahuja, Padhy, & Srivastava, 2018). According to Ahuja et al. (2018) individual factors can be age and tenure, gender, education, employment alternatives, and sense of competence while organizational factors include perceived structure, processes, climate, job satisfaction, organizational culture, and organization socialization. It can be incredibly costly for organizations when employees' organizational commitment is low. Hausknecht, Hiller, and Vance (2008) found that employees with lower organizational commitment are more likely to make mistakes in their role, tend to be

absent more often, tend to experience higher levels of stress, and have greater intentions of

leaving their job. Meyer and Allen (1997) found that committed employees will continue to stay

in an organization under both favorable and unfavorable circumstances – while an uncommitted

employee is much more likely to leave once conditions turn unfavorable.

**Organizational Commitment in Higher Education Institutions**

Similar to organizational identification, organizational commitment research can be

found across multiple contexts. Many studies focus on the detriments of low employee

commitment (Griffith & Hom, 1988), commitment in relation to job satisfaction (Markovits et

al., 2007), and predictors of organizational commitment (Timalsina, Sarala, Ria, & Chhantyal,

2018). Scholars have also examined organizational commitment in regard to faculty members in

higher education institutions. Lawrence, Ott, and Bell (2012) examined the linkage between

organizational commitment and citizenship behaviors with faculty members of universities. They

found that organizational commitment was positively associated with citizenship behaviors such

as being responsive to administration and accepting additional opportunities for advancement.

Afif (2018) explored the relationship between perceived organization support and organizational

commitment with faculty members in the public sector of higher education and found that

perceived support from the organization is significantly associated with organizational

commitment. Zhang (2019) researched if faculty members using emotions in their teaching

impacted their organizational commitment. The study concluded that emotions in teaching play a

critical role in academics' organizational commitment – a conclusion that may be interesting to

look at in regard to the emotions involved with Eastern Illinois University's "All In" branding

campaign and its impact in regard to organizational commitment for employees. Love (2013)

measured organizational commitment in undergraduate students based on factors such as gender,

race, transfer status, and GPA. Timalsina at al. (2018) examined potential predictors of

organizational commitment among university faculty, such as job satisfaction and highest

attained education degree, while Li, Castano, and Li (2018) looked at the effects of perceptions

of supervisor support and organizational justice on affective commitment amount university

instructors. Similarly to organizational identification, the research done so far on organizational

commitment has left gaps concerning university community-building campaigns and how those

external messages impact university employees.

**Organizational Branding**

　　Defined as "a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's

good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (American Marketing Associate, 2020,

para. 1), a brand is simply how an organization attempts to set itself apart from similar

organizations or products. An organization's identity and its brand often times go hand-in-hand

with each other. Sackett and Kefallonitis (2003) argue that creating a unique brand experience

reflects an organization's advantages over its competitors. In turn, branding helps organizations

maintain their existing customer bases while also helping attract potential new consumers. Aaker

(2004) states that an organization's brand is special due to the fact that it explicitly and

unambiguously represents the organization – as well as its products and services. In addition to

representing the organization, Aaker (2004) also suggests that an organization's branding can

help differentiate it from competitors, create influencers for the brand, provide credibility,

facilitate brand management, support internal brand-building, provide a base for consumer

relationships, and support organizational communication.

　　At the heart of an organization's branding is its organizational identity. Organizational

identity refers to the central, distinctive, and enduring attributes of an organization that

distinguish it from other similar organizations (Albert & Whetten, 1985). By central, they mean

that the identity of the organization is concerned with those things that are core rather than

peripheral; by distinctive, they mean that the identity consists of a set of core features and

characteristics that demonstrate how the organization is similar to, but still different from, others;

by enduring, they mean that the organization's identity is focused on those core elements over a

long space of time, rather than being short-lived (Albert & Whetten, 1985).

Organizational identities help guide organizations when trying to interpret organizational

issues and make potentially difficult decisions (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). An organization's

identity also influences the survival and performance of organizations (Barney, Bundeson, &

Foreman, 1998). Another way of understanding organizational identity is through how

organizational members come to understand their organizations' identities. Organizational

identity is also defined as members' shared understanding of their organization's subjective self-

view (Foreman & Whetten, 2016). It is the answer to the question "Who are we as an

organization?" Foreman and Whetten (2016) suggest that organizations' identities are backed by

social facts and how organizational members make sense of their experiences with the

organization. Organizational branding has been explained as the projection of organizational

identity to primarily external stakeholders (Brønn, 2013). This projection can be accomplished

through an organization's behaviors, symbols, and communication; and this communication can

be verbal or nonverbal, controlled or uncontrolled, and direct or indirect (Brønn, 2013).

Organizational research suggests that an organization's branding impacts a wide range of

areas. Backhaus and Tikoo (2003) maintain that branding has an effect on organizational culture

and that it impacts organizational identity. Huang and Liu (2010) suggest that a correlation exists

between an organization's branding and its employee performance. This is due to the employee's

sense of organizational identification – the "better" an employee perceives their organization's

brand to be, the more that employee identifies with that organization. DelVecchio, Jarvis, Klink,

and Dineen (2007) argue that successful organizational branding also leads to favorable attitudes

among employees. In such cases, employees are more satisfied to be a part of the organization.

Additionally, having a perceived successful brand is useful for organizations because of the

impact it may have on employee recruitment. Rampl (2014) suggests that job seekers

differentiate companies on the basis of their brands. Thus, having a well-developed brand is a

competitive advantage. Edwards (2005) found that companies with perceived stronger

organizational brands can frequently offer less compensation than companies without developed

brands to employees with equal qualifications and skills. These studies demonstrate the

importance of having strong branding for organizations.

**Organizational Branding in Higher Education Institutions**

Branding is a phenomenon that has become increasingly common and popular in higher

education over the last few years. In order to attract new students and faculty, in addition to

appealing to corporate partners and governmental regulators, universities need to engage in a

wide range of identity-, image-, and brand-building activities (Aula, Tienari, & Wæraas, 2015).

These brand-building behaviors allow universities to become more visible and better positioned

than competing universities. Often times, branding efforts in academia are easily observed

through the use of vision/mission statements, visual designs used on and off campus, and core

values – for a few examples. However, to begin these branding efforts, universities must first

define the essence of what the university "is," what it "stands for" and what it is going to be

known for (Wæraas & Solbakk 2008). Ideally, these definitions should be as precise as possible

and communicated very consistently. Ind (2004) also states that it is not sufficient that only top

management knows the brand; all employees must, in a sense, become brand managers and "live the brand." However, this is not easily achievable in higher education institutions due to the fact that these organizations are often very complex.

Harvey (1996) identifies four groups that benefit from higher education: students, parents, institution authorities, and society at large. He also suggests that branding in higher education helps students and their parents identify the particular services offered by universities and encourages those groups to buy-in to those institutions. McAlexander, Koenig, and Schouten (2006) state that although the core product of higher education, the development and transfer of knowledge, is intangible, researchers can measure the success of a university's branding in terms of assessment of students and alumni perceptions in regard to the quality of their education and satisfaction with their overall educational experience. A major goal of branding – especially in the competitive field of academia – is differentiating organizations from each other. However, organizational branding is not only about differentiation. Hatch and Schultz (2003) suggest that organizational branding in higher education is often times about belonging – especially for groups, such as students. Balmer and Liao (2007) found that when students identify with their university's brand, they view their degree as a life-long membership with the university and use that degree as a way of defining their own self – even after graduation.

According to research, having a strong brand is important for universities for a wide range of reasons. Blanton (2007) states that the public is more likely to support a higher education institution if it has some level of recognition – such as a strong branding presence. Branding also allows for higher education organizations to provide information and images that combine neutral information with information that is intended to create emotional ties with various stakeholders (Stensake, 2007). Belanger, Mount, and Wilson (2002) also suggest that

branding efforts may be a promising way to initiate internal change within higher education institutions. Often time, faculty members have a strong focus on their academic fields, but by having a strong brand presence with which faculty can identify, universities may be able to get faculty to express interest in extra-role behaviors. De Chernatony and McDonald (2005) assert that a successful brand delivers a sustainable competitive advantage and invariably results in higher profitability and market performance for universities. In addition, Bennett, Ali-Choudhury, and Savani (2007) suggest universities with strong brands are able to enhance awareness of their existence and of their course offerings. This is important for universities due to the ever-growing competition they face in this day and age.

**Literature Review Summary**

This literature review covered research on organizational identification, organizational commitment, and organizational branding. Each section also examined research done regarding those areas in the context of higher education institutions. Organizational identification is the process of members adopting the identity of their organizations due to an alignment in values and beliefs. This can have a wide range of positive outcomes such as increased job motivation, increased job satisfaction, and increased extra-role behaviors (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000; Carmeli, Gilat, & Waldman, 2007; Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). Organizational commitment is the perceived relationship a member has with their organization. This relationship influences an employee's intention to stay or leave the organization and is determined through three distinct components: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Organizational commitment can be impacted by organizational culture, perceived structure, and job satisfaction (Ahuja et al., 2018). Lastly, organizational branding occurs when an organization uses terms, design, symbols, and other types of

communication to make their organization distinct from others. Often times, an organization's

identity goes hand in hand with its brand. While branding does help maintain and recruit new

customers, it can also have an impact on organizational members. Research suggests that having

an effective brand can increase employee performance, organizational identification, and

employee recruitment (Huang & Liu, 2010; Rampl, 2014). An understanding of these three areas

– organizational identification, organizational commitment, and organizational branding – is

necessary to assessing and interpreting the potential impact of external branding campaigns on

organizational members.

**Chapter III**

**Methodology**

This section provides an explanation of the methods used for data collection and analysis for this research study. In this study, participants were interviewed to gain insight into their lived experiences as faculty members to understand how the "All In" branding campaign has impacted their organizational identification and commitment. Through a thematic analysis of participant interviews, themes surrounding the campaign's impact were discovered which helped create an understanding about how an organization's external messages can affect an organization's internal members. Consequently, this study examined two research questions.

RQ1: What is the impact of Eastern Illinois University's "All In" branding campaign on employees' perceived organizational identification?

RQ2: What is the impact of Eastern Illinois University's "All In" branding campaign on employees' perceived organizational commitment?

**Rationale**

This research study used qualitative research methods because the study aimed to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective from the standpoint of the participant (Hammarberg & de Lacey, 2016). The purpose of this study is not to generalize the results to a greater population, but rather to gain a deeper understanding of how faculty members perceived any changes to their organizational identification and commitment due to the "All In" branding campaign. The data was examined through an interpretive lens in order to understand how organizational members assigned meaning to their experiences discussed in the data. Thus, a qualitative approach was most suitable for this study.

**Participants**

In order to qualify for this research study, participants had to be tenured faculty members at Eastern Illinois University. Tenured faculty members were chosen due to their ability to freely discuss their thoughts, opinions, and experiences without potential reprimand from the university. Ultimately, ten tenured faculty members participated in the interviews. The participants worked in a variety of academic departments across Eastern Illinois University's campus. Participants were recruited using convenience and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of nonrandom sampling where participants are selected because they meet certain practical criteria – such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Snowball sampling allows for the participant list to grow through momentum when initial participants suggest people for the researcher to reach out to (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999.) The six initial participants were recruited using convenience sampling via the researcher's existing social and professional networks, and four the remaining participants were recruited by referral from the initial participants through snowball sampling.

**Data Collection**

In order to answer the research questions, qualitative interviews were conducted to collect data from the participants. Interviews are the most effective method for receiving responses in regards to employees' perceived organizational identification and commitment because of the detailed answers participants can give. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) explain how interviews are useful when researchers are trying to understand the participants' perspectives and experiences through explanations. Interviews help researchers gather information about the things that cannot be observed effectively by other methods and help researchers understand

native conceptualizations of communication. Creswell (2003) also states how interviews allow for researchers to remain in "control" over the line of questioning and to steer the conversation in the desired direction.

This study used semi-structured, respondent interviews. The researcher began with a list of interview questions, but as participants began to respond, the researcher would ask additional questions for more details, clarity, and reinforcement of ideas. Interviews were conducted in the participant's private offices to ensure that they were in a space where they felt comfortable disclosing information regarding their experiences as faculty members. Once a time, date, and location were established, the researcher presented a series of interview questions to participants designed to elicit open-ended responses. This type of interview was useful because it allowed the researcher to ask every participant base questions, but also allowed the researcher to ask additional questions as the interview progressed in order to gain clarity or elicit more specific answers. This also allowed the researcher to ask the participants questions throughout the interview process in order to verify that the information provided was both reliable and valid.

Interviews took place during January and February of 2020. The interview question guide can be found in Appendix A. All participants were asked to sign a consent form before they participated in the study consistent with expectations from Eastern's Institutional Review Board. The consent form informed participants of the purpose of the study, any risks or discomfort that might arise, potential benefits of participating, and explained that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Along with asking participants for consent to participate, the form also asked participants for permission to audio-record the interviews. All interviews were recorded using a personal recording device, and the audio files were stored on a personal computer that was safe-guarded with a password. During the interviews, the researcher took

meticulous notes in order to track potential key words and phrases. Once the interview process was complete, all interviews were transcribed via transcription service software. All identifying information was omitted from the transcripts, and all names of people were replaced with pseudonyms.

**Data Analysis**

After the data was collected and transcribed, the researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis in order to look for themes regarding participants' organizational identification and commitment. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017) the goal of a thematic analysis is to identify patterns in the data that are interesting or important to answer the research questions; not only does thematic analysis summarize the data, but it also interprets and makes sense of what has been said. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis is also useful because it is not tied to a particular theoretical perspective, which makes it a very flexible method to use for qualitative research.

Thematic analysis allowed for themes in the data to become apparent during and after the interviews. After identifying themes regarding participants' organizational identification and commitment via the notes taken during the interview and comparing notes from all ten interviews, the researcher revisited the transcriptions in order to find specific instances, examples, and quotes that best portrayed the themes that arose. This was accomplished by noting any experiences in the interviews where participants discussed the impact the "All In" branding campaign had on their perceived organizational identification and commitment. Each participants' response was revisited and analyzed for instances when they shared a story regarding their identification or commitment with the university in regard to the "All In" branding campaign. In the results and analysis chapter of this study, these themes, which formed

from the participants' responses, are examined through an interpretive lens. Such an approach is

used to illuminate how participants assigned meaning to their organizational experiences with the

"All In" branding campaign.

**Chapter IV**

**Analysis**

Several themes were found in the interview data and are discussed here according to the related research questions. The three themes that arose regarding organizational identification are: the campaign provided language for participants' current identification, the campaign's values aligned with and reinforced participants' values, and participants' feelings regarding the campaign speaking on their behalf. The two themes that arose regarding organizational commitment are: participants' commitment prior to the campaign and the participants' thoughts on the events leading up to the campaign. First, the campaign's perceived impact on organizational identification is discussed.

**"All In" Campaign's Impact on Organizational Identification**

The first research question sought to discover the potential impact the "All In" branding campaign had on tenured faculty members' organizational identification. When directly asked the question of the campaign's impact on their identification, participants claimed that the campaign had no notable impact on their organizational identification. However, themes relating to this question still arose during interviews, and these themes point to impacts reported by participants that they did not recognize.

First, participants cited that the "All In" branding campaign has given them language to use with other organizational members to further promote the campaign as well as display their own identification. Second, participants claim that the "All In" branding campaign's values, which are communicated through its messages, closely align with their own values and reinforce those values in their work. Third, participants felt comfortable with Eastern speaking "on their

behalf" as an organization through the "All In" campaign because of how closely aligned their

own identities are with the campaign's messages.

**Campaign Gives Language to Identification**

The first theme found regarding organizational identification and the "All In" branding

campaign is how participants felt like the campaign has given them language to use that reflects

their personal identification with Eastern. They are then able to use this new language when

communication with other organizational members as well as external stakeholders. Having

shared language that organizational members can communicate with internally and externally is

important because it allows organizational members to feel deeply connected with their

organization, as well as make sense of their roles within the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008).

When participants were asked if the "All In" branding campaign has affected how much

effort they put into their role, participants overwhelmingly reported that it did not. One

participant, Megan, shared that because she is already so deeply connected to Eastern Illinois

University's values and mission, the "All In" branding campaign has not affected the effort she

puts into her role. However, when asked to elaborate further, the participant shared,

> I've been here a long time already and all those, uh, are already things that I was doing
> and values that I had. The only thing it (the campaign) has affected is that maybe I'm
> using that language, that specific language, in the communication that I have with
> students. Um, and it continues to reinforce the notion that we (participant and the
> university) are aligned and we are doing this together.

In this excerpt, Megan expresses how the "All In" branding campaign has given her language to

use when communicating with important organizational stakeholders. She also expresses how

even though she has not perceived an impact on her organizational identification from the

campaign, the campaign has reinforced many of the values that she sees herself sharing with the

university. This demonstrates the hidden impact that the campaign has had on participants'

organizational identification. Megan claims she has noticed no impact, but when she begins to

tell stories, these stories reveal a bigger impact – reinforcement – than what was originally

stated.  Another participant, Devin, claimed that the "All In" campaign has provided him with

"better, er, more succinct word choice to communicate to students and faculty with regarding my

values and beliefs within Eastern." Both Megan and Devin emphasized how the campaign has

given them language to use when communicating their organizational values and beliefs to other

organizational stakeholders. In addition to the campaign offering language to more easily share

these values and beliefs, other participants felt like the campaign has given them language to use

when recruiting students. Megan shared,

> I use 'all in' in my emails to perspective students. I use that language. Uh, I've adopted it
> (the campaign) to the point where I have adopted that language and actually use that
> language in my emails and, uh, other communication with potential students and their
> parents. When I'm constructing those messages, I try to keep the campaign in mind.

In this instance, Megan demonstrates how she's begun utilizing the language from the campaign

into how she communicates with potential students, an important external stakeholder for the

university. Cole, another participant, shared,

> I'm very heavily involved with trying to, um, recruit new students to our program. I think
> that's something the campaign has given to us as faculty. Kind of like, um, a 'how to talk
> to students guide. 'Yes, faculty is all in here for you. We go above and beyond for you
> because of how all in we are!' You know? I'm not saying it's great language for
> recruiting, but it's easy language to add to my vocabulary that students easily understand
> and can make sense of which is important.

Cole plays a big role in recruiting students to his department, and the "All In" branding

campaign has given him clear and succinct language to use communicating with potential

students. In another instance, Benjamin states, "It (the campaign) articulates the values of the

university so well. I've even started using 'all in' in my conversations with my students, peers,

even my wife at home when talking about my job." Benjamin goes on to compare the "All In"

branding campaign to a campaign put out by his previous employer.

> Benjamin: At my previous job at a different university, I won't say which school, they had a terrible slogan. Just awful. It was long, with lots of big "statement" words, but it did a terrible, terrible job at communicating what the university actually did and stood for in regard to, uh, the student body and faculty and staff.
> Researcher: Would you say that Eastern does a better job, with the "All In" campaign, at communicating what the school stands for?
> Benjamin: Absolutely yes! My wife makes fun of me for how "all in" I am. She'd like to see me spend more time at home now that I'm tenured, but I just love my job and coming into work and teaching and talking to students. Ever since I first heard of the phrase "all in", I catch myself using it all the time. It drives her nuts! But anytime I think about putting off grading or prepping for a class, I remind myself of the "all in" slogan and get fired up and ready to go all over again.

This statement by Benjamin does a good job at clearly depicting how the "All In" branding

campaign has actually had a bigger impact on participants' organizational identification then

they realize. While participants claim that the "All In" branding campaign has not impacted their

organizational identification, statements such as these demonstrate how the campaign has caused

participants to change the language they use when communicating with people inside and outside

of the organization to more closely align with the organization's values, beliefs, and actions. This

idea relates to research done by Humphreys and Brown (2002) who found that when

organizational members' values align with the values of the organization, those members are

more likely to speak positively about the organization and are more likely to demonstrate

positive behaviors that benefit the organization. Organizational members are not required to use

the campaign's language, so the fact that so many participants end up using it shows how the

campaign has impacted organizational identification and potentially organizational members'

extra-role behaviors.

**Campaign Reinforces Organizational Identification**

The second theme that arose from the data regarding participants' organizational

identification is how participants claim that the "All In" branding campaign's values, which are

communicated through the messages, closely align with their own values and reinforce those

values in their work. Again, while participants claimed that the campaign had no notable impact

on their organizational identification, this theme points out that the campaign reinforced the idea

of their own values and level of identification and, in some cases, changed participants'

behaviors. When asked if the "All In" branding campaign has impacted his motivation in his

role, Devin stated,

> Maybe it has a little bit. I guess, maybe, ya know, in a point I go "Eh…I'm not going to
> take this extra step because, ya know, maybe I'm doing too much for a particular
> student". It's like, ya know, I don't want to enable them because people aren't going to
> do everything for them their whole lives, but then it's like, no I'll go ahead and do it, but
> I then try to walk the student through the steps or whatever. Because it might only take
> me a minute to do it, but it might take them half a day. So it's like "All In!" and I'll be
> motivated to take that extra step where I would previously not take that step.

This instance demonstrates how the "All In" branding campaign has impacted Devin's extra-role

behaviors by giving him the motivation to take extra steps for his students. Extra-role behavior is

"behavior that attempts to benefit the organization and that goes beyond existing role

expectations" (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006, p. 33). By being motivated to take these

extra steps, Devin is engaging in actions that benefit not only the student, but also the

organization beyond typical organizational expectations. Benjamin, as stated in the previous

theme, also explains how the campaign has impacted the language he uses and the effort he puts

into his role. When asked about how the campaign has impacted his motivation, Benjamin stated,

> Motivation? I think, I think it has. Only from the standpoint that, um, when I have this
> duty to do, that little tag line always pops into my head with "all in", ya know? And that
> makes me think, "Well of course I have to get into this and do it well, because I'm all in,
> man!" I think it feeds back into itself. It's easy to get dismayed over the all the negative
> stuff we talked about with the budget, but something like this kind of reaffirms why we

> are here and why we need to work harder – which I do and have been doing especially
> since I first heard about the, uh, the all in campaign.

This statement clearly shows that the "All In" campaign has impacted how Benjamin approaches

his work within his organizational role. The campaign has made both Benjamin and Devin

reflect on the motivation they have in their roles and realize that they could be doing more to be

"all in" such as Eastern Illinois University claims concerning faculty members.  As a result both

of them have adjusted their behaviors to fit the campaign message. Another participant,

Kimberly, stated how the "All In" campaign has even impacted her behaviors outside of work,

> Kimberly: I'm not sure if this is a great example for you because it doesn't involve
> Eastern per say but my husband and I – my husband also works here at Eastern – have
> changed our eating habits kind of due to being all in!
> Researcher: Interesting! What exactly does that entail?
> Kimberly: We used to go out to eat in Mattoon or Effingham quite a bit, but we've
> started, um, going out to eat more in town in Charleston now. We are trying to be more
> involved in the community because, well, Eastern and Charleston go hand in hand with
> one another. If we are all in with Eastern, that means we have to be all in with Charleston
> too, so we are, uh, trying to be more aware of how we spend our money locally in hopes
> that it helps both communities.

Kimberly's behavior interacting with the communities of Eastern and Charleston demonstrates

her concern about the success of both communities. This relates back to Mael and Ashforth's

(1992) definition of organizational identification as "the perceived oneness with an organization

and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own" (p. 104). Kimberly

and her husband are under no obligation to change their eating habits in order to help the

Charleston and Eastern communities, but by doing so they feel as if they are doing their part to

help the success and growth of each community.

On the other hand, another participant, Alex, stated how he did not believe that the "All

In" campaign accurately represented Eastern's values. However, this made him want to work

harder in his own role in order to demonstrate his values to students,

Alex: No, I do not believe that the campaign accurately represents EIU. The campaign makes the university appear to be some big, uh, supportive community, and students are constantly telling me that is not how they feel here. Especially minority students. So, uh, in turn, I've been trying to do what I can in order to show students that even if they don't feel EIU is all in for them, that at least I, as their professor, am all in for them.
Researcher: And how do you try to do that?
Alex: I just do a lot for students that I wouldn't do before. I go out of my way, without martyring myself, to help them or guide them to where they want to be. I try to make them feel at least supported by me even if they don't feel supported by campus.

Even though Alex does not feel like his values align with the values that Eastern claims in the

"All In" branding campaign, the campaign has allowed him to reflect on his own values. This

reflection has caused him to put more effort into his role in order to live by and demonstrate

those values to others. This instance, in addition to the examples of Kimberly, Devin, and

Benjamin, show how the "All In" branding campaign has reinforced participants' perceptions of

their own organizational values and identification, and how that reinforcement of both values and

identity has changed their actions and behaviors in their roles.

**Organization Speaking "On Behalf" of Members**

The third theme that arose from the data regarding participants' organizational

identification is participants felt comfortable with Eastern speaking "on their behalf" as an

organization through the "All In" campaign because of how closely aligned their own identities

are with the messages being communicated by the campaign. Organizations are constantly

putting out messages that both internal and external audiences interpret and are impacted by. It is

important for organizations to understand how internal audiences, such as the participants in this

study, perceive and feel about their organization speaking on their behalf. Overwhelmingly,

when asked how they felt about Eastern speaking on their behalf via the "All In" branding

campaign, participants had no issue with this communication, but only because they felt the

messages being communicated aligned with their organizational identities and values. Megan,

for example, states,

> I would say the campaign does a good job of doing that (speaking on behalf of faculty).
> Maybe not all faculty would agree, but I feel like those of us who have been here awhile
> and are dedicated to that mission, yeah, I feel like that's pretty accurate. I feel like faculty
> should be all in. This is what we are here for. This is our job. That's the university's job
> is to come up with a message that speaks for the various entities or stakeholders in a kind
> of unified version, and I feel like it provides that.

In this instance, Megan explains how she believes the "All In" branding campaign accurately

represents how she views her identity as a faculty member – as someone who is "all in" in their

organizational role. Since the messages being communicated by the university align with her

identity, Megan has no issue with the organization speaking on her behalf through these external

messages. Another participant, Emilie, stated, "Well, I align with the sentiment of being all in, so

that's fine. I disagree with other things that we say, but that's usually internal, departmental

drama, but as far as the campaign goes, I'm fine with it since it matches up." The "All In"

branding campaign attempts to communicate the message that faculty members' value being "all

in" for their students, and since participants such as Emilie and Megan agree with and hold those

values as a part of their organizational identity, they see no issue with the organization speaking

on their behalf in that regard. Another participant, Brooke, reflects a similar sentiment,

> Yeah, I think it's really good, and I don't have a problem with the university representing
> the faculty the way that they are because I think it's truthful. The way that I understand all
> in, what we are doing for students is we're not sparing any effort. And, I can definitely
> say that that is true from the faculty here in my department and my own experiences.

This statement by Brooke demonstrates that since she perceives the messages being

communicated by the university as accurate, she has no problem with the organization speaking

on her behalf. Having branding messages that communicate values that align with organizational

members is important due to the impact that employer branding, such as the "All In" campaign,

has on employee performance (Huang & Liu, 2010). When the values being communicated

through branding messages align with organizational members, those members become more

identified with the organization and are shown to perform better.

In addition to feeling comfortable with Eastern speaking on their behalf through the "All

In" branding campaign, many participants also expressed how they perceive this communication

to be practical and necessary for the university to function. When asked how he feels about the

university speaking on his behalf, Cole stated,

> Well from a practical standpoint, someone's got to. You don't want to try and talk to 500
> people. So that doesn't bother me in general, I mean someone's got to, that's what you
> have a leader for. I think the issue comes when the leader says something that doesn't fit
> you, and since I don't have any problem with anything that's been said, I'm all for it. It's
> about creating that identity and helping us articulate that to our students and create those
> connections because our students are lifetime members of our community. Eventually
> they'll graduate, but they'll always be Eastern, they'll always be our alumni, and they'll
> always be part of our family. And so creating and maintaining those connections is the
> role of the leadership of the institution. Yeah, I think that's kind of their responsibility,
> but I also think they do an accurate job of it with this campaign.

In this instance, Cole explains the practicality of having organizations being able to speak on

behalf of their members. Alex shares a similar sentiment, "I just think it's the way it is. It's how

organizations function, so I don't really care about it since it's not misrepresenting me in

anyway." Since he feels the "All In" branding campaign represents him well, Alex has no issue

with the organization speaking on his behalf, especially since he believes that is just how

organizations work. Additionally, Kimberly strongly identifies with the idea that organizations

have a right to speak on behalf of organizational members. She states,

> You're an employee of that organization. I have really, really strong beliefs that the
> organization, any organization, has a right to speak on your behalf. I probably say to my
> peers at least once a month, someone will say something about their office, and I'll say,
> "It's not your office, it's the state's office." I am not self-employed. I am an agent of my
> organization as an employee who is performing the duties to the best of my ability in

order to help out the mission of the organization. If that wasn't something I accepted as just the way things are, I'd work for myself.

These examples demonstrate how participants not only feel comfortable with their organization speaking on their behalf, as long as they feel the messages being communicated align with their own values and identities, but many participants also feel like organizations have the right to speak on members' behalves in order to properly function. This is the last theme found in the data regarding organizational identification. While participants did not express that they felt the "All In" branding campaign had any impact on their organizational identification, these three themes reveal that the campaign did have an impact through the adoption of new language, reinforcing their values and identification, and feeling comfortable and being on board with an organization speaking on their behalf.

**"All In" Campaign's Impact on Organizational Commitment**

The second research question sought to discover the potential impact the "All In" branding campaign had on tenured faculty members' organizational commitment. Once again, when asked the question if the campaign has impacted their organizational commitment directly, participants answered no. However, the two themes found here suggest that the campaign might have had a bigger impact on commitment than participants realized. The first theme that arose from this data suggests that the majority of participants did not notice an increase or decrease in their commitment to Eastern, as they already felt as committed as possible, so their commitment level stayed consistent regardless of the campaign. The second theme regarding organizational commitment is how participants viewed the events, such as the budget impasse, that led up to the campaign and the impact those events' had on their organizational commitment.

**Consistent Perceived Commitment Level**

The first theme that arose regarding participant's perceived organizational commitment was the theme that commitment levels stayed consistent regardless of the "All In" branding campaign. Overwhelmingly, participants reported that they felt as if they could not be any more committed to their roles or to their students then they currently were, and so the "All In" branding campaign had no impact on their perceived organizational commitment. When asked if the "All In" branding campaign has impacted her commitment to Eastern, Kelly asked,

> Kelly: Just by looking at the campaign's messaging? Like the ads?
> Researcher: Yeah, any sort of message that the university puts out via the campaign.
> Kelly: Then no. Like I said, I think most of us (faculty) were already very committed and going above and beyond for students way before the campaign. We were already all in. So it's not the "All In" campaign making us committed as much as, again, the fact we were already motivated to be doing these things for our students in the first place.

This instance suggests that because Kelly perceives herself as someone who is highly committed to the university already, and the campaign had no impact on how she views her commitment to the university. When asked to share her thoughts on the campaign's impact on her commitment, Emilie stated, "All I probably would say is that I think I am all those things, committed and loyal and all that jazz, without that campaign. The campaign is nice, but I was those things before we had it. I don't ever think about it to be honest." Both statements by Kelly and Emilie demonstrate the theme of the campaign having no direct impact on participants' organizational commitment due to the fact they already viewed themselves as committed to the organization.

Regardless of the department each participant worked for, the majority of participants viewed themselves as committed to Eastern before the "All In" branding campaign. Cole, a professor in the humanities field, states,

> Regardless of what the current campaign is, I'm always committed. I'm always going to be doing the same thing, reaching out, talking with students, going to their programs, or being involved in campus events. And none of that will ever change based on what campaign is going around campus at the time. But I know that's not typical for all faculty. Some faculty are just career academics, like, I don't know, chemistry professors

> are chemists, you know? And their focus is their topic, so it can be a little different to approach them, but no, it hasn't impacted my commitment at all because nothing like this ever could.

In this statement, Cole suggests that a faculty member's specific field of study might impact how committed they are to their organization. However, no data from this study suggests that Cole's implication is true. On the contrary, the data from this study indicates that regardless of the department or field of study, participants perceive themselves as committed to Eastern. Benjamin, a professor in the sciences, went into detail in regard to how he viewed himself as a highly committed faculty member throughout the interview. He stated,

> My wife often tells me I need to take more time off because I have more time than I need. But I never take time off, only for vacations, and that's because I just love coming in here. I love the mission of the university. I am committed to it and to my students. So I just really like coming to work. I don't have the drudgery of coming to work, and my commitment is a big part of that I feel, yeah.

When asked if he believes the campaign has impacted his commitment to Eastern, Benjamin stated, "Oh no, I don't think so. I'm already as committed as I think I could ever possibly be, and it would take a whole lot to, uh, lower that commitment, I suppose. Unless it was a truly awful campaign, no." Kimberly, a professor in business, further demonstrates how participants were committed before the "All In" campaign, regardless of department or field of study, and that participants felt as if the campaign had no impact on their already high levels of commitment. When asked if the campaign has had an impact on her organizational commitment, Kimberly stated,

> No, but that's not, um, the campaign's fault. I am just already incredibly committed to my job, and to my students, and to EIU as a whole. I always have been. Like, why work somewhere where you don't want to be? Like I said earlier, the business school went through a span of time where we just, um, where we were having trouble hiring business faculty. Everyone we brought in was just, um, at odds with what we do here at EIU and who were are. Just from interviews, we could tell they'd never be as committed as we

like our faculty to be, and I told them that from the get-go that they probably wouldn't be
very happy here.

Kimberly, Benjamin, and Cole all stated that they felt as though the "All In" branding campaign

had no impact on their organizational commitment. Interestingly, every participant except one

expressed some sort of emotional attachment to the university, suggesting that most participants

fall underneath affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This affective commitment can be

seen through their pride to work for Eastern and their willingness to stay committed to the

university regardless of obstacles (Evanschitzky, Iyer, Plassmann, Niessing, & Meffert, 2006). If

participants did not have affective commitment to the organization, research suggests that many

would choose to leave the organization due to too many perceived obstacles – such as the budget

crisis (Ahuja, Padhy, & Srivastava, 2018). Participants are not simply staying at Eastern due to

weighing the risks/benefits of staying or due to financial obligations; participants are staying

committed to Eastern because they feel an emotional connection to the university – demonstrated

additionally though their organizational identification. This type of affective commitment allows

for the participants to feel deeply connected to Eastern and to not be easily swayed in their

commitment – specifically by the "All In" branding campaign in this case.

**Events Leading to the Branding Campaign**

The second theme regarding organizational commitment is how participants viewed the

events that led to the campaign, particularly the budget impasse, and their impact on

organizational commitment. All 10 participants mentioned Eastern's budget impasse at one point

in their interviews – many expressing frustration about that duration of time where "things were

at a stand-still for a good few months. No one was really sure what was going to happen," as

stated by Brooke. When the budget impasse was mentioned, participants brought up a wide range

of emotions associated with the difficult time. Many participants felt as though Eastern was putting too much pressure on the faculty and giving them too many tasks to handle. Megan stated, "Since the budget crisis, I've been teaching an overload, as have most of my colleagues. I'm constantly, um, teaching more than I should be, and doing more than I contractually need to be doing." Emilie very early on in her interview mentioned how she was committed to Eastern right away after joining the faculty due to her undergraduate experience. However, over time, she felt that loyalty starting to dwindle due to a variety of factors such as student engagement, departmental struggles, etc. Despite these obstacles, Emilie stated,

> Emilie: I will say that though, I became inspired after I saw how the faculty, and the students as well, handled the budget crisis. It would have been really easy to just give up, but people started to really give their all. Ha, give their all, all in? But really, the community showed just tremendous loyalty when it did not have to. But there is this pride that comes along with being a part of EIU, and I felt that a ton during the crisis, and it was really inspiring.
> Researcher: Do you think that impacted your commitment to Eastern then? Because you just mentioned how it was starting to kind of –
> Emilie: Go away? Yes. But yes, seeing how the community rallied together to face the budget crisis together definitely reminded me of why I love this school and why I want to be here.

When asked if she felt the "All In" branding campaign impacted how committed to Eastern she was, Emilie replied, "I mean, no, the campaign itself hasn't at all. But if you consider how the budget crisis kind of led to needing a new brand, then it becomes a maybe?" In this instance, Emilie demonstrates how even though the campaign itself did not lead to any change in her organizational commitment, the budget impasse that led up to the creation of the campaign did have an impact.

Another pattern that arose from the data regarding the events that led to the branding campaign was the relationship participants had with their fellow faculty members versus the relationships they had with administration and how those relationships affected their

commitment to Eastern. Alex explained how he has always been hesitant to put too much trust

into administration due to incidents in the past, but he knows he can rely on his colleagues in his

department.

> Alex: Oh, the administration at Eastern was shit during the budget crisis, yeah? I think most people would agree on that matter, as far as I've seen at least. It was really hard not to just get up and walk out, but I knew that would put a lot of, er, stress on the other faculty, and I didn't want that. So like everyone else here, or who is still here I guess, I buckled down and did what needed to be done. Which was a lot, and it was exhausting for months, but we got through it and came out stronger, in my opinion at least.
> Researcher: Stronger how?
> Alex: Well you were just asking about commitment, so I would say that a lot of us double downed in our commitment? Like…um, if EIU was a ship, we were not about to let it sink. And after putting so much hard work in, it's hard not to feel even more committed to helping it stay afloat, ya know?

This excerpt suggests that because of the extra tasks faculty took on during the budget crisis, he

became more committed to Eastern, regardless of his feelings towards administration.

Additionally, Kelly stated that even though many in her department "took on many hats that I

think people in higher leadership positions should have been wearing," she felt encouraged by

her peers to "take it one day at a time. We came out better and more prepared because of it, and I

think that shows – especially to the students who were around for the couple of rough years."

Other participants, like Brooke, expressed that their previous commitment to Eastern and to their

peers were the only things that got them through the budget crisis.

> A lot of it was simply just out of my control. I never wanted to leave – and even if I wanted to I couldn't because my husband couldn't just quit his job and leave with me – but, um, like I said I never wanted to. It was really frustrating, but I still believed in Eastern and its mission and our students, and it was frustrating to me that it was experiencing such an onslaught of what seemed to be like a conscious effort on the behalf of people above me, way above me, to close it when it was providing a service to a lot of underrepresented people. So that investment in the school and its students and its overall mission and goals is part of what helped me to stick it out. And I work with just some really great and dedicated people, which made sticking it out a lot easier and rewarding.

This example provides insight into how the relationship participants had with the administration versus with their peers impacted their organizational commitment during and after the budget impasse. Because of the first theme regarding organizational commitment, which was how many participants' affective commitment stayed consistent despite the "All In" branding campaign, this second theme makes sense. Smollan (2016) suggests that employees with higher levels of commitment, such as affective commitment, tend to deal with stress better in times of organization change – such as the budget impasse – because they seem to understand the change and are willing to put in the effort to make the change as successful as possible.

The analysis revealed three themes regarding organizational identification: the campaign providing language for participants' current identification, the campaign's values aligning with and reinforcing participants' values, and participants' feelings regarding the campaign speaking on their behalf. The analysis also revealed two themes regarding organization commitment: participants' commitment prior to campaign and the participants' thoughts on the events leading up to the campaign. Now that these findings have been established, the significance of this study regarding the impact of an organization's external messaging via a branding campaign on an internal audience will be discussed.

**Chapter V**

**Conclusion**

This study set out to determine if Eastern Illinois University's "All In" branding campaign impacted tenured-faculty members' perceived organizational identification and commitment. Through listening to participants speak about how they view their organizational lives in regards to the "All In" branding campaign the research questions were answered. The need for this study stemmed from a gap in organizational communication literature. While existing research shows that organizations often look to see how their external messaging impacts external stakeholders (Grant, 2011; Kim et al., 2016; Mael & Ashforth, 1992), little research exists that examines how an organization's external messages impact internal organizational members – especially in the field of higher education. Understanding how an organization's external messaging, such as its branding, impacts internal organizational members is important due to the impact it may have on a variety of member behaviors. Such behaviors include employee performance (Huang & Liu, 2010), positive employee attitudes (DelVecchio, Jarvis, Klink, & Dineen, 2007), and being more supportive of an organization during trying times (Blanton, 2007).

The first research question sought to determine if Eastern's "All In" branding campaign impacted how tenured-faculty members perceived their organizational identification with the university. An analysis indicated that three themes arose regarding participants' organizational identification: the campaign provided language for participants' current identification, the campaign's values aligned with and reinforced participants' values, and participants' did not have an issue with the organization speaking on their behalf as members. Overwhelming, when asked directly if they believed the "All In" branding campaign caused any change to their

identification with the university, participants claimed that the campaign had no notable impact. However, the three themes that arose from the interview data pointed to impacts that were unrecognized by the participants.

The first theme that came from the data regarding organizational identification suggests that the "All In" branding campaign gave participants new language to use that reflects and reinforces their organizational identification. Participants stated that they adopted the campaign's language due to how closely it aligned with their own feelings about the university. This newly shared language not only allowed for participants to communicate their shared values and beliefs with other members in the organization, but also allowed them to communicate effectively with those outside of the organization such as potential students and faculty members. Having shared language that organizational members can communicate with internally and externally is important because it allows organizational members to feel deeply connected with their organization, as well as make sense of their roles within the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008). Feeling deeply connected with an organization allows organizational members to have stronger identification, which is valuable not only to themselves as members, but also to their organizations as well. On the employee side, higher levels of organizational identification lead to increased job satisfaction (Carmeli, Gilat, & Haldman, 2007) and increased job motivation (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Employees with reportedly high levels of job satisfaction and motivation have been shown to handle uncertainty more easily; have higher levels of innovation; are more profitable; create higher levels of customer satisfaction; and increase employee retention rates (Pinder & Knudsen, 2017; Burton, 2017). Additionally, language shapes reality (Teubert, 2013) and having a shared language allows for members and organizations to shape their organizational reality in particular ways.

The second theme that arose regarding organizational identification is how participants claimed that the "All In" branding campaign's values, which are communicated through campaign messaging, closely aligned with their own values and reinforced those values in their work. Being aware of the campaign and seeing it in action caused participants to feel more connected to their organizational values, which indicates that their organizational identification had increased. Many participants felt like they were already doing the work expected of them because of their own motivation to do well and help students succeed, but the campaign reinforced the idea of being "all in" for students. Participants told stories of how this reinforcement motivated them to go above and beyond in their extra-role behaviors in order to better benefit the organization beyond previously held expectations (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). Participants stated that this reinforcement of aligned values led to changed behaviors inside and outside of their organizational life. Extra-role behaviors can lead to many positive outcomes within an organization such as increased employee effectiveness, increased organizational performance, and a positive impact on manager-employee relationship (Desselle & Semsick, 2016). These positive relationships may lead to a more friendly and efficient organizational culture that has the means to affect not only faculty members within the organization, but also affect current and future students as well.

The third theme that came from the data regarding participants' organizational identification is that participants felt comfortable with Eastern speaking "on their behalf" as an organization through the "All In" campaign. Participants claimed that they felt comfortable with Eastern speaking on their behalf because of how closely aligned their own identities are with the messages that are being communicated by the campaign. This suggests that is it important for organizations to consider including employees in discussions regarding external messaging that

end up speaking on their behalf. Multiple participants expressed that they did not have an issue with the messaging because they felt it was an accurate representation; however, if they did not feel the messages were accurate, this would cause some strain between them and the organization. This strain could potentially have many negative impacts across the organization such as dis-identification which leads to decreased job motivation (Zavyalova, 2016) and decreased employee effectiveness (Ahmad & Islam, 2018). However, since participants perceived the messages from the "All In" branding campaign to be an accurate representation of how they felt as faculty members, they did not see any issue with Eastern speaking on their behalf. In addition, participants also expressed how they perceived this type of communication to be practical and necessary for the university to function.

The second research question sought to determine if Eastern's "All In" branding campaign impacted how tenured-faculty members' perceived their organizational commitment to the university. An analysis indicted that two themes arose regarding participants' organizational commitment: participants' commitment prior to the campaign and the participants' thoughts on the events leading up to the campaign. Once again, when asked the question if the campaign had impacted their commitment to Eastern, participants claimed they experienced no change. However, through sharing their organization stories and experiences, themes arose that suggest the "All In" branding campaign had a bigger impact on organizational commitment than what was reported.

The first theme that arose regarding participant's perceived organizational commitment was the theme that commitment levels stayed consistent regardless of the "All In" branding campaign. The majority of participants claimed they were already as committed to Eastern as they could be, so no campaign – even the "All In" branding campaign – could change their

commitment. Regardless of what department or field of study participants came from, participants claimed that they were already as committed to their students, their roles, and the university as they could be. While these claims could possibly be due to the participants wanting to paint themselves in a good light for the study, the expressed emotional attachment to the university suggests that many participants are experiencing affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This suggests that participants have an enduring sense of loyalty to the university, feel deeply connected to Eastern, and will not be easily swayed in their commitment – regardless of the "All In" branding campaign. Understanding that faculty members held this affective commitment previous to beginning the "All In" branding campaign might have been useful to know for those who craft the campaign's messages. If they had known that faculty members' commitment to Eastern was so strong, they may have been able to craft the messages in a way more directed and focused on students, instead of considering how the campaign would impact faculty as well. However, the third theme regarding organizational identification pointed out the importance of ensuring that messages accurately represented faculty members' thoughts – so keeping these two themes in mind in order to make messaging balanced would be vital. Messages have the ability to be targeted more directly at other stakeholders due to faculty members' high levels of affective commitment. However, they should be created *with* faculty members' values in mind to ensure that the faculty perceives the messages as accurate.

The second theme regarding organizational commitment is how participants viewed the events that led to the campaign, particularly the budget impasse, and their impact on organizational commitment. Each of the 10 participants mentioned the budget impasse during their interviews, and every participant brought up the wide range of emotions they experienced during that difficult time. Participants felt like they were being overworked and underappreciated

by administration during the budget impasse, but their commitment to Eastern did not wane –
suggesting once more that participants have affective commitment to the university. Smollan
(2016) suggests that employees with higher levels of commitment, such as affective
commitment, tend to deal with stress better in times of organizational change – such as the
budget impasse – because they seem to understand the change and are willing to put in the effort
to make the change as successful as possible. While the "All In" branding campaign was not
reported to impact organizational commitment directly, participants shared that the events that
led to the campaign caused them to feel more committed to the university. In a society where
organizations are constantly have to undergo organizational change in order to stay competitive,
it is vital that they have employees who are ready and willing to adapt to these changes (Burton,
2017).

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate the impact a branding campaign may have
on an organization's internal members – specifically on members' perceived organizational
identification and commitment. Research suggests that having organizational members with
strong identification and commitment is beneficial for the organization in a variety of ways.
Therefore, organizations should give significant attention to how internal members perceive
external messages when constructing communication – such as a branding campaign – in order
to ensure that the messages do not have negative internal impacts. Now that we have an
understanding of how these external messages impact internal members, we can work towards
finding news ways to create messages that are successful in not only communicating effectively
to external stakeholders, but in communicating to internal organizational members as well.

**Theoretical Implications**

The findings of this study add to the literature on organizational identification in higher education institutions. Having a solid understanding of organizational identification is key for universities due to the fact that others often identify university employees according to their profession and where they work (Hekman, Steensma, Bigley, & Hereford, 2009; Russo, 1998). While research has found that organizational identification from students/alumni can greatly benefit a university (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Eury, Kreiner, Trevino, & Gioia, 2018), this study helps argue for the impact of faculty organizational identification. By understanding what messages impact faculty's organizational identification, universities will be able to construct messages that more closely align with faculty members' values and beliefs in order to ensure effective communication is being created. While faculty members might not perceive a change in their organizational identification, universities can craft external messages that reinforce the shared values between an organization and its employees. This reinforcement of values strengthens faculty members' identification, which may lead to many benefits for the organization.

This study also adds to organizational communication literature regarding organizational commitment in higher education institutions. While there is a substantial amount of research on faculty members' commitment to their universities, this study examines how a university's external messaging, such as a branding campaign, might impact faculty members' perceived commitment. The findings from this study support existing research that states faculty members are more committed to their organization when they openly express emotion in their teaching (Zhang, 2019). This study reveals that the majority of participants felt emotionally connected to Eastern, which led to being affectively committed to the organization. Lawrence, Ott, and Bell (2012) examined the linkage between organizational commitment and organizational behaviors,

and this study supports their findings by demonstrating that when participants felt more

committed to Eastern, they were more willing to go above and beyond in their extra-role

behaviors inside and outside of the university. This study demonstrates how external messages

from an organization can impact employees' extra-role behaviors.

In addition, this study adds to literature regarding organizational branding in higher

education institutions. This study supports existing research that states branding efforts by a

university can be used to get faculty members to express interest in extra-role behaviors

(Belanger, Mount, & Wilson, 2002). Through the "All In" branding campaign, participants

claimed that they began using shared language with the university, going above and beyond

expectations in order to be "all in" for their students, and changed other behaviors in order to

benefit the university. Additionally, the "All In" branding campaign has allowed Eastern to

provide information to internal/external stakeholders in a way that is intended to create

emotional ties in order to create stronger, affective commitment to an organization (Stensake,

2007). This stronger organizational commitment leads to employee's undergoing organizational

change with more ease. Understanding the theoretical implications this study prompts a

discussion of the way in which organizations can use this knowledge in order to better

communicate with their internal organizational members. Therefore, the practical implications of

this study are discussed.

**Practical Implications**

The practical implications of this study are perhaps the most significant. This study

provides organizations with insight to better understand the way external messaging impacts

internal organizational members. This study specifically focused on the impact external

messages have on internal members' organizational identification and commitment. These two

key concepts have a huge impact on organizational life, and so organizations can use the findings

of this study to construct better messaging that can in turn create better organizations. This can

be accomplished by organizations using appropriate language in their external messaging that

accurately represent the values and beliefs of internal members. To ensure appropriate language

is being communicated, organizations can include internal members when creating branded

messages. Hanson (2015) states that when organizations intentionally include employees in

conversations about external communication, employees feel valued, which is key for employee

retention, morale, and talent development.

While focusing on how the messages will be perceived by external stakeholders is

important for organizations, understanding the impact the messages also have on internal

members is key. While the majority of participants felt like the "All In" campaign had little

impact on them in regards to their organizational identification and commitment (despite themes

that suggest otherwise), many also stated that they felt that way because the campaign accurately

represented their values. However, participants also stated that if they felt like the university was

creating messages that did not accurately represent them or their values, they would have an

issue with those messages. This suggests the importance of having conversations with internal

members about external messaging prior to the messaging being released in order to ensure that

internal members perceive the messages as being aligned with their own values to minimize

potential issues.  This dialogue might occur through formal focus groups, town hall events, or

informal meetings. While Eastern currently has a dedicated website to hearing stakeholders'

thoughts on the "All In" branding campaign, receiving feedback from employees before the

campaign might have been useful.  The results of this study can also benefit Eastern specifically.

The findings suggest that participants began to go above and beyond in their work roles after the

"All In" branding campaign was implemented. Understanding this effect can be beneficial to Eastern because it allows them to be aware of the impact and to monitor their employees – for both positive and negative effects. Positively, employees are putting more work in, causing the workplace to become more productive and effective. Negatively, going above and beyond in the workplace can strain employees, both physically and mentally, and cause burn-out. Understanding how branding messages, especially messages as ambiguous as "all in", set an expectation of employee behaviors can be greatly benefit Eastern as well as other organizations inside and outside of higher education.

**Limitations**

　　While this study yielded satisfactory results, a few limitations were experienced during the data collection process. Since this study sought to gain insight regarding tenured-faculty members' experiences in regards to the "All In" branding campaign, the researcher attempted to recruit a wide variety of faculty members from varying departments. While the researcher attempted to get in contact with faculty members from a range of departments, only a handful of departments were ultimately represented in this study due to time constraints. The initial goal was to interview 10 – 15 participants. However, the researcher was only able to recruit 10. While conducting more interviews would have provided more data to draw from during the analysis stage, 10 interviews proved to be sufficient to develop themes regarding organizational identification and commitment. In addition, because data was collected from interviews, the researcher had to take participants at face value and look for any potential sources of bias such as exaggeration. It is important to note that all participants were white. In the future, these limitations could be overcoming by including more diverse participants in the study as well as including ways to verify information from participants.

**Future Research**

In order to better understand the impact of an organization's external messages on internal organizational members, future research should focus on different types of external messaging that organizations create. While this study focused on branding messages specifically, organizations are constantly using multiple forms of communication in order to put messages out into the world. Future research could also focus on how these messages impact different types of internal organizational members – this study focused on tenured-faculty because of their unique ability to speak freely without worrying about consequences, but future studies could concentrate on other organizational members without that luxury in order to better understand the impact external messages may have. Future research could also examine the different organizational impacts messages have on members outside of organizational identification and commitment – such as organizational culture. Lastly, future research could examine how external organizational messages impacts the emotional labor of employees in order to understand how these messages affect how employees manage their emotions in the workplace – especially when the messages suggest that employees need to go above and beyond in their work roles. The findings of this study, along with the findings of the recommended studies, could provide insight into how organizations should be constructing messages in order to best benefit not only external stakeholders but also internal organizational members.

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**Appendix A: Interview Guide**

**Interview Guide**

- How would you describe how you feel about your time spent working for EIU?

- What factors made you to want to work at EIU?

    o Has your opinion on the things that initially drew you in changed over the course
    of your tenure?

- What would you say are EIU's values?

    o Would you say your own values match up with EIU's?

- What are your thoughts on EIU's "All In" branding campaign?

    o How have you seen EIU's "All In" branding campaign in action?

- What would you say are the messages of the "All In" branding campaign?

- How do you feel about those messages?

- Has the "All In" campaign affected how much effort you to put into your role?

- Would you say that the messages from the "All In" branding campaign align with EIU's
  values?

- Would you say that the messages from the "All In" branding campaign align with your
  own values?

    o How do you feel about the university speaking on your behalf in regard to the
    "All In" branding campaign?

- Has the "All In" campaign affected how proud you are to work for EIU?

- How has the "All In" campaign impacted your motivation in your role?

- What does being "All In" at EIU mean to you?

- How do you feel about being "All In" at EIU?