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**IMPROVING WORKING LIFE LEADERSHIP WITH
VIDEO REFLECTIONS –
MANAGING YZ-GENERATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

Videos have been proposed to promote reflective processing that may result in changing one's interaction practices in social situations. Therefore, videos may be utilized to support recognition of individual managerial behaviour as interaction practices in social situations with different generations.

In this study, managers from hospitality sector in central Finland used videos to capture everyday management situations in order to reflect on their managerial practices with the generation y and z employees. Managers analysed and reflected on their own and peers' videos, as well as shared their reflections in small groups in workplaces facilitated by two researchers from the research group. Thus, managers co-constructed the understanding of managerial behaviour stimulated by the recordings. These discussions were analysed to depict collaborative learning. In addition, managers filled in pre- and post-surveys to assess the change of their interaction practices in the company.

Initial findings revealed that analysing one's managerial behaviour, as interaction practices in structured and supported way could be a tool in changing managerial behaviour as interaction practices in companies. Results underline the importance of reflections and collaborative learning to increase understanding of generational



differences to promote the development of servant leadership as well as general well-being at work.

Keywords: collaborative learning, workplace learning, video reflections

AIM OF THE STUDY

Managers construct their occupational knowledge continuously in socio-cultural work surroundings (Billett, 2008). To see behavioural change in real life situations, education needs to promote engagement and changes in thinking according to the classical model by Donald Kirkpatrick (1994). In this pilot study, managers' managing practices referring to social interaction with employees are investigated in hospitality sector. Workshop-type training education with reflective discussions are applied to support managers to consider the workplace specific culture as managerial behaviors and employee features as well as socio-emotional aspects in daily working life. We investigate if video observations promote reflective processing supporting collaborative learning to help managers to recognize results of their behaviour and ultimately change management behaviours to consider for example generational differences at work.

Research questions:

1. Can videos be utilized to support recognition of individual managerial behaviour as interaction practices in social situations with different generations?
2. Can reflective, structured and supported analysis of one's interaction practices be a tool in changing managerial behaviour in companies?

In this first pilot study, as a beginning for longer follow-up study, we present research protocol and preliminary results for video utilization as a tool for reflections. Later in the study, we will focus on the changes in managerial behaviour as social interaction practices at workplaces and if the changes were promoted by the video supported reflection process and collaborative knowledge building.

PRAXIS: MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOUR AND CHANGING WORKING LIFE

Managerial behaviours as communicational and social interaction practices have been emphasized in working life today (e.g. O'Donnell, 2018), as assumptions on management have changed as y and z generations have entered the working life (e.g. Davidson, McPhail & Barry, 2011). Also in workplaces, behaviours are driven by motivations, and in the learning theories, the successful motivation to change



organizational behaviours can be described as positive reinforcement (Luthans & Youssef, 1998). In the social context of working life, the individual learning process of managers are intertwined in a socio-cultural work performance requirements, as managers re-construct the occupational knowledge constantly (Billett, 2008). In addition, managerial behaviour can have various consequences to for example follower well-being (e.g. Dierendonck et al., 2004, Kuoppala et al., 2008) and organizational culture (e.g. Tsai, 2011).

As organizational culture reflects for example the beliefs and norms of the employees, including prejudices or incomprehension towards different generations, shifts in the managerial behaviour may affect the whole organizational culture (Robbins & Coulter, 2005). Work culture has been even suggested to be one aspects determining the possible outcomes of the companies (Woods, 1999). Here behaviour can here be defined as how people act in social situations, therefore concentrating on the social context. Therefore, to shift towards servant leadership with coaching style management, behavioural changes of managers could be a driver for a positive change in workplace culture, resulting possibly in better job satisfaction and well-being.

Reasons for different managerial behaviour can rise for example from earlier experiences or workplace culture, and be related to self-efficacy beliefs or personality traits. Additionally, personal values of managers can also results in different managerial behaviour (O'Donnell, 2018). Therefore, it is a complex mission to change the behaviour. Nevertheless, it can be assumed, that change in thinking and a new view on social environment and understanding of the results of managerial behaviour and people skills among the managers is prior to changes in (managerial) behaviour (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 1994).

In the context of changing work, the hospitality sector shares many of the challenges of contemporary working life, as in hospitality sector the work days are hectic with constant flow of customers, with shift or 24/7 work environment and a high turnover of workers (Davidson, McPhail & Barry, 2011). Additionally hospitality sector is the largest employer in the world, and employs a large amount of minorities and young people (e.g. Davidson, McPhail & Barry 2011, Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017). Therefore, hospitality sector workplaces provide an interesting multigenerational surrounding to investigate managerial behaviour.

THEORY: VIDEO SUPPORTED REFLECTION TO FACILITATE CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR

Education interventions may be utilized to pursue a behavioural shift in organizations via reflection. In practice-based organizational intervention studies, aim is often to see behavioural change in real life situations after the change in



thinking brought by educational intervention. The classical model by Donald Kirkpatrick (1994) differentiates four levels in evaluating learning. According to the theory, the changes in behaviour or performance in workplace environment may be seen only after first making learning experience engaging and favourable, having increase in level of skills or knowledge via learning transfer, and finally implementing new in behaviour, attitude and/or capabilities at workplace (see also Frash et al., 2008).

The Kirkpatrick (1994), model can be also applied to education that aims to change managerial behaviour in the workplaces. First (level 1: reaction) education needs to change thinking and view on social environment - such as human or generational differences - in a way managers would see it favourable and useful in their work. Second (level 2: learning), education could promote increase in knowledge on how the behaviour can be changed, for example how different kinds of followers can be managed hence transferring the new learning results to practice. In this phase, process might include also changes in attitudes behind the behaviour. Third (level 3: behaviour), managers would implement new knowledge after noticing how they may change their behaviour according to what they learned. Practically this means how much has behaviour changed due to the education. As a result (level 4: results), behavioural changes at workplace social environment would become rooted as new routines in managerial social behaviour, that could lead also changes in workplace atmosphere and managerial culture. (Kirkpatrick, 1994, Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009).

Capability to learn is often considered as a social construction with emotional and cultural aspects (e.g. Pintrich, 2000, Billett, 2008), and can be seen from agency perspective as a possibility to influence the course of learning events (Bandura, 2009, Leijen et al., 2019). In this framework, engagement can be seen as a premise or enabling learning (Meyer, 2014). It is also associated with to the first level in Kirkpatrick' model that could be seen as an expression of attaining "learning mode" as perquisite for learning. Learning mode can hence be described as "a growth mindset" for learning (Heslin & Keating, 2017). Heslin & Keating (2017) emphasize the importance of learning mode in learning leadership skills at workplaces. After all, learning stems from different motives, and building trust as well as open and communicative learning atmosphere facilitates engagement and learning mode as one educational action before knowledge building. However, mediators and moderators may have an effect on experiential leadership development (e.g. Heslin & Keating, 2017).

Reflection can be a tool to turn experiences into learning (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985, Zeichner & Liston, 1985). To reflect on justifications of behaviours (why we act the way we act) would in this sense make it possible to increase comprehension on the results of different behaviours (Zeichner & Liston, 1985). Managerial behaviour practices are in the core on servant leadership, but the change in leadership



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skills in managing situations is gradual. Reflection might endorse this gradual change by supporting the observation cycle from concrete authentic experiences on behaviours, to formation of more abstract understanding (Kolb and Fry, 1975, as cited in Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985) possible resulting in a behaviour congruent with coaching style management. Since as in Kirkpatrick model, behaviour may change after phases of learning and understanding.

If the aim is to promote changes in managerial behaviour, or more precisely communication and interaction practices in workplaces, authentic videos from social situations can be proposed to promote reflective processing (Tochon, 2006). Work days can be hectic and recollections of situations and own behaviour may change by time, and therefore it is helpful for recollections that videos capture the dynamic process of personal and organizational interaction culture, as well as emotions and their expressions as behaviours. Overall, video observations enable seeing own actions from the outside, and make it easier to create a new understanding of own experience. Hence, authentic videos may be utilized to support recognition of individual managerial behaviour in social situations. Videos can additionally be utilized to enhance collaborative learning (see e.g. ViSuAL-project publication, 2018).

Learning is often seen as mediated by social constructions, which would mean that knowledge itself is socially shared (Reynolds, Sinatra, & Jetton, 1996). Collaborative learning refers to practices where students learn together, but it possesses slightly different focus than knowledge building, which refers to process where new cognitive artefacts are created as a result of common goal setting, group discussions and synthesis of raised ideas (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003). This requires sharing for example ideas, experiences or for example videos, and building new common understanding or concepts in a shared environment. In this way, sharing videos for the foundation of reflections, can promote new perspectives for building broader understanding, and also management behaviours. Sharing also opens opportunities to compare individual behaviours to those of others', as a starting point for understanding different people in work context (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003). Additionally, if reflective processing after sharing is done with possibility for scaffolding, participants can develop in their individual zone of proximal development. In this way, it is possible to influence the development of different managers in different issues.

Overall, promoting positive changes in managerial behaviour to enhance coaching style management is supporting professional development. Joyce & Showers (2002) also point out the importance of learning to learn during professional development: it is seen as important as acquiring new skills and obtaining novel knowledge to implement in workplaces. They also mention among others reflection and collaboration ways to promote development, that support the ideas of earlier research (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 1994 and Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985).



METHODS

To intervene managerial behaviour at the hectic work today, intense education with supported reflection processes between the compact and limited number of contacts might be achievable for managers' in hospitality sector. Additionally, as authentic videos and reflections can both be utilized as a tool to promote recognition of behaviour and managerial practices in situations with different generations, they could be useful in educational training interventions described.

The research was executed in private, small to medium size, hospitality sector enterprises in central Finland. Two of the enterprises are located in central city surroundings, whereas others are located in suburb and rural area. All of them serve lunch and/or cafeteria products, but two also serve as site for events from which one also serves outdoor activities.

Research design is an observational study with four longitudinal follow-ups conducted in half-a-day workshops. In this paper, only preliminary results from the first and second workshop from the second wave are presented, as the study is still on going. The study can hence be seen as a pilot to reveal new insights into utilizing authentic videos to support reflection, and finally after the last workshops and results from post questionnaires we will be able to analyze possible changes in manager behaviour in daily working life context.

Research is part of two EU funded projects both conducted in JAMK University of Applied Sciences. Study aims to promote work and careers, and it is also one aim of the UAS education institutions where the study was performed in addition to hands-on experience in practice-based research. In the Video Supported Collaborative Learning ViSuAL (visualproject.eu) pedagogy is developed for video-supported collaborative learning in education practices. In YZ-generation project main aim is to produce practical solutions for managers to improve managerial behaviour in daily work and boost collaborative learning.

In this research, behavior was defined as managerial interaction practices, and relevant indicators of experiences of changes in behaviour were analyzed from self-reflections and collaborative reflections and knowledge building, as well as lay opinions from all employees.

Study protocol

This ongoing pilot study is conducted in central Finland from autumn 2019 to autumn 2020. Total of 10 managers from four small to medium scale hospitality sector enterprises are involved in this second wave of the study, and all of them gave their written consent to participate in the pilot study. Educational intervention in all



four waves consisted of three workshops, video recording of authentic management situations shared with via video platform (Flowboard by Flowbox: www.flowbox.fi/en/home/) and facilitated supportive and reflective discussions passed over about 6 months. Last fourth workshop later in 2020 will gather all four waves of managers, of which only second one is discussed in this paper.

Managers and their followers were asked to fill in electronic pre questionnaire (Webropol) to assess the state of practices and behaviours as organizational culture in the company. This e-questionnaire was sent to all employees in the organizations consisted of background questions, managerial status, former video utilization, open-ended questions and a question battery. The question battery was divided into two parts: level and importance of multiple aspects from themes: communality, coaching style management and meaning and relevance of own work. Responses to question battery were given in Likert –scale. Later a post questionnaire will be sent to same recipients.

The first workshop was held in a comfortable rustic surrounding in a wooden inn. In the workshop, aim was to build trust, raise new ideas and thoughts on coaching style management, outcomes of managerial behaviour, generational differences and phases of career. After the introduction, managers were given time to discuss on given topics, and later already concentrate on coaching style management and feedback, based on the anonymized summary results from pre questionnaires. Managers discussed the results in small organizational pairs or teams with support from the UAS research team. The structure of the workshop was designed to alternate between educational sessions and discussions supporting mutual trust and open dialogic environment, so that managers were able to receive new theories and ideas, and right after apply and elaborate information and share experiences over organizational boundaries. In addition, hands-on practical guidance was given to utilize the video platform. To build trust for open discussions on sensitive issues, emphasis was targeted on a warm welcome, and facilitating managers to participate and share experiences on and impact of managerial behaviours as interaction practices.

After the first workshop, managers recorded videos to capture a short solo video with a topic “me as a manager”, where the emphasis was on factual reflection (Zeichner & Liston 1985). Afterwards, managers analysed and reflected on their own and peers’ videos.

Personal contact after workshop was critical to build up trust and boost making videos, and hence experienced research pair visited organizations for appreciative interview (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2003). They also gave support and motivated the managers to plan, produce and share the video recordings, if not yet made. During this meeting, managers also shared their reflections in small manager-groups in workplaces facilitated by the two researchers. Thus, managers co-



constructed the understanding of managerial behaviour stimulated by the recordings. Idea on this second round of reflection was on procedural reflection to assess actions (Zeichner & Liston, 1985).

In the second workshop, themes and discussions were deepened with similar structure and ideas behind the workshop plan. After the second workshop, managers use videos to capture everyday management situation (social situation with one or more followers possibly from generation y or z employees) in order to reflect on their interaction practices. Similarly, personal contact from the research team supported the process, with procedural reflection.

Finally, in the third workshop, managers will focus on dialog, communication and interaction practices as managerial behaviour. Group reflections and collaborative knowledge building discussion on managerial behaviour and coaching style management based on authentic videos will be video recorded in the workshop. In the final stages, aim is to reflect on justifications of behaviours in certain situations (Zeichner & Liston, 1985), in order to find grounds for change in behaviours.

Data analysis

To gain picture of the currents starting point for the educational intervention, quantitative questionnaire data from pre questionnaire results were analysed first with partitioned descriptive analyses, followed by cross tabulations, before the first workshop. Open-ended questions were classified into themes. Later pre-survey results will be compared to with the post survey results. Analyses were performed with IBM SPSS 25.0 and R programs.

All video-material posted and shared in the video platform after the first workshop were analysed for subsequent workshop, where they were discussed and collaboratively reflected on. Videos, summaries and observations of behaviour at group discussions and reflections in workshops as well as video recorded appreciative interviews and notes from visits to companies were utilized to point out critical points in learning and gain overall picture of the process and in educational intervention following the Kirkpatrick's model (1994) and levels of reflection (Zeichner & Liston, 1985). From first workshop notes, videos after the first workshop, notes from visits to companies and notes from second workshop were utilized for preliminary results, to assess if videos utilization in a supported way may work as a tool for reflections.

Additionally, from workshops, the video recorded group reflections and collaborative knowledge building discussion on managerial behaviour and coaching style management will be analysed later with concept and social network engagement analyses to depict collaborative learning and concept building. Analysis



will be watched simultaneously with the video recording to combine the information from network-analyses and real-time behaviours.

RESULTS

Participants and descriptive baseline results from questionnaires

Total of 10 managers from four hospitality sector enterprises took part in the first workshop in the second wave pilot follow-up study with four workshops. Only results for these participants will be utilized in this paper. Managers were mainly first level managers. One of the participants was male, rest being females.

Total n=67 employees answered the pre e-questionnaire, from all four hospitality sector enterprises. The questionnaire results give overall glimpse of the current situations in the enterprises, even though the response rate was not high. Of all participants in the questionnaire, 18% were managers of different levels, total of 70% were women, 48% had permanent jobs, and 55% worked full-time. About a third represented generation y (born 1980-1994), and less than a fifth were born after 1994 and hence represented generation z. At the time of the study, generation y participants were maximum of 39 years old, whereas generation z were maximum of 25 years old. Over half of the participants had secondary education, and about a fifth had higher education. Over 60% had been under contract for at least 5 years, but in contrary more than 10% less than one year. Considering the results, sample brings out the diversity of employees in the hospitality sector.

From the whole pre-questionnaire sample (n=67) the most important aspects in communality-theme represent appreciation of the work of other co-workers and experienced social support. On the other hand, level appreciation had lowest average in the theme, but still estimated as “good”. In the coaching style management –theme all parts were seen important, such as if manager listens, appreciates and discusses with the follower. However, guidance and feedback were experienced by employees to be only at average levels in practice. This means, that the difference between importance and level of regular feedback was notable, the level not reaching as high. In the third theme (meaning and relevance of own work), all aspects from flexibility and possibilities to influence to meaningfulness were seen important, but overall feedback lacked in the level. To sum, feedback and personal contact with discussion and listening, in addition to guidance from manager were seen as lacking, compared to the high level of importance. These main results especially on feedback were congruent in all enterprises.

From the open-ended questions, different generations had similar answers to meaning of work: flexibility, professional expertise and hospitality, but millennials



(generation z) emphasized more solidarity, fairness and “being yourself”. Everyone wished better communication and equality, but less work or hurry.

Preliminary results from videos and workshops

From the discussions in the first workshop, it was evident that first level managers received lots of new information from the ideas of coaching style management, and were able to apply ideas already to their workplace. Managerial good practices, e.g. types of feedback were shared and discussed openly in the workshop. Especially negative feedback and non-formal feedback craved by the younger employees were discussed. Already at the first workshop, managers told that their understanding of the different results of managerial behaviour on different employees (from different generations) changed, and that they received lots of new ideas and thoughts for their managerial work.

On behalf of the videos, as expected, most of the managers were not comfortable in utilizing video technology at the first place, and personal support from the research team was needed to try the video recording to the cloud at the workshop for the first time. After the first workshop, they were encouraged to post the first video soon after the workshop also to allow time for reflections to arise. As managers recorded the “me as a manager” –videos they were shared with manager –colleagues in the same organization. Utilizing videos needed to be personally supported, with hands-on guided first trials with videos and with an easy app or platform to share the videos.

From every enterprise, some videos were captured before the supportive visit with appreciative interview, but not all (n=4) were able to post them before the visit. Face-to-face supportive meetings with professionals and teachers were needed to build trust, and support in video utilizations and start reflection process and to awake the ideas presented and discussed in the workshops. During the visit in the recorded appreciative interviews, managers discussed their factual reflections, expressed their lay opinions and analyzed the generational differences at their specific workplace in hospitality sector. As a summary, many managers noted that “younger” workers might not be committed to work in a same way as the young before. In addition, they reported that “younger” ones speak out, are hardworking, and work community might not be the most important community for them. Generations y and z were mostly seen in positive light. Nevertheless, it was mentioned, that younger have always been different, but now life situations seem to change very quickly, and it has an effect on work, too.

To share the videos, trust building was vital, as managers are already allowed in this first step to peek into these self reports as a starting point in the process. From the videos, we made first preliminary analyses how managers view their work and see themselves as managers. Few term selections and short notions they utilized drew a narrow picture of managerial work, as some seemed to view managerial work as



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mainly giving practical orders to employees. On the other hand, especially the younger managers mention they feel as if they are not “above” other employees or followers, and feel like co-workers instead, but still they have different job description.

Additionally, the importance of formal and non-formal feedback in the core of managerial work raised from the pre questionnaires as well as in the discussions in the visit. Therefore, in the workshops one aim was to discuss and reflect what is managerial work in the sense of coaching style management with different interaction styles. Dialog practices will also be introduced to support the search for mutual understanding in workplaces. In the second workshop in the procedural reflections (to evaluate activity or managerial behaviours), managers discussed meaning of adjusting the style of speaking depending on companion. As a conclusion, many noted that small changes in communicative practices may result in changes in work well-being.

DISCUSSION

Results underline the importance of discussions and reflections to bring understanding of generational differences to promote the development of managerial behaviour as well as general well-being at work. Overall, initial findings revealed that after getting used to making videos, recording and analysing one’s management practices in structured and supported way could be a tool in changing thinking, and may result later in changes in managerial behaviour in companies. The results from questionnaires also pointed out the need for training in for example feedback as one interaction situation in managerial work, as a basis for this study.

As practical results, videos utilization in a supported way was a busy process, and may succeed as a tool for reflections if and only if there is enough support accessible and time to spend to facilitate the utilization. In this pilot, we still recognized the need for even more time for discussions and support, as making videos was challenging despite the easy app, and content itself was multisided. However, more emphasis was on purpose not put on theoretical delivery, but on application and open reflection. Overall, discussions had large role in constructing understanding together – workshops concentrated mostly on reflections in addition to theoretical information on generations, new work and management with coaching style.

To utilize videos with employees, personal face-to-face support with easily applied video recording program and platform are vital. Learning mode (Heslin & Keating, 2017) or engagement and enthusiasm towards the understanding of managerial behaviour (as the first level in the model by Kirkpatrick 1994) were enhanced during supported discussions with manager peers. However, to share the videos, discuss and reflect, building trust was planned carefully, and workshops held in comfortable surroundings outside work environment. This sharing and discussions facilitated the



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increase of understanding of managerial work, managerial behaviour as interaction, and gave new insights to (generational) differences of employees as well as to daily practices at hectic workplaces. From the appreciative interviews and second workshop, it seems like views and understanding of the participants on managerial behaviour was extended after factual and procedural reflections. Therefore, the workshops were seen as very supportive and important for the increases in learning (level 2 on the model by Kirkpatrick, 1994), and managers already verbally reported changes in thinking (level 3 in Kirkpatrick model) already after factual reflections.

In hospitality industry, many of the enterprises are small scale, especially in central Finland. Therefore, the managers may not have many follower, and they often work next to each other, managers only having some extra tasks. Therefore, it was understandable for many managers to feel, as they are not that different from their followers, and some felt giving feedback difficult. Growing to manager position takes time, and support for communication skills and soft skills may support this development in working life context.

Nevertheless, as managers switch back to working life might the reflection process be seized, and only later we will be able to see if reflections (Zeichner & Liston, 1985) will result in changes in the practical behaviours and if managers in this pilot are able to build knowledge collaboratively in later workshops. Nevertheless, as earlier research already shows, change in leadership style takes time after the recognition of attitudes and behaviours, and sometimes the changes are difficult to apply as the work tasks and work community itself stays the same.

In this paper, generational differences are seen as multifold dissimilarities of the employees. Still, from the point of view of the generational differences, it is notable that the followers and managers were often from different generations, so that younger employees were more often in follower positions. Especially the generation z employees (maximum 25 y at the time of the study) were often still students, or only in the beginning of their careers, and it explains some of the differences. Situations in life are not attached to age, but different phases of life have their special characteristics, also through generational experiences.

As a result, video observations from one's management practices and stimulating managers' learning mode may promote the development of interaction practices and lead to general well-being at work. This knowledge can be applied also in educational context, as teachers may facilitate a change in learning mode with peer discussions and utilize videos as part of assignment or course to promote reflective processing of course material or attitudes towards learning. Additionally, as in education overall, as Joyce & Showers (2002) point out, one aim in professional training is also to learn interaction skills and communication as soft skills development, as well as learning to learn. These educational actions can also support agency.



For future practice-based educational research, this pilot study reveals challenges in utilizing videos, and the importance of building trust in the face-to-face meetings. Discussion and sharing of practices over the company boundaries already introduced new ideas and promoted thinking and seeing own managerial work in new light. Later we will be able to analyze possibilities of interactive training to change managerial behaviours in this type of model with repeated workshops and visits to companies. In the end, as organizational culture reflects for example the beliefs and norms of the employees, shifts in the managerial behaviour may also later affect the whole organizational culture (Robbins & Coulter, 2005). This approach seems to increase the understanding of diversity of employees and generational differences, but as earlier research already shows, change in leadership style takes time after the recognition of behaviours in daily working life social situations.

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