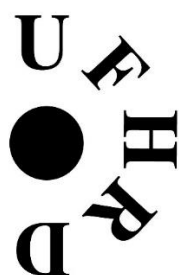


UFHRD 2022 Conference Proceedings



Critical approaches to HRD

(Chapter 2 of 5)



MIND THE GAP

Bridging Theory and Practice in a Post-Covid Era

June 2022

Hosted by

Sheffield Hallam University

Editors Dr David Wren, Professor Sarah Fidment, Dr Paul Stokes, Dr Christine O'Leary

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Contents

Critical approaches to Human Resource Development (HRD)	3
Introduction	3
Unlearning at the boundary of institution and organisation for academics and contingent academics – implications for HRD	5
MRS. REBECCA PAGE-TICKELL	5
Managing tensions and differing stakeholder expectations within the HRD role	7
DR. JENNI JONES	7
DR. SALLY KAH	7
Presentation - Managing tensions and differing stakeholder expectations within the HRD role	7
Rebooting Feminist Research in HRD: Shifting from Gender Binary to Gender Diversity	19
DR. TOMIKA GREER	19
MS. EUNBI SIM	19
MS. WEIXIN HE	19
DR. LAURA BIEREMA	19
Presentation - Rebooting Feminist Research in HRD: Shifting from Gender Binary to Gender Diversity	19
Learning about the workforce impact of Covid19 – Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam	27
DR. DIANE KEEBLE-RAMSAY	27
DR. TAM LE THI KHANH TAM	27
Paper – Learning about the workforce impact of Covid19 – Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam	28
Presentation – Learning about the workforce impact of Covid19 – Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam	48
The unintentional benefits of being made redundant: Building strategic capabilities in the implementation of redundancies	56
DR. MADELEINE STEVENS	56
Paper – The unintentional benefits of being made redundant: Building strategic capabilities in the implementation of redundancies	57
Presentation – The unintentional benefits of being made redundant: Building strategic capabilities in the implementation of redundancies	66
Training Function Expected Performance index – a new HR measurement instrument for service companies	82
DR. SIDITA DIBRA	82
PROF. BLENDI GERDOÇI	82
Presentation - Training Function Expected Performance index – a new HR measurement instrument for service companies	82

Critical approaches to Human Resource Development (HRD)

This is the Critical approaches to HRD chapter from the UFHRD Conference 2022 proceedings document, published in May 2023.

Introduction

This stream was framed in terms of the vital role that Human Resource management and development can play, exploring experiences of life, employment and work from a critical perspective, questioning and challenging organisational practices. We invited submissions which considered the detail of individual and organisational responses to the many crises facing humanity. The papers presented during the conference represented a papers covering an eclectic range of topics, but unified by their clear focus on critical challenge – whether critical content and/or critical process as applied to HE pedagogy.

A fascinating paper explored how we could reconceptualise Feminist HRD research to be more inclusive. This paper encouraged us to consider a historical perspective in terms of the development of feminist research framework in HRD research, focusing on the work of Bierema (2002). The discussion challenged us to consider how further work is needed to consider more deeply issues of intersectionality, whole person approaches and addressing unconscious bias in our research. This important paper concluded with a call for more bold research within the field.

An insightful paper explored the vital issue of the effectiveness of organisational training programmes – how can we better what makes workforce development training effective. In particular, this study proposed and explored a new model for examining the effectiveness of training – a model called ‘training function expected performance’ or TFEP. This study was set within the context of the need for organisations to build their human capital with ‘broad, deep and flexible competencies’. From a study of large service sector organisations, this qualitative study explored multiple organisational cases to illuminate the nature and effectiveness of organisational training and found that effectiveness of training can be determined by the extent to which both the vertical (external) and horizontal (internal) integration is coordinated.

With the final paper within this stream, the critical gaze turned upon Business School Executive Education, with a critical study into how an academic team had challenged itself to develop and articulate a critical pedagogy underpinning its executive education programme. Based on a qualitative research design, this study explored the question of how a critical pedagogy can develop leadership and coaching & mentoring for the future of work and develop mindsets that can respond to the complexity of contemporary circumstances. The presentation conveyed the challenge of this work, exploring the demanding nature of challenging our pedagogic approach, taking a learner-centred approach which encourages deep reflexivity and building this into ongoing practice.

The varied papers within this stream inspired critical reflection within the audience. Whether the critical gaze was upon organisational HR function, the frameworks which guide our organisational research, or the approach we take to training future organisational leaders, the stream sparked rich

debates about our assumptions and the 'norms' which commonly guide our work. The papers called on the broader academic community to continue to develop critical research agendas, challenging the frameworks we use to research and teach within the HRD context.

Dr Ellen Bennett, Sheffield Hallam University.

Unlearning at the boundary of institution and organisation for academics and contingent academics – implications for HRD.

MRS. REBECCA PAGE-TICKELL
University of East London

Abstract #44

As Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) increase the variety of contracts for academics, (Wolf & Jenkins, 2021) implications emerge for HRD in terms of cohesion, culture and experience of colleagues, both contingent and permanent. This increasing trend is significant across the sector and calls for a response from HRD practitioners to support both individual and organisation in this context. The importance of this is demonstrated in the impact of variance in contract types on HEIs (Scott, & Kezar, 2021).

Contingent faculty act as a flexible resource, filling gaps for HEIs. Investigation of this organisational habitus (Thomas, 2002; Byrd, 2019) informed by managerialism (Featherman, 2014) at the institutional / organisational boundary (Turner & Angulo, 2018) may expose significant learnings for HRD. This boundary imposes novel practices originating outside the organisation forcing unlearning. The processes of unlearning cycles (Hislop et al, 2014; Cegarra-Navarro, & Wensley, 2019) provide a theoretical hook to interrogate the adaptations and negotiation that colleagues undertake to manage contingent contracts, e.g. variance in assessment & attendance policy.

The focus of this paper is developing an in-depth understanding of the patterns and variations of the unlearning cycle (Cegarra-Navarro, & Wensley, 2019) for contingent and permanent colleagues and proposing HRD based interventions to support cohesion in the school as well as enhancing experience of colleagues. In-depth interviews to understand the lived experience of contingent and permanent academics in a business school at a post '92 urban university are conducted. Thematically analysed to understand the shared elements and propose appropriate interventions, both shorter and long term, local and more sector focused. This understanding will inform HRD recommendations to support all parties (Locke et al, 2016).

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Scott, D. T., & Kezar, A. J. (2021). The Gig Academy: Naming the Problem and Identifying Solutions. *Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy*, 12(1), 3.

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Paper

Not applicable.

Presentation

Not applicable.

Managing tensions and differing stakeholder expectations within the HRD role

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DR. SALLY KAH

Birmingham City University

Abstract #50

There have been some ongoing and recent studies about the changing role of HRD and the gap between the rhetoric and the reality of the HRD role (Torraco & Lundgren, 2019). It seems that HRD practitioners are clear about their purpose and the direction of travel of their role but that those managers enacting some of their diffused HRD related duties (Cappelli & Tavis, 2018) and those employees on the receiving end have differing needs and expectations.

As part of a more comprehensive project looking at the HRD role within 20 companies within the UK, the Netherlands and the USA (to be published in an upcoming HRD book), this study/presentation will focus on the findings from just 6 of the UK case studies. A total of 30 interviews were undertaken with HRD practitioners and individuals who assume HRD responsibilities. There is various role level from senior managers, managers to employees. Precisely, we conducted the following interviews - 10 at HE institutions, 10 at two healthcare Trusts, 6 in the hospitality sector and 4 within the transportation sector.

We asked questions about the role, the neo-classical learning and development cycle (i.e. understanding needs, planning to meet those needs, delivering to those needs and evaluation), and future HRD activities. Despite the differences in organisational size and sector, some similar themes emerged regarding clarity, tensions, and expectations. Also, some intriguing metaphors were used, including hats, guinea pigs and chickens, which help to neatly and perhaps more creatively show the underlying challenges of the HRD role.

The purpose of this paper/presentation is to share the learning from these 6 case study organisations, share the similarities and differences in comments made by those in differing organisational roles, and make some recommendations to progress the future reputation of the HRD profession. The ultimate aim of this session/paper will be to highlight the discrepancies and differences and the underpinning issues and challenges for all stakeholders that have driven the widening of this expectation gap but to provide some helpful suggestions for the post-Covid-19 HRD professional in the UK.

Key words: HRD, strategic alignment, expectations, stakeholders, gaps

Paper

Not applicable.

Presentation - Managing tensions and differing stakeholder expectations within the HRD role
See below.

Managing Tensions and Stakeholder Expectations within the HRD Role

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UFHRD Conference 2022, Sheffield Hallam University



1

Outline

- Introduction
- Study aim
- Empirical evidence of the literature
- Theoretical underpinning
- Methodology
- Key findings
- Implications
- Recommendations

Introduction

- The evolving nature of HR, HRM and HRD.
- The rhetoric Vs the reality of the HRD role.
- HRD practitioners are clear about their purpose and the direction of travel of their role.
- Those managers enacting some of their diffused HRD related duties (Cappelli & Tavis, 2018) and those employees on the receiving end have differing needs and expectations.

3

Aims for today

- The purpose of this presentation is to:
 - share the similarities and differences in perceptions and expectations of HRD role from different stakeholders in six UK organisations
 - make some recommendations to progress the future reputation of the HRD profession
- This will be achieved by highlighting the:
 - discrepancies and differences

Empirical evidence of HRD role

- ‘HRD should be characterised by diversity, creativity and debate about the meanings and practices that constitute its field’ (Gold et al., 2003, p. 452).
- HRD is no longer training and development (Lee, 2011)
- ‘HRD encompasses planned activities, processes and/or interventions designed to have impact upon and enhance;
 - organisational and individual learning
 - to develop human potential
 - to improve or maximise effectiveness and performance at either the individual, group/team and/or organisational level,
 - and/or to bring about effective, beneficial personal or organisational behaviour change and improvement

within, across and/or beyond the boundaries (or borders) of private sector (for profit), public sector/governmental, or third/voluntary sector (not-for-profit) organisations, entities or any other type of personal-based, work-based, community-based, society-based, culture-based, political-based or nation-based host system.’ (Hamlin & Stewart, 2011, p .213)

- HRDs defining attribute is its contribution to the host system (Wang et al., 2017)
- ‘Human resource development (HRD) is no longer expected to be the primary agency for promoting learning and development among employees.’ (Torraco & Lundgren, 2020, p. 39)

5

Criticism of HRD

- Criticisms of HRD and the challenges it faces are not new
 1. HRD is not aligned with the organisation’s strategy and business needs
 2. HRD does not demonstrate its effectiveness and return on investment (ROI)
 3. HRD is pre-occupied with offering programmes aimed at marginal problems
 4. HRD carry out limited needs analysis
 5. HRD has insufficient first-hand knowledge of work and the workplace
- [Torraco & Lundgren \(2020\)](#) study pointed to the need for further research to examine the perceptions of leaders, supervisors, employees, and other stakeholders in HRD about how well HRD is meeting the needs of those it is intended to serve.
- To this end, we became part of a project looking at the HRD role within 20 companies within the UK, the Netherlands and the USA.

Theoretical underpinning: Stakeholder/value theory

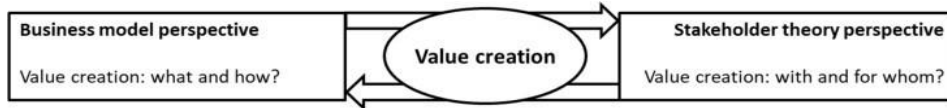
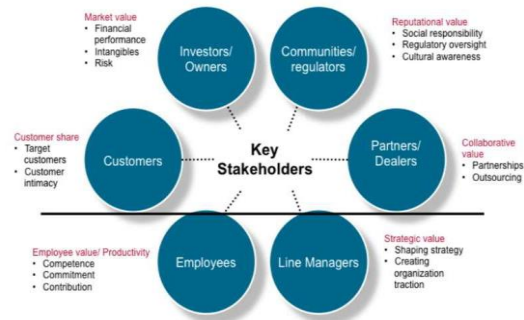


Figure 1: HR Outside In: HR Creates Value for Key Stakeholders



Taken from: Freudenreich et al (2020)

- Stakeholder theory: a company is characterized as a set of relationships, crucial to its functioning, among individuals or groups who affect or are affected by its business operations

7

Methodology

- A critical realist position and an interpretivist theoretical perspective, which aim to offer 'explanation, clarification and demystification' (Bryman & Bell, 2015).
- Data collection: Semi-structured interviews with:
 - HRD practitioners (senior and mid-level managers)
 - Senior managers
 - Employees
- In the UK, we conducted the following interviews:
 - 10 at HE institutions
 - 10 at two Healthcare Trusts
 - 6 in the Hospitality sector
 - 4 within the transportation sector

Total = 30 interviews
- Interview data were thematically analysed to achieve the study objective.

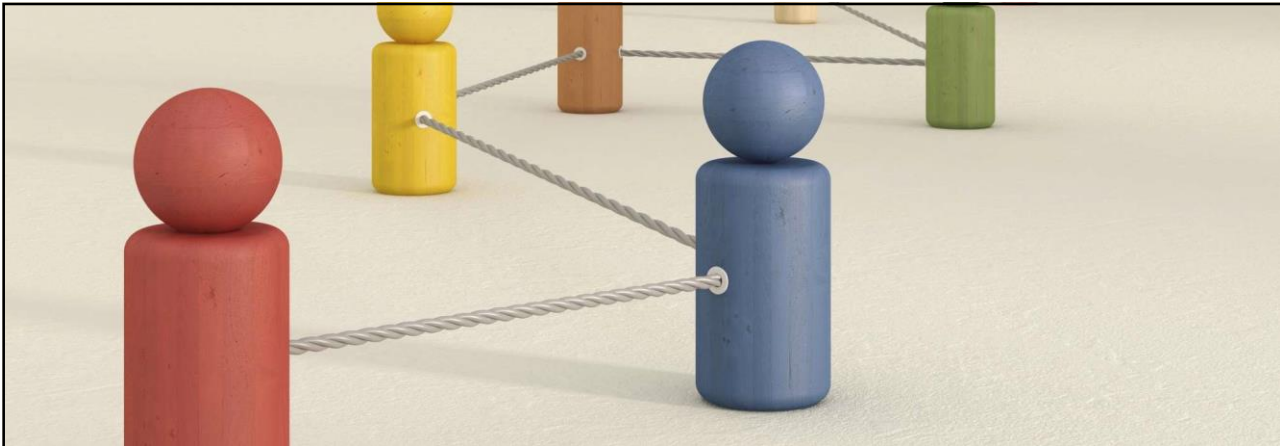
Case organisations

Case	Year of establishment	Industry	Role	Participant	Professional HR/HRD background
Higher Education Institution	1800s	Education	Learning and Organisational Development Manager	HEI_HRD1	Manager (HRD professional)
			Learning and Development Lead	HEI_HRD2	Manager (HRD professional)
			Organisational Development Consultant	HEI_HRD3	Manager (HRD professional)
			Learning and Development Programme Coordinator	HEI_EE4	Employee (HRD professional)
Train Network	2000s	Rail Transport Service	HR Director	TN_HRD5	Manager (HR professional)
			Senior HR Business Partner	TN_HRD6	Manager (HR professional)
			Senior Learning and Development Manager	TN_HRD7	Manager (HRD professional)
			Customer Experience Staff	TN_EE8	Employee
National Health Service (Northwest)	1990s	Health	Sister	NHSNW_MGR9	Manager (HRD responsibility)
			Sister	NHSNW_MGR10	Manager (HRD responsibility)
			Nurse	NHSNW_MGR11	Manager (HRD responsibility)
			Research Nurse	NHSNW_EE12	Employee

9

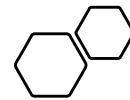
Case organisations (continued)

Case	Year of establishment	Industry	Role	Participant	Professional HR/HRD background
Brewery/Pubs	1800s	Hospitality	HR Director	B_HRD13	HRD professional
			L&D Manager	B_HRD14	HRD professional
			Company Secretary	B_MGR15	Manager
			Head of Operations	B_MGR16	Manager
			Procurement Manager	B_EEE 17	Employee/Manager
			General Manager	B_EEE 18	Employee/Manager
Higher Education Institution	1800s	Education	Associate Director, OD	HEI_HRD19	HRD professional
			Head of OD	HEI_HRD20	HRD professional
			Head of Department	HEI_MGR 21	Manager (HRD professional)
			Head of Department	HEI_MGR22	Manager
			Senior Lecturer	HEI_EEE23	Employee (HRD professional)
			Senior Lecturer	HEI_EEE24	Employee (HRD professional)
National Health Service (West Midlands)	1990s	Health	Head of OD	NHS_HRD25	HRD professional
			OD Practitioner	NHS_HRD26	HRD professional
			Lead Pharmacy Technician – Education and Training	NHS_MGR27	Manager
			Deputy Director of Strategy and Planning	NHS_MGR28	Manager
			Clinical audit/policy role	NHS_EEE29	Employee
			Clinical role	NHS_EEE30	Employee



Key findings

Similarities and differences between the perception of HRD responsibility amongst different stakeholders



11

HRD practitioners 'self-view'

We found strategic influence, value-added and employee lifecycle, custodians of service as common themes of HRD practitioners self-view of their roles in organisations.

- Some HRD practitioners (n=9) believe they are being more strategic and more accepted at higher levels. To these practitioners, being strategic is influencing decision-making and having input at a higher level. NHSWM_HRD26 said, *we are being listened to more and more, because of the impact of what we are doing, not being seen on the periphery – some more open to that than others.*
- Other practitioners (n=8) said their role is adding value to the employee life-cycle. As one participant reflects: *we're adding value through employee lifecycle. It's our role, and we take that very seriously to ensure that onboarding stage, people are onboarded accurately, so they can transition as smoothly as possible, and get on with their careers and have the resources to be able to do their job.* (HEI_HRD1).
- Another practitioner said, *we are the 'custodians' of the service; we need to set the framework for others to operate within.* (B_HRD1)

13

HRD practitioners ‘perceived-organisational view’

Concerning how HRD practitioners believe they are being perceived in their organisations, we found some interesting perspectives.

- Some claim their *strategic influence is growing and they are not being seen on the periphery.* (NHSWM_HRD26)
- Some claim to have less influence at strategic level as noted in the view of *“the L&D are responsible for organisational learning but the amount of influence they've been given in the past has been limited. It's going to increase but it has been limited and we need to be more strategic about it.* (TN_HRD5).
- HRD is an administrative function – *we still have a long way to go because HRD still gets drawn to do more administrative duties like take minutes in meetings and so on. But we are also in a place where managers and their teams are trying to take ownership* (TN_HRD6).

13

Role perception using metaphors and analogies

We also hold the ring on culture (NHS/HRD)



The conductor of the orchestra (HEI/HRD)



Wearing 2 hats; as a Board member and as part of the delivery team (HEI/HRD)



My whole life is about bartering – “1 guinea pig is worth 2 hamsters” (HEI/HRD)

14

Managers perceived HRD role

- Facilitate training and development, update core skills (NHSNW_MGR9; NHSNW_MGR9 10), manage online learning resource unit, review performance (NHSNW_MGR9; NHSNW_MGR10, NHSNW_MGR11), meet internal stakeholder needs, audit mandatory training (NHSNW_MGR9; NHSNW_MGR911).
- There is role ambiguity – *even the name OD/HRD; not sure that people know what that is. Learning and Training is clearer, isn't it?* (HEI_MGR22).
- *HRD is tremendously valuable but that in their opinion HRD does not have the profile they should have. It should be seen to be much more important...HRD is seen as the 'tinsel on the Christmas tree' – nice to have but you can strip it off.* (HEI_MGR21).

15

Employees perceived HRD role

- To provide customer service training, performance review, assess core competencies.
- The suggestion being that HRD has sold itself as a strategic function but have not invested in the resources needed to cascade the strategy to operational levels; *those people who make the strategy real for the people who need to deliver the actions that make the strategy happen, that's missing.* (HEI_EEE1)
- *Not all those in HR are strategic. Need bigger bandwidth and to think wider* (HEI_EEE1)

15

Key tensions between HRD, managers and employees

- **Managers**

- Training and development
- Online learning resource
- Stakeholder needs
- Audit training

- **Employees**

- Assumed strategic influence
- Limited resource ownership
- Performance evaluation
- Assess core competencies

versus

- **HRD practitioners**

- Strategic influence
- Employee lifecycle
- Custodians of service
- Value-added

- Managers perception of HRD complements the functional role of HRD in existing research (add reference). Employees also acknowledge elements of training but, perceive HRD as non-strategic. In contrast, HRD practitioners perceive their role as both functional and strategic.

- The tension lies between:

Managers & Employees versus HRD practitioners

- Precisely, about the perceived *value, positioning and responsiveness* of HRD in the organisation.

17

Further tensions and challenges

- **Value**

- HRD practitioners believe they add value by influencing decisions at senior management level (HEI), developing guidance for the organisation's strategic needs such as investment in people (TN). This supports the stakeholder theory of *what value* is created (Freudenreich et al. 2020).
- For those whom value is created (i.e., employees), HRD is not strategic because they are reactive. For instance, they organise training courses when requested, not prompted.

- **Positioning**

- HRD is a recognised term in all cases. However, it is situated within the Learning and Development Team (except for TN, NHSWM). HRD is the task whilst L&D appears to be the function.
- HRM and HRD activities are distinct, but HRD fulfils HRM responsibilities.
- HRD position itself as strategic (and are being) but line managers not seeing this; still expecting the 'old life-cycle service'.

- **Responsiveness**

- HRD is reactive rather than proactive.
- Learning materials and approach is also reactive.

16

Summary & recommendations to progress the future reputation of the HRD profession/post Covid-19

- HRD role is functional and strategic, and it is broadly situated within L&D.
- The three stakeholders are clear about the role of HRD, but expectations differ
 - HRD articulated 'hopes/aspirations' and/or 'made more of recent improvements' (their reality)
 - Managers and employees articulated functional roles.However, there is inconsistency in response
 - Depends on the type of HRD role and managers role (senior versus line)
 - Depends on established relationship/partnership/skills to meet gaps
- More strategic if HRD more experienced/been there longer?
- If HRD being more strategic, who is picking up the lifecycle work, administration of L&D etc?

- HRD should:

- revisit their positionality in the organisation, i.e., HRD or L&D
- assess the organisations priority to respond to immediate business needs
- clarify how they create value and the stakeholders involved
- manage stakeholder expectations by role
- develop strategic alliance that is action-oriented
- conduct internal and external environmental scanning for proactive actions

19



Any questions/comments?

17

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Rebooting Feminist Research in HRD: Shifting from Gender Binary to Gender Diversity

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MS. WEIXIN HE
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DR. LAURA BIEREMA
University of Georgia

Abstract #67

This article traces the history of Bierema's (2002) "A Feminist Approach to HRD Research," and extends and reconceptualizes her framework by exploring key contrasts between early feminist research and critical feminist research 20 years later, discussing the key lexicons that define current feminist research, and considering how feminist research can be more inclusive and resist binary thinking, essentialism, heterosexism, and cisnormativity in HRD. This article reconceptualizes critical feminist research that is grounded in a multidimensional, intersectional gender diversity framework.

Key words: feminist research, gender diversity, intersectionality, human resource development

Paper

Not applicable.

Presentation - Rebooting Feminist Research in HRD: Shifting from Gender Binary to Gender Diversity
See below.



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GEORGIA

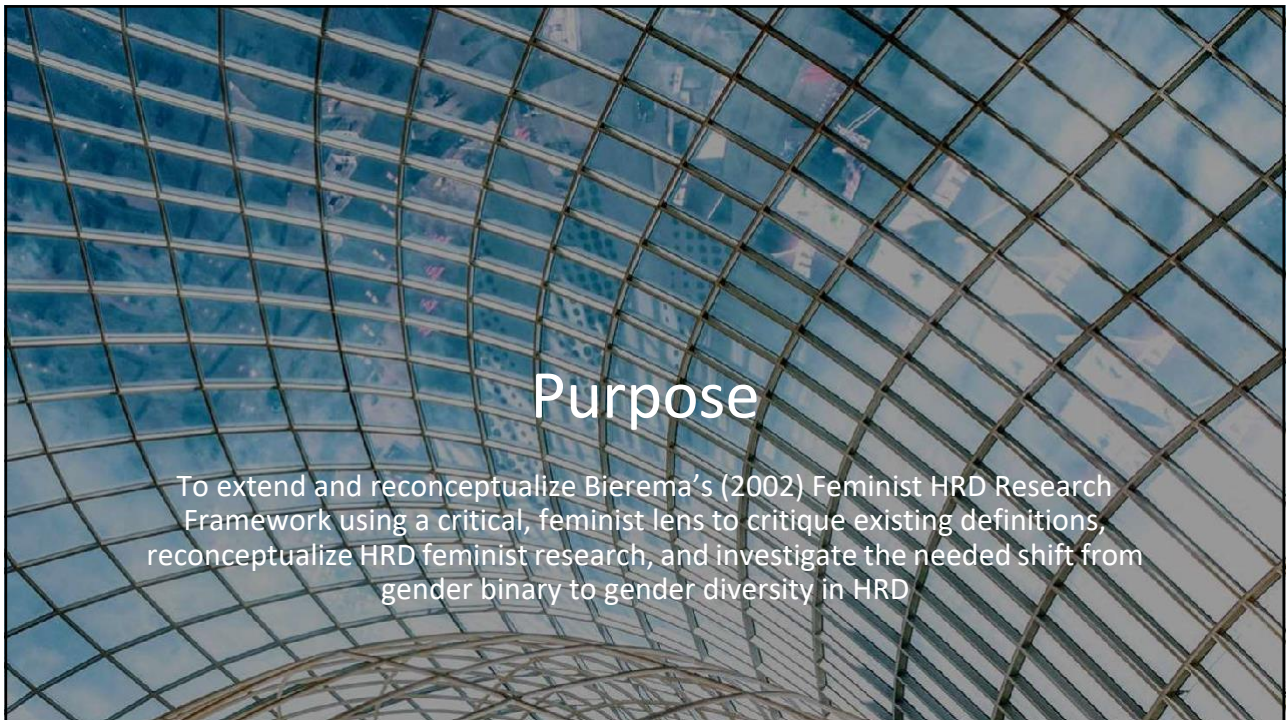


Rebooting Feminist Research in HRD: Shifting from Gender Binary to Gender Diversity

Tomika Greer, University of Houston
Eunbi Sim, University of Georgia
Weixin He, University of Georgia

Laura L. Bierema, University of Georgia

1



Purpose

To extend and reconceptualize Bierema's (2002) Feminist HRD Research Framework using a critical, feminist lens to critique existing definitions, reconceptualize HRD feminist research, and investigate the needed shift from gender binary to gender diversity in HRD

2

Research Questions

1. What are the key contrasts between early feminist research and feminist research today?
2. What are the key lexicons that define feminist research?
3. How can feminist research be more inclusive and resist binary thinking, essentialism, heterosexism, and cisnormativity in HRD?

3

Historical Context

1993	AHRD is formed
1990s	Request to form AHRD SIG on Women's Issues denied
1998	Bierema presents paper on "Feminist Research in HRD" at an AHRD Conference symposium on "Advances in Qualitative Research"
2000s	Feminist HRD Research approaches begin appearing (Bierema & Cseh, 2003; Howell et al., 2002; Hughes, 2000; Metcalfe, 2008)
2002	First Critical HRD Symposium at AHRD on "Critical Thinking in HRD—A Panel Led Discussion" (Elliott & Turnbull, 2002)
2002	Bierema publishes "A Feminist Approach to HRD Research," in HRDR
2018	Bierema UFHRD Keynote: "Ladies and Gentlemen, Your Implicit Bias is Showing: Gender Hegemony and its Impact on HRD Research"
2020	Special issue of Human Resource Development International, focused on gender hegemony and its impact on HRD research and

4

Bierema, L. L. (2002). A feminist approach to HRD research. *Human Resource Development Review*, 1(2), 244-268.

Adapted Worrell & Etaugh's (1994) model of feminist research to HRD:

1. challenges traditional scientific inquiry
2. focuses on the experiences and lives of women
3. considers asymmetrical power arrangements
4. recognizes gender as an essential category of analysis
5. attends to language and the power to "name"
6. promotes social activism and societal change

Challenges since:

- Performance-oriented, masculine-dominated, and Western-centered HRD approaches prevail
- Critiques of HRD have increased
- Critical HRD has developed traction
- Advances of women and historically excluded populations have been slow and sometimes eroded
- Understandings of gender have become more fluid and diverse

5

Critiques of Gender Binary Feminist Research

Essentializes women

Fails to problematize contradictions women face in organizations and society

Research findings often reinforce gender stereotypes and socialized norms

Reproduction of gender binary discourse

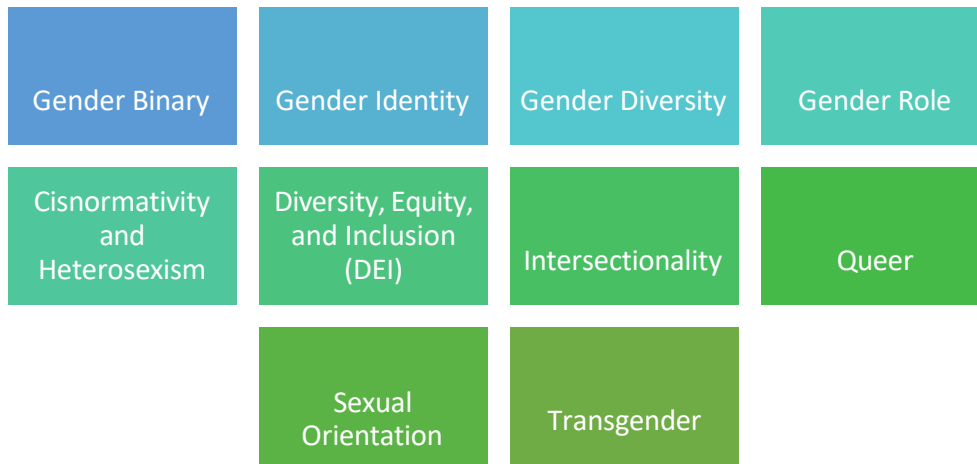
Privileges cisnormativity and heteronormativity

Marginalizes gender and sexual minorities (GSMs)

Post feminism boosts gender hegemony

6

Key Lexicons Defining Inclusive Feminist Research



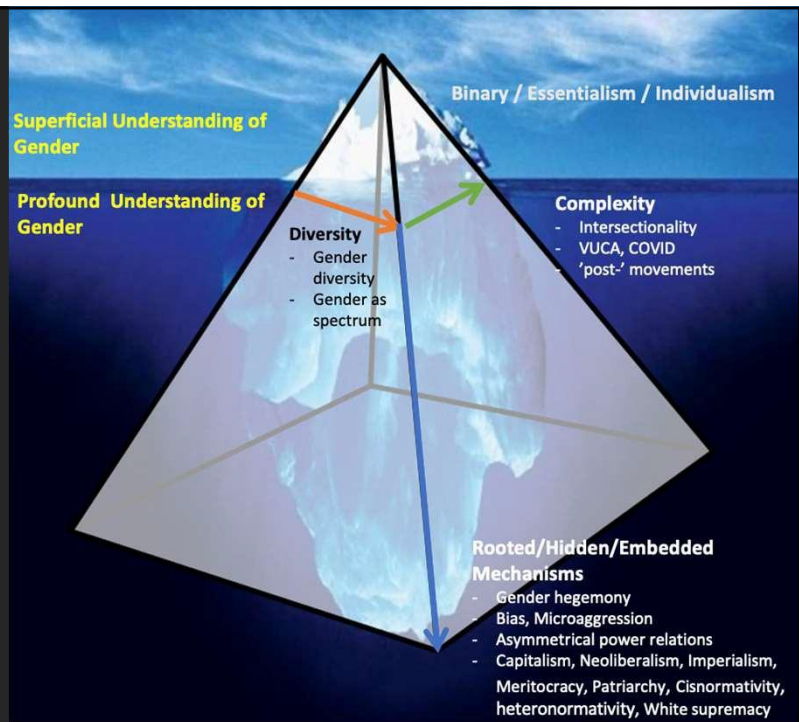
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Shifting from Gender Hegemony to Gender Diversity in HRD Research (Adapted from Bierema, 2020)

Gender Hegemony	Gender Diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • male versus female • fixed and stable identity categories • male as norm • research on women • women as deficit • gender as binary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • femininities and masculinities • fluid identity categories and intersectionality • diversity as norm • research for gender equity, social justice, and liberation • gender as asset • gender as spectral

8

Depiction of 20 Years of Gender Discourse in HRD

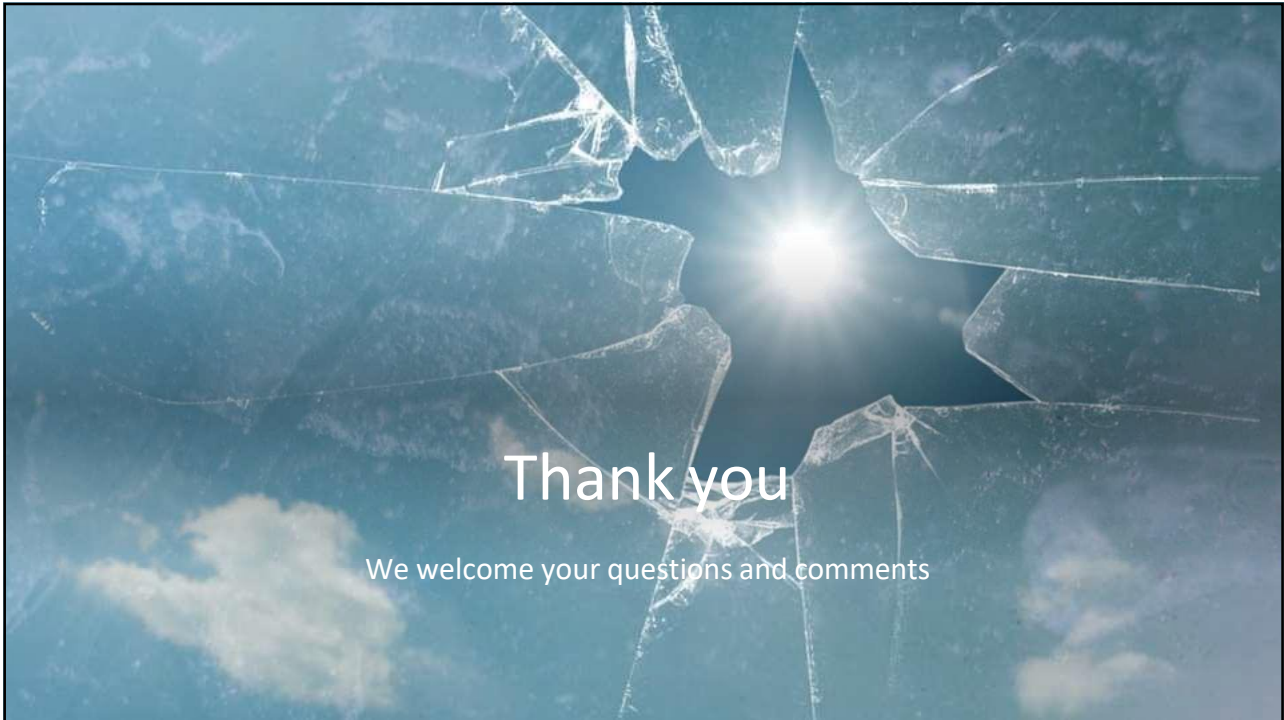


9

Towards More Inclusive Feminist HRD Research

- Intersectionality (Bowleg, 2008; Byrd, 2014; Choo & Ferree, 2010; Cole, 2009; Collins, 2015; Dillard & Osam, 2021; McCluney & Rabelo, 2019; Samuels & Ross-Sherriff, 2008)
- Whole person approaches (Collins et al., 2012; Rosette, 2018)
- Addressing unconscious bias (Haggins, 2020)
- Calls for more gender diverse research (Bierema, 2010; Bierema & Grace, 2020)
- Feminist Research 2.0 (Bierema, Greer, Sim, & He, forthcoming)
- Bold research (Bierema, 2020)

10



11

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12

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Learning about the workforce impact of Covid19 – Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam

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Abstract #69

This paper reflects a doctoral enquiry which considered the impact for work based learning during the Covid19 pandemic through exploring the nature of switching to working from home. The Vietnamese government conducted an intensive control campaign using a policy of quick testing for early discovery of infection sources, aggressive treatment services, immediate isolation, and free clinical treatment for those infected. Society prevention initiatives began early and spread across the nation. The government recommended immediate social isolation, self-isolation of vulnerable individuals, compulsory isolation of patients infected and those who tested positive, environmental cleansing, regular hand washing, and the use of face masks in all public areas. Given the Vietnamese government applied a national lockdown policy across the country at the declaration of the pandemic, employees in Vietnam fundamentally changed their ways of working towards telework to mitigate the effects of the virus. That the safety of their workers and customers had become one of their top priorities, hospitality and tourism businesses were placed in extremely challenging situations. As a result, during the pandemic, telework practices increased substantially in Vietnam yet these shifts in work practices may remain an essential and permanent.

This paper reports on interview research with employees within the Vietnamese hospitality and tourism business. Drawing insights from semi-structured interviews analysed by thematic analysis, themes such as “isolation”, “encourage” and “motivate” were examined to conduct further analysis and group eleven primary themes. There were both negative and positive influences experienced during the restrictions. The study found that generally whilst working remotely, employee satisfaction and motivation increased during the epidemic, with improved happiness and inspiration reported where the businesses’ provided support to employees during the crisis. Online training programmes, meetings or informal group chats represented some of the greatest support. Equally, feelings of isolation during the COVID-19 crisis, with a potential for detrimental effect on social well-being, related to decreased effectiveness. Further managing changed workloads alongside their personal life proved challenging.

The study set out to explore how working from home has affected Vietnamese employees during the COVID-19 pandemic in the hospitality and tourism industry and examine the impacts of telework on work-life balance of employees in the crisis to investigate the influences of remote work. It found that Vietnamese employees were forced to become conversant with new or different technical tools throwing up data security and privacy risks. Soft skills development was identified as mediating differing levels of negative (or positive) work-life conflicts and to increase the effectiveness of working remotely. By conducting normal social ‘chats’ or raising awareness about where to get specialised help, who to speak with about certain concerns improved engagement or decreased stress responses.

By collecting employees' reflections of this unprecedented shift in working practices around changes to work-life balance, job satisfaction, motivation and well-being, further insights of the developmental role of digital technology were identified. Practical implications for future preparation of unpredictable crises for supportive business policies and strategies for parents, financial support for childcare in this difficult situation were noted.

Paper – Learning about the workforce impact of Covid19 – Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam

Learning about the workforce impact of Covid19 – Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam

Introduction

This paper reflects a doctoral enquiry which considered the impact of the pandemic by exploring the nature of switching to working from home in terms of workplace learning within Vietnam. Whilst this provides insights of wider issues, it is noted that the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic began in December 2019 in. Global approaches towards protective public health measures in terms of timing, scope, and aggressiveness of implementation regimes differed significantly across the globe. From the first recorded case received, World Health Organization (WHO) declared as a serious global pandemic. By March 2020 which impacted at least 188 countries further to the identification of the COVID- 19 virus in early 2020, worldwide governments responded with strict policies to control the spread of disease (WHO, 2020a/b/c). Social Distancing was enacted to maintain public safety, travel restrictions were progressed, non-essential business was concluded whilst employees were required to work at home outside key workers (Shine, 2020).

Given unanticipated economic challenges, companies sought the shift to home working to avoid diminishing customer relations, but further to move, from traditional physical working to virtual home working to retain their workforce and contain costs. On the flipside, though challenges for work-family conflict remain, greater work-life balance through Telework increased employees' motivation (Shine, 2020). As an unanticipated way of working, it further challenged historical notions of career and talent management demonstrating the lacking of prior crisis planning. Whilst recognizing the acceleration in the transformation from a digital revolution towards remote working, there remained a lack of experience around such profound, sudden workplace change (Yang et al, 2020).

The first case of COVID-19 infection in Vietnam was found on January 23rd. By May 5th, 2020, Vietnam had verified 271 cases with no deaths (Vietnamese Ministry of Health, 2020). Vietnam was among the nations with the fewest recorded cases. Society prevention initiatives began early and spread across the nation. The government required immediate social isolation. Their relatively recent experience against SARS, Swine Flu (A/H1N1pdm09 virus, popularly known as 'H1N1'), and Avian influenza (Avian influenza virus subtypes A), meant the Vietnamese government and health organisations had pandemic preparation and management strategies already in place. On March 20th, 2020, it was determined that community infection had been reached Vietnam (Vietnamese Ministry of Health, 2020). Meetings of more than two individuals were banned (Vietnamese Prime Minister of Government, 2020). Although having experienced past outbreaks of infectious illness Tourism and hospitality industries were significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Early, effective, and coordinated measures by the Vietnamese government and tourist sector provided the circumstances

for the sector to bounce back and fully recover from the disaster (Vietnamese Ministry of Health, 2020).

Research Problem

Any consideration of the conditions for telework had been under 'normal' circumstances. Whilst forced choice feels less attractive than free choice before the pandemic, working from home entailed shorter periods of time. Whereas, during lockdown restrictions and many faced educating their own children (Vietnamese Prime Minister's Office, 2020), it was more difficult to balance work life and coordinating family needs. Benefits of home working from limited interruptions leading to productivity increase had been experienced solely in 'normal; circumstances', it is unsurprising the impact differed but development opportunities arose as well as difficulties (Molino et al., 2020).

The main aim of this paper is report on the investigation into the impact of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic upon employees who would usually work pre lockdown within the office and in-store for coffee chains, restaurants and hotels in Vietnam. The investigation sought to identify the benefits and challenges from the employees' perspective when considering work life conflict.

One main and one sub research question was considered:

RQ: How did working from home (telework) impact Vietnamese employees in the COVID-19 pandemic?

Sub – RQ: How main factors of work-life balance, satisfaction and motivation, well-being have been affected by telework under COVID-19 disaster?

Further objectives were also explored in this study:

- 1) To explore how working from home has affected Vietnamese employees during the COVID-19 pandemic within the hospitality and tourism industry.
- 2) To examine the impacts of telework on work-life balance of employees within the crisis.
- 3) To understand the effects of working from home on workers' well-being during and post pandemic.

Teleworking - Background to the Paper

Working from home was considered as the most suitable option for reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection, whilst including remote work, flexible work environments, telework, telecommuting, and e-working), teleworking was not a new concept. Internet connectivity has been critical to teleworking's fast growth alongside the reducing cost of technological tools (Agarwal et al., 2020). Yet Teleworkers need guidance, support through formal and informal contact with supervisors and colleagues, as well as development in terms of time management practices to achieve work-life balance (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020).

Before the pandemic, it was known that Teleworking lowers colleague interaction and the collaborative character of work, given endless digital and mobile device usage, workers unable to escape from work or to enjoy their rest and leisure time. Social isolation is viewed negatively by

workers and seen as leading to a social loss within company culture and blindness to mentoring needs. Many organisations further faced the challenges of ensuring company profitability secure the workforce while balancing the healthy and safety working environment. Governments, companies, and individuals were expected to modify their attitudes towards remote telework in the aftermath of the pandemic's economic and social shock (Fachriansyah, 2020). Regardless of whether they previously adopted teleworking, this factor had a significant influence on organisational practice. Yet the result was many workers, particularly those with lower skills or less valued, lacked safety equipment or consideration for their well-being (Syakriah, 2020).

The COVID-19 epidemic profoundly changed the work environment and job requirements of those who transferred to teleworking or working from home. Individuals compelled to work from home confront basic concerns such as a lack of space in their homes to do business (Allen et al., 2014). Employees who live with others suffer more obstacles since they must negotiate their coworkers' environment. Employees often struggle to establish a clear distinction between work and non-work. This was particularly the case where a household might have more than one homeworker.

Telework After The Pandemic

After the initial pandemic restrictions, many Vietnamese companies offered their employees Hybrid Working. Adapting was neither easy, nor painless, for many businesses, especially those with no or limited past experience of teleworking. A significant proportion of workers are interested in working remotely more often in the future, even after physical distance restrictions are eliminated. Firms have recognised that labour responsibilities may be accomplished remotely and supervisors - who previously were opposed having their staff conduct job activities remotely - are now more receptive to these practises from the pandemic experiment. Workers have found that they can conduct job duties outside of their usual office environments, increasing their confidence and comfort level with technology. According to Smith (2020), over 29% of SMEs in the United Kingdom with 1,000 employees expect to expand their flexibility post-pandemic.

The persisting COVID-19 epidemic compelled commercial businesses and the public sector to implement widespread teleworking. This may result in a larger use of this alternative way of work post pandemic. Government actions become critical to ensuring that any innovative, more productive, and welfare-enhancing working techniques, established during the pandemic are developed after the control measures are completed (Chong et al., 2020). Governments must encourage this new era of teleworking by enacting supportive legislation. The demand for adaptability and independence is perhaps dictated to employees but taking their individual conditions and preferences into account may extend further than previously considered?

Beyond the Pandemic Restrictions

Technical factors, such as reviewing need for investments into further technological innovation which facilitates business working remotely on a long-term commitment and more productive telecommuting is key. The pandemic provides a catalyst for promoting teleworking policies and becomes potential a critical component for an appropriate contingency plan which for preserves productivity, jobs and corporate sustainability. Sharing accountability and engagement within and without the workforce may assist. To be effective the scrutiny of the changing face of demands of emergency scenarios should not be backfooted. With the upside of synergistic improving of worker well-being, this could accelerate a virtuous transformation for any "new normal" (Davison, 2020).

Since sustaining enterprises and economic growth is interdependent with workforce capabilities, when positive Covid29 cases rose globally, telework became critical for health and safety, (Richter, 2020). The relevance of telework continued further to the pandemic's later stages globally until the vaccine (or alternative treatment against the virus became available) (WHO, 2020). Yet it still presented a significant degree of uncertainty throughout.

The duration of this worldwide epidemic remains uncertain. In the medium term, more office space has been required to accommodate social distancing. Depending upon global location, the pandemic had forced enterprises to take further precautions to safeguard the safety of their personnel despite potential for risk taking, given the operational frustrations. Firms were forced to comply with stringent hygiene and safety rules and social distancing (Donnelly and Johns, 2020). This made teleworking necessary for a percentage of the workforce (Wheatley, 2020).

The profound effect upon the populace from dread, frustration, tension, and worry (Szabo, 2020) reflected a crisis scenario globally coupled with widespread public anxiety and a significant shift in working circumstances.

Rules requiring social distance/self-isolation in order to avoid COVID-19 viral transmission have impacted employees' needs of social, prestige, and self-actualisation (Syakriah, 2020). A new social norm where companies utilise teleworking as a means of enabling people to balance work and family life (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020) might address issues of isolation with adjusted societal interactions.

In summary, COVID-19 time effects from remote working have yet to be completely been evaluated for the workforce or enterprises. Despite sharing a border with China, the virus's original epicentre, Vietnam's reactions to COVID-19 present a spectacular example of national awareness, protection, and control, reflected by a low number of overall cases and fatalities (Vietnamese Prime Minister of Government, 2020). Rather than notions of relaxing attention and not adhering to Ministry of Health standards, the re-appearances of cases in 2020 serves as a reminder of the virus' continuous danger to health and well-being, (Vietnamese Ministry of Health, 2020). The Vietnamese government moved promptly during the pandemic's early stages, focusing on containment operations and substantial public health. Consequently, the COVID-19 epidemic created difficulties for management. COVID-

19 further caused career shock and affected well-being (Akkermans et al., 2020). Employers needed to address the growing stresses of remote work and any blurring of work and family boundaries, whilst some continue to favour office employment (Von Gaudecker et al., 2020).

The evolution of the Internet age and the digital revolution 4.0 provided a significant opportunity for all enterprises/businesses. It is critical for companies to develop improvement suggestions to adapt to new industries, and for its workforce to actively seek opportunities to enhance their abilities in order and adapt to new business strategies such as working from home (Fachriansyah, 2020).

Methodology - A Phenomenological Analysis

The participant's lived experiences were utilised to determine the phenomenon's fundamental characteristics (i.e. essences). Smith et al. (2009) stated that by using phenomenology, researchers may obtain a better understanding of how to analyse and comprehend human experience in and of itself. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was the chosen qualitative method for this study

because of these main reasons. First, interpretative phenomenology is compatible with the study objectives because it is dedicated to examining how individuals make meaning of significant life events. This is also interpretive in nature, using what is referred to as a "double hermeneutic", in which the researcher attempts to obtain participants' experiences (Smith et al., 2009) of telework during the epidemic.

The research sought to explore the influences of telework on employees during the pandemic. The researchers sought to acquire 'the lived experiences' of remote working by workers. The doctoral researcher was Vietnamese and well-informed about the work done on this topic in Vietnam. To understand the effects of working from home during the COVID-19 crisis, selecting the most suitable approach to follow the application of the interpretivism paradigm was used to gain knowledge of the participants' experience of social events (Saunders et al., 2009).

An interpretivist inquiry was further used for this research to comprehend and elicit the perspectives of those who remote work during the epidemic. The interpretivist method enabled findings to be representative of each individual's particular view and experience of remote work. Undertaken as a qualitative inquiry in order to explore the 'lived experiences'. For this study, fifteen interviewees who normally work in an office (8 workers) and work in a store (7 staff) were selected for the interview as a convenience sample. The quantity of obtained data during applying the qualitative research process can be identified as beneficial, even with a small number of participants. Rich data further counters bias from the convenience sampling, qualitative research samples are often small (Saunders et al., 2009).

The data was analysed thematically, as it is a flexible and productive research instrument capable of producing vast amounts of comprehensive data. Although thematic analysis is not bound by any post conceptual framework, it is adaptable to a variety of epistemological viewpoints (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Findings and Discussion

Fifteen semi-structured interviews (see appendix 1 for composition of participants) were all recorded and transcribed then analysed by thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This was conducted by coding and categorising general results. Any patterns initially identified then led to further examined similarities being uncovered. As such, themes such as "isolation", "encourage" and "motivate", were classified as a single theme to conduct additional analysis through grouping the themes into primary themes that developed (King, 1998).

Theme 1 New Post Covid Business Policies

Ritcher (2020) expressed that there will be a number of business policies and practices in the service industry that may be adopted after the pandemic. This was found within the interview cohort. One interviewee showing changes from traditional customer service to technological innovations within sales stated,

"in our customer experience will be created new habits".

They also agreed that

“[...] customers will be offered to order take away and pay through our app”

(Interviewee I)

to *“help them feel safe”* in using products and service as well as “[...]”

always keep safe distancing when contacting our staff”

(Interviewee M)

Further after the Vietnamese government eased restrictions in the first lockdown, many coffee stores, hotels and restaurants still remain concerned about exposure to the coronavirus.

To explain this, participant F confirmed that:

“Even the government announced that the epidemic has been controlled in Vietnam. However, many customers are hesitant and worry to go in the public places such as restaurants, hotels, coffee shops and spas. For example, they are willing to pay more money to book a table in the restaurant, where have been applied the strict policies of their customers’ health and safety.”

(Interviewee F)

To which L said that:

“We have to go back to work in store to serve customers after the first lockdown. The company policies have changed many things, particularly new working styles on serving customers in stores.”

(Interviewee L)

After the initial lockdowns, for the progressive resumption of economic activity, the public had been recommended to maintain social isolation, maintain proper grooming, wear masks and prevent crowds unless absolutely necessary). How new policies were adopted could be illustrated by participants = N explained that:

“[...] that is a really essential step to check the quality of products, service and sterilisation in stores. We need to prevent spreading the virus, protect our staff and customers as well as keep the good business image in this serious situation.”

(Interviewee N)

All fifteen interviewees decided that inviting guests to see the whole operation of deep cleaning on-site and transmitting the practice digitally to inform customers of the hotel's protection protocols would both increase employee and consumer trust. Eight out of fifteen interviewees agreed that

"[...] working in the safe environment during the horrible situation is a really important issue to increase our productivity to serve customers"

(Interviewee O)

Throughout the pandemic, hotel groups have expanded their use of intelligent contactless systems, such as self-check-in, automated check-in, facial screening, voice-activated room service, robotic room service, and zero-second check-out.

To illustrate one participant stated:

"We process orders online for both drink-in and take-away for all customers. We still accept orders at the till but we always need to do the social distancing between staff and customers. It is quite challenging if you want to have a conversation with your regular clients so you need to balance between delivering good customer service and protecting customers from the virus."

(Interviewee A)

All participants outlined that most Vietnamese businesses tried to move from traditional customer service towards online methods which included taking the orders online to satisfy other customer requirements instore.

To illustrate M said that:

"Recently, customers are normally looking for stores, which can serve by the online orders. They are really careful to eat/drink in stores because of the serious impacts of COVID-19."

(Interviewee M)

Historically self-check-in booths and robotic room service have been used in the service industry, Covid19 saw the increase the number of contactless service hotels. All fifteen participants confirmed the maintaining social distancing by using digital technology in businesses can be evaluated as an effective online service to attract more customers.

All fifteen participants agreed that applying technology to customer service can:

"[...] help businesses to attract more customer in this hard situation".

(Interviewee M)

H also highlighted that

"[...] before COVID-19, using the machine to order foods and drinks has been very popular in many countries because of their convenience".

(Interviewee H)

N added that

"Coffee stores and restaurants have started to apply new methods after noticing their benefits, especially in the pandemic."

(Interviewee N)

On the other hand, three interviewees mentioned that applying new business policies and technologies may cause problems for both staff and customers.

N identified that:

"I am not good in technology and I am very confused to use them. Some customers are not good in using these machines and feel they are very complicated. They prefer to order at till. It needs to take time to adapt and use it for me and my customers."

(Interviewee N)

The nature of development necessary both for the pandemic and further the translation towards future teleworking practices was raised.

Participant J stated that their company had complaints from staff, who have to work in stores, about the usage of machines in the shop because

"they take more steps to work and serve customers"

(Interviewee J)

or

"they have no skills to deal with it."

(Interviewee A)

All fifteen participants agreed that they trust their companies to take adequate measures to maintain their well-being and customers' safety. Yet there was a sense that the new business policies not only effected change/transformation of practice but lacked consideration for the development needs of the workforce. The inadequacy of crisis planning in terms of limited focus for development impacts the possible efficiencies or efficiency gains from swapped technologies which increased digital responses to address the pandemic restrictions but further future working practices.

Theme 2 Remote Working Experiences – the Lived Experience

When the participants mentioned about impacts on normal working style and when working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, the theme included “*unpredictable problems*” or “*unsure*”, “*no experience*”, from all fifteen people.

To illustrate, N explained that he cannot say anything about this issue either now or in the future because this COVID-19 is “new” and “unstable” for everyone, not only in Vietnam but also all over the world.

J and A also agreed that:

“[...] full-time working at home 7 days a week is new for me and my teams”.

(Interviewee J)

D added that:

“I do not know anything about this crisis and I am very confused, worried and depressed about this difficult problem. However, thanks to national lock down and work from home, I feel better. It is safe for me and my family.

(Interviewee D)

Fifteen participants admitted that they have “no experience” of COVID-19 and how the pandemic will affect them and their colleagues. However, they all completely accepted that the biggest change in their working style is to transfer from working in their stores or office to working at home. During discussion of the influences on working style of working from home, there were two main elements that were pointed out: the length of time to be required to work at home and the support policies put in place by governments.

On the one hand, the length of time is reported by ten participants as one of the most essential factors to affect employees working from home. B stated that:

“My friend is working from home more than five months and maybe she has to work more than that. I just need to work from home around one or two months. So I think that the feelings will be different.”

(Interviewee B)

F also added that:

"[...] I think that if you work from home from more than six months to a year, you will have different feelings and problems compared with working from home just only a month or two months."

(Interviewee F)

To analyse the impacts of working from home on employees it is important to consider the length of time required to work at home during the crisis. Twelve interviewees said that:

"It will get more serious problems when working from home around half a year".

(Interviewee C)

L added:

"I can not imagine how can I deal with my children if I need to stay with them 24/24. I haven't got any experience working full-time at home more than three months but I think it will be really horrible."

(Interviewee L)

J concluded that:

"[...] you will be so excited when you do new things but just for a short time. If you need to do it for a long time, only work, stay at home and take care of your family, you will get more problems. I don't think working from home in the long-term will work with Vietnamese people, particularly for the hospitality staff like me and my husband."

(Interviewee J) Ten

interviewees spoke about the government's support policies to work from home such as:

"We can not say that working from home is good or bad in Vietnam or other countries. First, Vietnamese government policies are really good to block the spread of the virus so we never need to do lockdown more than three months. Second, the employees cannot get any financial support from the government like other countries. Next, working from home in more

than a year, I don't think it is a good strategy for the economic of country. Therefore, working from home in the long-term is not a good idea in Vietnam."

(Interviewee K)

"[...] you get the financial support from your government but we could not. Working from home should be fine with a person who is working in office, because they still can make money. However, for a person like me, who needs to work in barista position, staying at home and doing some online training without any money. I don't think that I can do it."

(Interviewee I)

Participants described themselves as completely alone or experiencing characteristics of isolation. This was corroborated by the literature, which indicated that distant employment had a detrimental effect on social well-being (Chong et al., 2020). As a result, this study's findings also showed that distant work has a detrimental effect on social well-being owing to feelings of isolation.

Theme 3 Sustainable work and Work life Crisis

Ten participants explained they do not think that the Vietnamese government can support income for employees or financial issues for business because of the limitations of economy. However, fifteen interviewees agreed with the illustration from interviewee F:

"the goverment has tried really hard to prevent the pandemic!"

(Interviewee F)

in their support to help them *"back to normal work"*.

They also believed that after the crisis, the government will introduce many strategies *"to recover and improve economy"* as well as *"support business by other ways"*. All fifteen interviewees responded that they cannot be absolute around the impact of COVID-19 or working from home on both business and employees in the *"long-term"*. Nonetheless, eight respondents highlighted in terms of their experiences that:

"[...] there always are both positive and negative sides of any problem"

(Interviewee D)

This suggested that both employees and employers should prepare for changes in the future after the crisis as well as learning from the changes within the crisis through adoption of new working patterns. Before the pandemic, working from home was one of the most effective working options, that has been selected the most by employees who have family (Beauregard et al, 2019).

E commented that due to the COVID-19 impacts and national lockdown:

“This has been so far so good because I can take care of my daughter, since her school has been closed.”

(Interviewee E)

D also explained that:

“I feel so happy and lucky that my company gives me to chance to work at home. It helps me to take care of my son and my daughter, but it is easy to protect them in this pandemic.”

(Interviewee D)

This research indicated that some aspects had detrimental effects on the employee, most notably COVID-19. Fifteen participants believed telework in the coronavirus crisis would have the impacts on the idea of work-life balance both on positive and negative sides. The results showed that switching off from work in the office to work at home during COVID-19 was hard for them, as agreed by all fifteen participants. K was “worried” and “depressed” because:

“[...] working from home reflects on my job and personal activities”.

(Interviewee K)

F outlined that:

“It puts work and private life together in the same place and mixes them and I don't really know what I am doing. Am I relaxing now at home or am I working in the relaxing place?”

(Interviewee F)

Felstead and Henseke (2017) expressed that remote work has been correlated with an individual's unwillingness to switch off from their work. Allen et al. (2014) discussed how work and family life are inextricably linked and influence each other. Additionally, work–family balance has been often expressed in terms of the absence of disagreement or disturbance between work and family (Frone, 2003).

E stated that:

“[...] while my colleagues said that they are more productive, but I have huge struggled to stay focused on work at home because of the lack of proper workspace.”

(Interviewee E)

Participants J and H expressed their boundaries as being “definitely blurred”. Participants A, B and D all agreed it was “difficult” and they “don’t manage the boundaries well” when working from home in the epidemic. Connections between work and home can be confused or distorted, and ineffectively handled. This is supported by the results, with participant B emphasising the importance of “never turning off the [workplace] laptop or phone” in rest periods outside of work activity.

Similarly, participants E, F, J and C confirmed that they are “online 24/24” when working from home. This is supported by the results, which indicate that the 10 of 15 participants “*think they should be actively online*” to prove that they are “working” and “busy” continuously.

Participant D explained that they have to have an “online status” in order to avoid being seen as “slacking off”. Participant A emphasised that they need to remain “constantly online” because they are not “present in the workplace” so stay “always online” to help his team to know that “I am working”, and also his team and manager always “need me to respond to emails from my team as quickly as possible”. Whilst this might be explained as culturally aligned to Vietnam, it perhaps provides insights which are recognisable to other western and Asian working practices.

Participant E outlined that:

“My work never finishes when working from home in the pandemic”.

(Interviewee E)

Ten participants expressed that balancing between work and life has been extremely difficult to them, especially during the national lockdown time because their teams and managers always think that they are completely “free” to receive more tasks.

On the subject of their family, seven interviewees also stressed that a family member thought that “I do not have much work to do” or “I am too lazy to help with housework”. Wheatley (2012) suggested that in some cases, employees will spend their leisure time on working extra hours rather than switching off and participating in physical activities. O highlighted that:

“[...] due to social restrictions, I just focus on solving my work as much as I can”.

(Interviewee O)

Participant E confirmed O’s answer that “instead of trying to switch off or relax”, they are “answering emails, cooking or taking care of my kids”.

K stated that “no opening time or closing time when working at my place means I cannot control my time to work” causing an imbalance between work and private life. All fifteen participants reported the difference between working in their office and at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, that at home they “always never finish work” or have “no time for family”.

E noticed that:

“I think that I couldn’t stay away from work starting from the day we need to work from home. I even don’t have my own space for relaxing or enjoying.”

(Interviewee E)

Discussing the impacts of working from home on employees related to the work-life balance issue. All fifteen interviewees mentioned about the distraction problems introduced by teleworking. Equally illustrations of the problems for mothers working within the family as well as within telework, leading to an overloading. Further comments around the impact upon individuals satisfaction with work and motivation was presented and reflect the need for support from the business and commitment to the employee but that saving time and costs or focus upon productivity reigned over their experience. This took little account of the stress incurred from working from home or their social isolation and impact upon them in a time of crisis.

In summary then, the illustrations provided give some insights of the issues that were anticipated but further reflect the needs for revisiting them in order to inform companies in their management of future policies. What seems to prevail is the need for consideration of career development, personal development approaches for remote workers and a re-thinking of how the business might facilitate this by way of the needs of not only work transformed during a crisis but as that work progresses towards post crisis what might be learned for future work strategies to assure the most productive outcomes.

Conclusions

The aim of this doctoral study inquiry was to investigate the impact of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic for employees who would usually work both at the office and in stores pre-lockdown, in coffee chains, restaurants and hotels within Vietnam. The Research Question posed was: How working from home has affected Vietnamese employees during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The following research objectives were framed to provide insights:

- 1) To explore how working from home has affected Vietnamese employees during the COVID-19 pandemic within the hospitality and tourism industry.
- 2) To examine the impacts of telework on work-life balance of employees within the crisis.
- 3) To understand the effects of working from home on workers' well-being during and post pandemic.

The essential role of digital technology during the COVID-19 pandemic on remote work was investigated in the findings and results section in chapter 4 of this research. This was supported by previous research which showed that the significant rise in using technologies in COVID-19 has been affected by telecommunicating (Spurk and Straub, 2020; Von Gaudecker et al., 2020).

Business policies and strategies for improving employee satisfaction, engagement or loyalty for telework, especially during the hard time, should be considered, such as rewards and promotions. Additionally, internal communication channels need to be developed because of the importance of communication for employees (Dick et al., 2020), to decrease their isolation and stress while working at home.

Limitations of the Study:

It is recognized that the study seeks to explore and understand to gain insights rather than provide generalisations which might be progressed to other settings. However given the unique period of observation and the exceptional circumstances, the rich data received by workers through their lived experience provides rich data. This data provides a starting point for a conversation which reflects upon emergency or crisis planning and further the transformation through technology of working practices and potential issues this raise.

A further study might seek to progress these themes through a larger data set and explore whether these experiences presented are furthered in other sectors, other countries. Equally whether study undertaken after the pandemic is more reflexive in its reflections of the extraordinary period under scrutiny in this study.

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APPENDICES

This segment describes the actual demographics of the workers who took part in the interviews, demonstrating that the survey variance objective was fulfilled. When recruiting volunteers, the researcher took into consideration their background working from home during the Vietnamese lockdown. The descriptions of participants and some of their professional details are included below.


Appendix 1

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Job Title	Year working experience	Industry	Date of Interview	Length of Interview
1 A	35	F	OFFICE	3	Coffee	19/12/2020	48m 20s
2 B	38	M	OFFICE	5	Hotel	05/01/2021	50m 03s
3 C	29	M	OFFICE	5	Coffee	19/12/2020	57m 37s
4 D	30	F	STORE	5	Restaura nt	05/01/2021	48m 22s
5 E	32	F	STORE	2	Coffee	02/01/2021	25m 33s
6 F	36	F	STORE	4	Restaura nt	19/12/2020	38m 26s
7 J	28	F	OFFICE	2	Hotel	19/12/2020	49m 05s
8 H	39	M	OFFICE	5	Hotel	05/01/2021	44m 37s
9 I	26	M	STORE	2	Coffee	05/01/2021	29m 01s
10 J	34	F	STORE	3	Restaura nt	02/01/2021	33m 40s
11 K	29	F	OFFICE	2	Coffee	02/01/2021	41m 25s

12 L	32	M	STORE	2	Restauran t	05/01/2021	28m 19s
13 M	41	M	OFFICE	5	Coffee	05/01/2021	23m 40s
14 N	25	F	STORE	2	Coffee	05/01/2021	39m 40s
15 O	38	F	OFFICE	3	Coffee	19/12/2020	31m 03s

Table 6: The details of the fifteen participants. Source: Researcher

Presentation – Learning about the workforce impact of Covid19 – Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam
See below.



Learning about the workforce impact of Covid19 –
Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam

Dr Le Thi Khanh Tam, University of West Scotland
Dr Diane Keeble-Ramsay, University of Suffolk

1



Emergent Workplace Learning

- This reflects a DBA enquiry which considered the impact for work based learning during the Covid19 pandemic through exploring the nature of switching to working from home.
- Given the Vietnamese government applied a national lockdown policy across the country at the declaration of the pandemic, employees in Vietnam fundamentally changed to teleworking to mitigate the effects of the virus.

2



What were our initial research questions?

Any historical consideration of the conditions for telework had been under 'normal' circumstances.

Research Questions posed:

- How did working from home (telework) impact Vietnamese employees in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Sub-question : How main factors (of work-life balance, satisfaction and motivation, well-being) have been affected by telework under COVID-19 disaster?

3



The motivation for the research

To investigate the impact of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic upon employees who would usually work pre lockdown within the office and in-store for coffee chains, restaurants and hotels in Vietnam.

benefits and challenges from the employees' perspective when considering work life conflict.

4



Research Design and Limitations

- Interpretative phenomenological analysis -The participant's lived experiences were utilised to determine the phenomenon's fundamental characteristics (i.e. essences) (Smith et al. 2009)
- Sample – 8 office workers and 7 instore to gain knowledge of participants' experience of social events (Saunders et al., 2009) analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

5



Emergent Learning

Theme 1 New Post Covid Business Policies

- After the initial lockdowns, for the progressive resumption of economic activity, the public had been recommended to maintain social isolation - new policies were adopted
- 8 participants agreed that –
'...working in the safe environment during the horrible situation is a really important issue to increase our productivity to serve customers...'
- Throughout the pandemic, hotel groups have expanded their use of intelligent contactless systems

6

Emergent Learning

Theme 2 Remote Working Experiences – the Lived Experience

- *“Coffee stores and restaurants have started to apply new methods after noticing their benefits, especially in the pandemic.”*
- *Vietnamese government policies are really good to block the spread of the virus so we never need to do lockdown more than three months. Second, the employees cannot get any financial support from the government*
- *...if you work from home from more than six months to a year, you will have different feelings and problems compared with working from home just only a month or two months...*
- *I can not imagine how can I deal with my children if I need to stay with them 24/24.*

7

Workplace Learning

Theme 3 Sustainable work and Work life Crisis

the impacts on the idea of work-life balance both on positive and negative sides (employer/family):

- *Am I relaxing now at home or am I working in the relaxing place?*
- *never turning off the [workplace] laptop or phone - have an “online status” in order to avoid being seen as “slacking off” or “I am too lazy to help with housework*

8



What was found so far?

How did working from home (telework) impact Vietnamese employees

- Internet connectivity was critical to fast transformation to teleworking (alongside the reducing cost of technological tools eg Teams/online ordering)
- Business policies and strategies for improving employee satisfaction, engagement or loyalty for telework, especially during the hard time, should be considered, such as rewards and promotions.
- Employees often struggle to establish a clear distinction between work and non-work.

9



What was found so far?

How main factors (of work-life balance, satisfaction and motivation, well-being) have been affected by telework under COVID-19 disaster?

- Employees who live with others suffer more obstacles since they must negotiate their coworkers' environment. This was particularly the case where a household might have more than one homeworker
- After the initial pandemic restrictions, many Vietnamese companies offered their employees Hybrid Working. Adapting was neither easy, nor painless
- Governments must encourage this new era of teleworking by enacting supportive legislation.
- the upside of synergistic improving of worker well-being, this could accelerate a virtuous transformation for any "new normal" (Davison, 2020)

10



Moving forward

What seems to prevail is the need for consideration of career development, personal development approaches for remote workers and a re-thinking of how the business might facilitate this by way of the needs

(not only during a crisis but towards post crisis)

what might be learned for future work strategies to assure the most productive outcomes

11



Moving forward

The duration of this worldwide epidemic remains uncertain.

Depending upon global location, the pandemic had forced enterprises to take further precautions to safeguard the safety of their personnel despite potential for risk taking, given the operational frustrations.

It is critical for companies to develop improvement suggestions to adapt to new industries, and for its workforce to actively seek opportunities to enhance their abilities in order and adapt to new business strategies such as working from home (Fachriansyah, 2020).

12



Thank you

- Any questions?

The unintentional benefits of being made redundant: Building strategic capabilities in the implementation of redundancies

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Abstract #84

Rationale: Restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have had a catastrophic impact on employment rates. In the UK, redundancies reached a height of 14.5 per a thousand employees being made redundant in the 3 months preceding September 2020 (ONS, 2022). The International Labour Organization provide detail of the global impact that suggests the labour market were disrupted to an unprecedented scale during the pandemic with working-hour losses equalling 255 million full-time jobs (ILO, 2021). The negative impact of redundancies on the workforce is well researched (De Vries and Balazs, 1997, Cascio and Wynn, 2004, Tourish et al., 2004, LaMarsh, 2009; Stevens and Hannibal, 2021). With uncertainty prevailing, it is essential that HR practitioners are prepared and equipped with the right strategic capabilities and strengths to implement redundancies effectively.

Focus: This research focuses on the ironic and unintentional benefits redundancy envoys have gained in developing their strategic capabilities when implementing redundancies, through the unfortunate experience of being made redundant themselves. My research posits that having previous experience of being made redundant, helped redundancy envoys in developing and practicing effective strategies when implementing redundancies, such as captured in this quote;

“It helps being on the other side of the table and makes you come across more genuine and empathetic as you really understand the emotions they are feeling and the pitfalls.” (HR practitioner)

Clair and Dufresne (2004) state that, typically, redundancy envoys would demonstrate sympathy and shy away from empathy as part of emotional distancing when implementing redundancies. My findings challenge this perspective with the data demonstrating that redundancy envoys felt that implementing redundancies with empathy was actually a critical part of a successful strategy in the overall delivery. Participants felt that having been exposed to a redundancy situation in the role of a ‘victim’ helped them to be more empathetic during redundancy consultations, which reaped several benefits to the overall success of redundancy implementation for all parties concerned. My research progresses the simulation theory of empathy (Goldman, 2006) that suggests that we anticipate and make sense of the behaviour of others by drawing on mental processes that produce similar behaviour.

Research methods: Data is collected through 23 semi-structured interviews with redundancy envoys, who have had the experience of implementing redundancies as well as having been at risk of redundancy themselves. Participants represent various countries, including UK, South Africa, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Poland, Germany, France, Switzerland and America.

Data was analysed through thematic analysis which consists of various stages such as data familiarisation, code generation and identification and formation of themes (Baran, 2016).

Keywords: Redundancies; strategic capabilities, redundancy envoys

Paper – The unintentional benefits of being made redundant: Building strategic capabilities in the implementation of redundancies.

The unintentional benefits of being made redundant: Building strategic capabilities in the implementation of redundancies

Introduction

Restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have had a catastrophic impact on employment rates. In the UK, redundancies reached a height of 14.5 per a thousand employees being made redundant in the 3 months preceding September 2020 (ONS, 2022). The International Labour Organization provide detail of the global impact that suggests the labour market were disrupted to an unprecedented scale during the pandemic with working-hour losses equalling 255 million full-time jobs (ILO, 2021). Redundancies have calamitous consequences for individuals which have been evidenced in literature to include elements of high levels of psychological stress, reduced self-esteem, anxiety, financial concerns, feelings of isolation, and failure (Kets De Vries and Balazs, 1997; Gandolfi and Hansson, 2011; Stevens and Hannibal, 2021). Literature on the economic success of redundancies in meeting the intended outcomes of redundancy indicates that organisations more often fail than succeed to meet these objectives such an improvement of financial performance, organisational effectiveness, profitability, and productivity, as a result of implementing redundancies (Macky, 2004, Gandolfi, 2009, Gandolfi and Hansson, 2011, Cascio, 2012). In the redundancy lexicon, there are four groups of employees impacted by redundancy: victims, the employees who unfortunately leave the organisation as a result of redundancy; survivors, the employees who remain in the organisation post redundancy, semi-survivors, the employees who were first at risk and then redeployed becoming survivors and the redundancy envoys, the managers, HR practitioners, directors and employee representatives responsible for redundancy implementation (Stevens, 2022a).

The pandemic may have slowed down, however, the scale of redundancies continues to be ever-present with recent research from Renovo denoting that seven in 10 employers expect to make redundancies during 2022 (Kaveh, 2022). Further research by Stevens (2022b) on the relationship between the impact between consecutive redundancy programmes on employees indicates a clear correlation of employee exhaustion, cynicism, and organisational detachment which HR practitioners should aim to prevent. With uncertainty prevailing, it is essential that HR practitioners are prepared and equipped with the right strategic capabilities and skills to implement redundancies effectively.

Review of literature

Literature on the negative impact of redundancies is plentiful (Vickers and Parris, 2007; Parris and Vickers, 2010; Gandolfi and Hansson, 2011) with no known studies that explore the unintended benefits of being made redundant specifically for the implementers of redundancies.

Research by Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi (2009) state that, typically, redundancy envoys would display sympathy and shy away from empathy when implementing redundancies, which they

define as emotional distancing. Gandolfi's (2009) study on a large Australian bank found similar results when it came to distancing; implementing redundancy activities is emotionally taxing work and redundancy envoys tend to distance themselves from the tasks emotionally, cognitively, and physically as a form of coping. This popular coping technique is known as; detached concern, which is where one disconnects one's emotions from a situation in order to maintain objectivity and balanced decision-making (Clair and Dufresne, 2004). During the redundancy process, literature indicates that communicating with empathy and making staff feel valued is of high importance (Tourish et al., 2004). Another study indicates that when delivering bad news, managers should aim to let employees feel that they are treated with fairness and with genuine concern as people, not just employees (Weide and Abbott, 1994).

Theoretical perspective:

Definitions of empathy are convoluted and complex. Scheler (2008) defines empathy as the ability to empathetically being able to experience other people's minds, whereas Stein (2010) explains that empathy is a lived experience through another. Empathy is also recognised as "interpersonal understanding, a recognition of our basic sensitivity to the mindedness of others and, of course, a highlighting of our experiential grasp of the foreignness of the other's consciousness" (Zahavi, 2014: 141). Another perspective offered by Blanchett (2019:751) suggests that the process of empathy includes:

"(a) the spectator imagining feeling the character's emotion in an experiential, first-person manner or more prominently

(b) the spectator actually feeling and thus replicating the character's emotional state." Blanchett (2019:751), whereas Carroll (2011) discards the second notion of replicating the character's emotional state.

The importance of Human Resource (HR) and knowledge management for HR practitioners have been recognised in studies by Sahdev et al. (1999) and Edvardsson (2008) during the implementation of redundancies. Furthermore, skills such as empathy and strategic decision making are of utmost significance in the role of strategic HR partner during change management programmes (Lemmergaard, 2009). This research reinforces the importance of HR competencies identified here of empathy, respect and treating people with dignity and fairness to ensure the successful implementation of redundancies (Jacobs, 2020; Stevens and Hannibal, 2021; Stevens, 2022a).

Research questions:

- To understand the potential benefits of personally being made redundant for redundancy envoys.

- To identify how the experience of personal redundancy contributes to the development of leadership skills and capabilities in the implementation of redundancies.

Research methodology

Data was collected through 23 semi-structured interviews with redundancy envoys over a research period of 2 years. For the purpose of this research, redundancy envoys included managers, directors, HR practitioners, and employee representatives who had responsibilities for the implementation of redundancies. Redundancy envoys were recruited through the purposive sampling method of expert sampling which is regarded as a useful method when investigating novel areas of research (Etika, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). In meeting this criterion, all participants had extensive experience of redundancy implementation whilst personally having been at risk of redundancy as individuals. The coding used for redundancy envoys is presented in table 1, redundancy envoys coding.

Semi-structured interviews took place face to face and via technological platforms such as Skype and typically lasted 60 – 90 minutes. Redundancy envoys represented a wide range of industries and sectors including, aviation, civil engineering, construction, technology, transportation, logistics, and building automation.

Data was analysed through thematic analysis which consists of various stages such as data familiarisation, code generation, and identification and formation of themes (Baran, 2016).

Table 1 Redundancy envoys coding:

Abbreviations code	Job titles
HR	Human resources advisor, business partner, consultant, specialist, manager
HRD	Director of human resources
OD	Operational director, managing director, head of the business unit director
LM	Line manager/supervisor with line responsibility
ER	Employee/union representative

Results:

The value of empathy

An analysis of the data highlights that being personally at risk of redundancy, provided redundancy envoys with a deeper insight into the range of emotions experienced from the perspective of the employee at risk, which resulted in a specific focus on empathy:

‘I have been made redundant more than once and I have seen the right and wrong way to do it. It is horrible. From then onwards, I decided that if ever I was going to make people redundant, I will treat them the way I expected to be treated. I know what people are going through, I know how they feel and that has given me the empathy to help them with what they are going through. This has really helped me in how I deal with people’. (HR9)

‘Having been put at risk myself has changed my approach in one major way; that I will show much more empathy and sympathy to all the people at risk. Being put at risk, taught me how to do it better.’ (LM4)

‘My own experience of redundancy has been formed by being made redundant myself a few times. As an HR person, it helps to make you more empathetic, more genuine, you do understand the situation and the emotions better.’(HR1)

‘The first time of being put at risk, we just moved house, my wife was pregnant with our first child and it was just before Christmas. The first experience felt like a lot of turmoil. It put me in good stead for being able to understand what people go through. If you haven’t gone through it before, you really don’t understand what people experience and you don’t understand the process at all.’ (OD2)

Learning from mistakes:

Previous experience of being subjected to bad redundancy implementation appeared to help redundancy envoys in learning from others’ mistakes:

‘I was once made redundant myself. It was quite brutal. So, I can honestly say that I know how it feels to sit on that side of the table and have experienced what it is like to be treated brutally. That was useful as past experience.’ (OD3)

This employee representative learned how poor planning could result in ruthless decision making:

‘I have been at risk of redundancy four times and made redundant once. The first time was terrible. I didn’t understand why I was made redundant, as we were really busy. I went home, not a happy man, at the time my wife just had a baby and I had to tell her I was made redundant. Then I had a phone call out of the blue about two weeks later, asking if I can come in for a meeting, who offered me a job as they were short of staff.’
(EC2)

This director identified a failure in strategic redundancy decisions:

‘I would not make the same mistakes they made. They could have avoided my redundancy through better decision making’ (OD4)

‘I have been made redundant myself. It has given me a different perspective, because... It is a terrible thing to happen to you. We had an offsite management meeting. I drove to the venue with my luggage to stay overnight. I walked into the meeting room to be told I was redundant. The complete horror of driving home, at the time I had a 5- and 6-year-old. I was the only wage earner. I just moved house and upped my mortgage considerably and I was thinking, holy shit, how am I going to pay my mortgage, because I did not qualify for any redundancy pay. I lost my company car; they took my mobile phone off me...’ (OD5)

Importance of fairness:

Another manager who was made redundant whilst also having to implement redundancies at the same time observed the negative impact of perceived unfairness:

‘Well, of course, I had to stay professional in the meetings, but were going “bastards” under my breath! I had a word with the Head of HR afterward and he did give me a slightly larger package, but it still was unfair! All I know is that I was stitched up ... Their selection criteria were corrupt – the whole story was corrupt. It was a poorly managed company and highly unprofessional. I was glad to get out.’ (LM3)

This director learned how the perception of injustice can have an impact:

‘The bit that annoyed me at the time, was the people with the least service had to go first. This did not sit comfortably with me. There was no process to establish who was the best skilled, to stay. The line management was very impersonal and everything was very process driven.’ (OD2)

Improved leadership capabilities:

This manager reported an improved understanding of the redundancy process:

‘Being at risk myself, changed my approach...before I did not think about the impact on families. You almost had to be put at risk yourself to understand the procedure better and then know what to expect. It taught me how to be better in redundancy situations.’

(LM3)

This HR business partner learned that each person should be treated as an individual:

‘Having been at risk myself, you know how it feels and thus you have to manage each meeting differently because everyone reacts differently to the news.’ (HR4)

This HR director acquired sophisticated skills of emotional intelligence:

‘In my first job, all really going brilliantly, all my feedback was really good and then suddenly I got made redundant. Ironically, although I was already looking around for other work before the redundancy, it was still quite a shock, it did hurt my ego that I was selected. In hindsight, it was a great thing ... it has put work in a reasonably healthy perspective; that however good you are, things happen or you could be unlucky, you could be at the wrong place at the wrong time. I think it was a valuable lesson. It toughened me in a sense that I didn’t ever want to feel that a company owed me a living and if they took that away I had nothing else.’ (HRD 2)

This HR consultant learned to be more robust in challenging business rationale:

‘Having been through redundancy myself, I have learned to challenge business directors more about the rationale and to ensure the case is robust. I test the fairness

of the selection of the employees more. I have more anticipation for what could go wrong.’ (HR6)

Building skills from positive redundancy experiences:

Both these redundancy envoys gained insight from being treated well during redundancy situations:

‘With my first redundancy, they dealt with me very well. They treated us all with such great respect and it gave me an insight then how you should be treated. It had an impact on me, as I felt I was worth something. When they sat you down and spoke to you, it was a very personal touch. So, I know what it is like to be made redundant, and when I went into an HR role, I decided, I am going to treat people how I would expect to be treated.’ (HR7)

‘I got put at risk very early on in my career. I had the option of redeployment with a very good redeployment package. This also included a relocation package which included part payment of my mortgage for 10 years. From a financial perspective it was very good.’ (OD2)

Discussion:

The results of the study indicated that every participating redundancy envoy gained a skill or reflective developmental element through their own experience of being either at risk of redundancy or being made redundant. The key benefits identified are captured below:

The value of empathy

Building skills from positive redundancy experiences

Improved leadership capabilities

Importance of fairness

Learning from mistakes

The findings illustrate that learning and capability building took place whether redundancy envoys were subject to positive or negative redundancy experiences, although notably positive experiences were rarer. This challenges the perspectives of Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi (2009) that redundancy envoys typically shy away from using empathy during redundancy situations. The data demonstrate that redundancy envoys felt that implementing redundancies with empathy was actually a critical part of a successful strategy in the overall delivery. This is consistent with empathy being required as a leadership skill for HR practitioners by (Lemmergaard, 2009; Jacobs, 2020).

Participants felt that having been exposed to a redundancy situation in the role of a 'victim' helped them to be more empathetic during redundancy consultations, which reaped several benefits to the overall success of redundancy implementation for all parties concerned.

Conclusion:

Practical and theoretical implications:

My research progresses the simulation theory of empathy (Goldman, 2006) which suggests that we anticipate and make sense of the behaviour of others by drawing on mental processes that produce similar behaviour. The findings also support Blanchett's (2019:751) notion that the process of empathy includes 'the spectator imagining feeling the character's emotion in an experiential, first-person manner or more prominently'. The unfortunate experience of being made redundant reaped unexpected and unanticipated benefits for the redundancy envoys who participated in this study, demonstrating the development or finessing of imperative cognitive leadership skills, established as essential for the successful implementation of redundancy programmes. It may thus be a consideration for employers, that where possible, they identify redundancy envoys with personal experience of being at risk of redundancy or being made redundant to adopt leading roles in the design and implementation of redundancies. This will allow for not only a better opportunity of meeting the intended objectives of their redundancy programme but also to mitigate the negative impact on employees and the organisation.

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Presentation – The unintentional benefits of being made redundant: Building strategic capabilities in the implementation of redundancies.

The unintentional benefits of being made redundant: Building strategic capabilities in the implementation of redundancies

*Dr. Madeleine
Stevens 8 June
2022*



1

- Research questions
- Why organisations implement redundancies
- Impact of COVID-19 on redundancies
- Impacted groups
- Negative impact of redundancies
- Theoretical underpinning
- Methods
- Findings and conclusion
- Recommendations for practice



2

Research questions

- To understand the potential benefits of personally being made redundant for redundancy envoys and the organisation during the implementation of redundancies.
- To identify how the experience of personal redundancy contributes to the development of leadership skills and capabilities in the implementation of redundancies.



3

Why implement redundancies?

- Change management strategy used since the 1970's (Gandolfi, 2009; Williams, 2004)

Drivers:

- immediate reduction of costs
- increased levels of:
 - Efficiency
 - Productivity
 - Profitability
 - Competitiveness (Allen et al., 2001; Cameron, 1994; Gervais, 2004; Nelson & Burke, 1998)

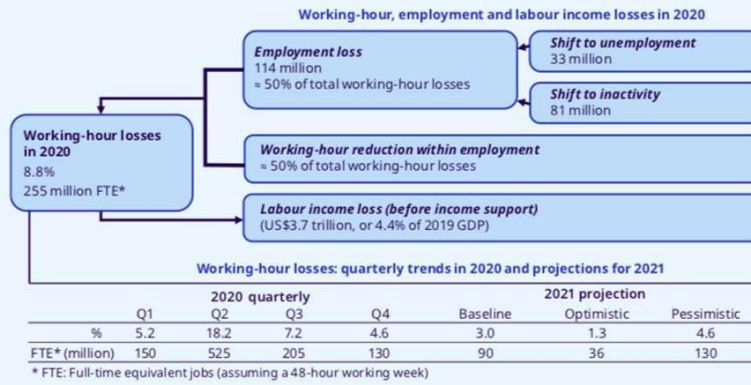


Scope and pace of redundancies have accelerated in recent years.
(Munshi J. 2018; Baruch and Hind; 1999)

4

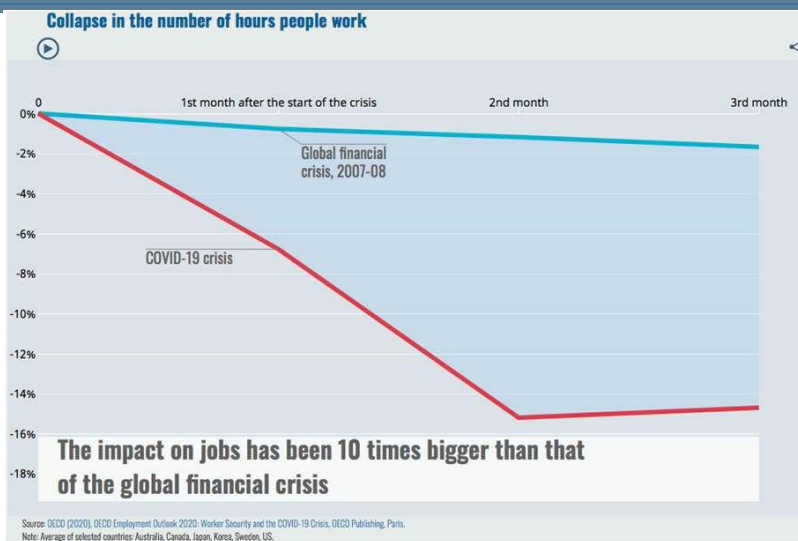
Impact of COVID-19

► Figure 1. Estimates of the working hours, employment and labour income lost in 2020, and projections for 2021



International Labour Organization (25 January 2021) <https://www.ilo.org>

Impact of COVID-19



<https://www.oecd.org/employment-outlook/2020/>

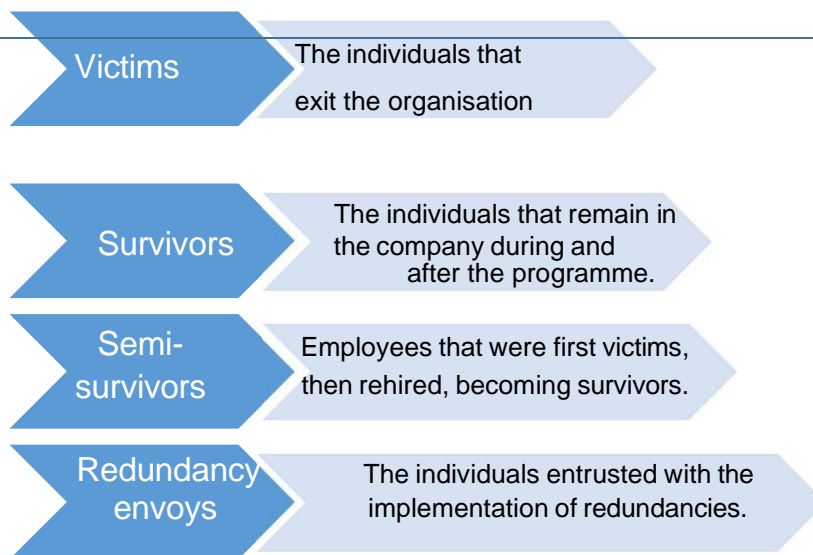
Impact of COVID-19

- Pandemic slowed down
- Future is unpredictable
- Renovo report 2022 indicate 7 / 10 employers expect to make redundancies



(Kaveh, 2022)

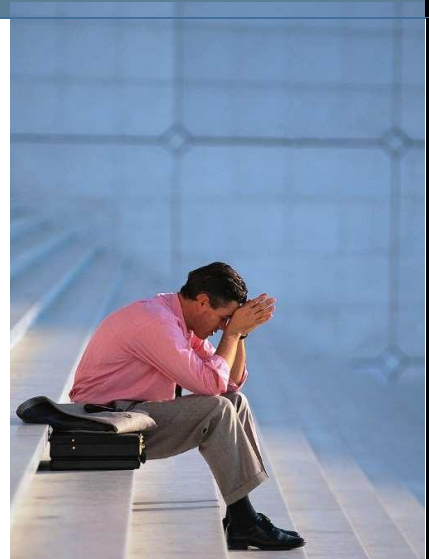
Groups impacted by redundancies



Stevens, 2022

Impact on victims

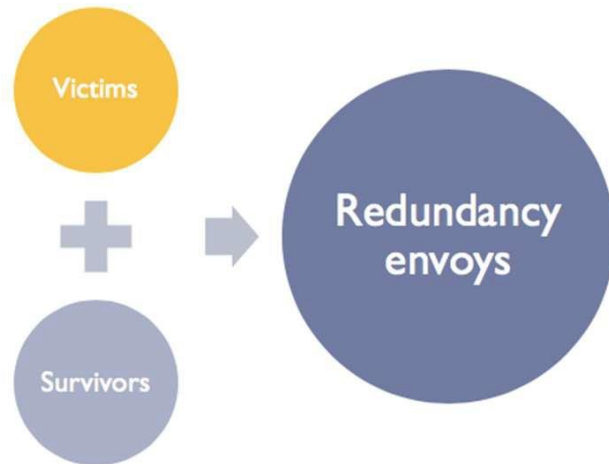
- Psychological stress
- Ill health
- Family and personal problems
- Reduced self-esteem
- Depression
- Helplessness and anxiety
- Feelings of social isolation
- Damage to career
- Loss of earning power
- Feelings of cynicism
- Uncertainty
- Decreased loyalty in future employment



Impact on survivors

Increased workload	Survivor guilt	Survivor envy: feeling of envy towards victim	Anger
Relief	Job insecurity	Managing higher level of stress, absenteeism, mistrust	Working in an environment with possible decreased work quality, morale, productivity
Decreased employee involvement	Decreased trust towards management	Depression	Fear and anxiety

What is the impact on redundancy envoys?



11

What is the impact on redundancy envoys?



- Psychological stress
- Ill health
- Family and personal problems
- Reduced self-esteem
- Depression
- Helplessness and anxiety
- Feelings of social isolation
- Damage to career
- Loss of earning power
- Feelings of cynicism
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- Increased workload
- Survivor guilt: depression, fear, anger
- Survivor envy: feelings of envy towards victims
- Anger
- Relief
- Job insecurity
- Managing higher levels of stress, absenteeism, mistrust
- Working in an environment with possible decreased work quality, morale, productivity
- Decreased employee involvement
- Decreased trust towards management

12

What happens in reality?

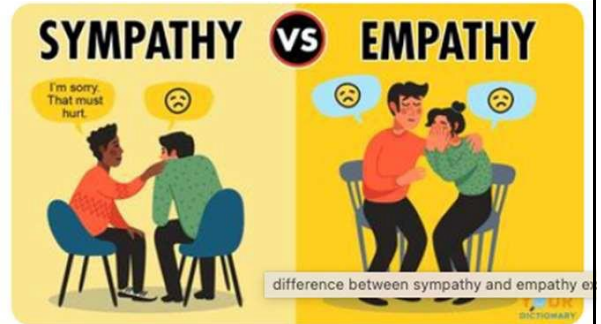
Emotional distancing:

Typically redundancy envoys would display sympathy and shy away from empathy when implementing redundancies.

(Clair and Dufresne, 2004; Gandolfi, 2009)

Detached concern:

Distance themselves from the tasks emotionally, cognitively, and physically as a form of coping. Disconnects one's emotions from a situation in order to maintain objectivity and balanced decision-making (Clair and Dufresne, 2004).



What really helps victims?

Empathy and making staff feel valued is of high importance (Tourish et al., 2004).



Managers should aim to let employees feel that they are treated with fairness and with genuine concern as people, not just employees (Weide and Abbott, 1994).



Definitions of empathy

“The spectator imagining feeling the character’s emotion in an experiential, first-person manner or more prominently.

(Blanchett, 2019:751)

“Interpersonal understanding, a recognition of our basic sensitivity to the mindedness of others”

(Zahavi, 2014: 141).

Empathy is a lived experience through another.

(Stein, 2010)

Empathy is the ability to empathetically being able to experience other people’s minds. (Scheler, 2008)



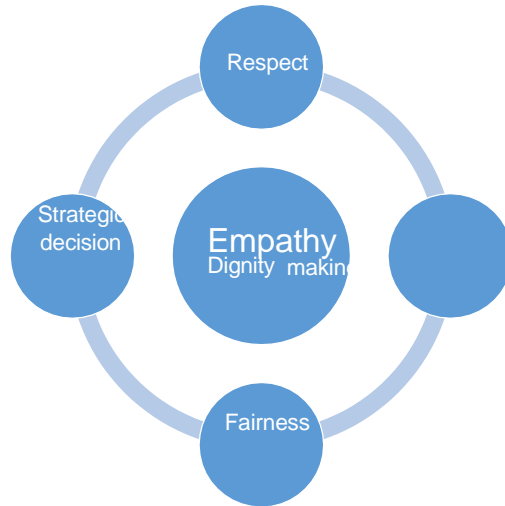
Theoretical perspective

Simulation theory of empathy
(Goldman, 2006)

Humans associate, anticipate and make sense of the other’s behaviour by activating certain mental processes, that when acted upon, produce similar behaviour.

This theory has useful implications in various mental health fields, as it can make people emulate desirable behaviour, training the brain to know and understand the other person based on their actions.





Stevens,
2022

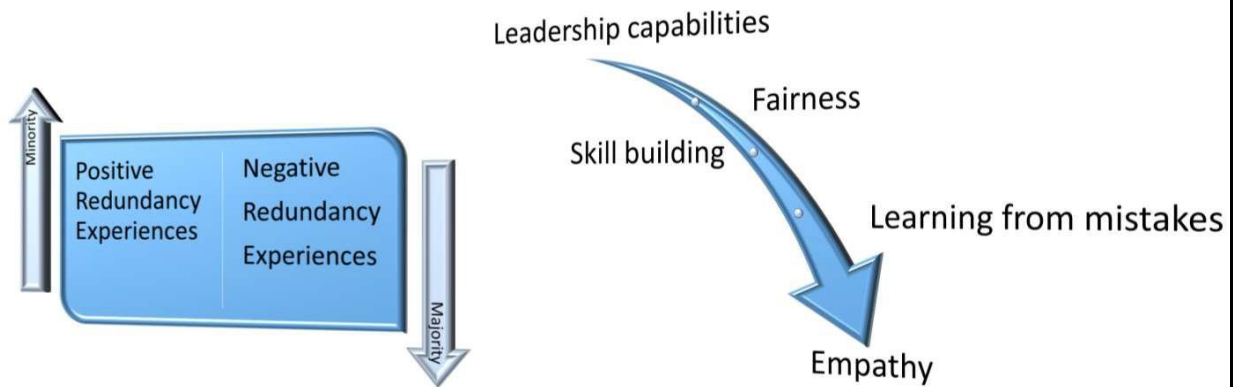
23 semi-structured interviews over 2 years

Purposive sampling (Etika, Musa and [Alkassim](#), 2016).

Extensive redundancy experience & personally having been at risk of redundancy

Wide range of industries and sectors including, aviation, civil engineering, construction, technology, transportation, logistics and building automation.

Abbreviations code	Job titles
HR	Human resources advisor, business partner, consultant, specialist, manager
HRD	Director of human resources
OD	Operational director, managing director, head of business unit director
LM	Line manager / supervisor with line responsibility
ER	Employee / union representative



- 'I have been made redundant more than once and I have seen the right and wrong way to do it. It is horrible. From then onwards, I decided that if ever I was going to make people redundant, I will treat them the way I expected to be treated.' (HR9)
- 'I know what people are going through, I know how they feel and that has given me the empathy to help them with what they are going through. This has really helped me in how I deal with people'. (HR9)
- 'Having been put at risk myself has changed my approach in one major way; that I will show much more empathy and sympathy to all the people at risk. Being put at risk, taught me how to do it better.' (LM4)

Learning from mistakes

- 'I was once made redundant myself. It was quite brutal. So, I can honestly say that I know how it feels to sit on that side of the table and have experienced what it is like to be treated brutally. That was useful as past experience.' (OD3)
- 'I would not make the same mistakes they made. They could have avoided my redundancy through better decision making' (OD4)

Fairness

- 'All I know is that I was stitched up ... Their selection criteria were corrupt – the whole story was corrupt. It was a poorly managed company and highly unprofessional. I was glad to get out.' (LM3)
- 'The bit that annoyed me at the time, was the people with the least service had to go first. This did not sit comfortably with me. There was no process to establish who was the best skilled, to stay. The line management was very impersonal and everything was very process driven.' (OD2)

Skill building experiences

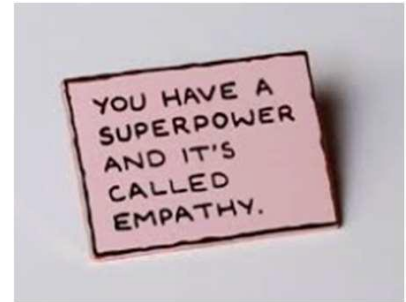
- 'With my first redundancy, they dealt with me very well. They treated us all with such great respect and it gave me an insight then how you should be treated. It had an impact on me, as I felt I was worth something. When they sat you down and spoke to you, it was a very personal touch. So, I know what it is like to be made redundant and when I went into an HR role, I decided, I am going to treat people how I would expect to be treated.' (HR7)
- 'I got put at risk very early on in my career. I had the option of redeployment with a very good redeployment package. This also included a relocation package which included part payment of my mortgage for 10 years. From a financial perspective, it was very good.' (OD2)

Leadership capabilities

- 'Being at risk myself, changed my approach...before I did not think about the impact on families. You almost had to be put at risk yourself to understand the procedure better and then know what to expect. It taught me how to be better in redundancy situations.' (LM3)
- 'In hindsight, it was a great thing ... it has put work in a reasonably healthy perspective; that however good you are, things happen or you could be unlucky, you could be at the wrong place at the wrong time. I think it was a valuable lesson. It toughened me in a sense that I didn't ever want to feel that a company owed me a living and if they took that away I had nothing else.' (HRD 2)

Conclusions

- Every participant gained skills which lead to development and growth when it came to the implementation of redundancies.
- Support Blanchett's (2019:751) notion that the process of empathy includes **'the spectator imagining feeling the character's emotion in an experiential, first-person manner or more prominently'**.
- Progresses the simulation theory of empathy (Goldman, 2006) that suggests that **we anticipate and make sense of the behaviour of others by drawing on mental processes that produce similar behaviour in redundancy situations.**

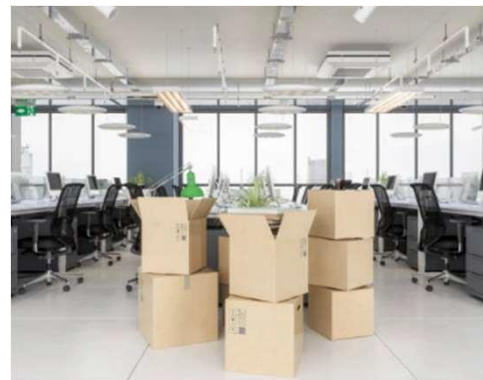
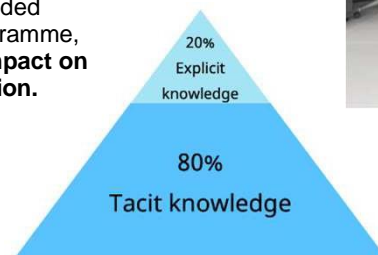


Recommendations for practice

Identify redundancy envoys with **personal experience of being at risk of redundancy or being made redundant** to adopt leading roles in the design and implementation of redundancies.

Harness the tacit knowledge pool.

This will allow for not only a better opportunity of meeting the intended objectives of their redundancy programme, but also to **mitigate the negative impact on employees and the organisation.**



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Strategic Redundancy Implementation

Re-Focus, Re-Organise and Re-Build

Madeleine Stevens



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Training Function Expected Performance index – a new HR measurement instrument for service companies

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University of Tirana

PROF. BLENDI GERDOÇI

University of Tirana

Abstract #114

This paper aims to contribute to the existing body of research on the impact of employee training and development on organizational performance. Despite the extensive empirical research on this topic, the results have been mixed. Therefore, this study proposes a new index, the Training Function Expected Performance (TFEP), which comprises five components: training needs assessment, training program design, training methods, training evaluation, and training organizational climate. The TFEP index is built based on empirical research on the effectiveness of different policies, procedures, and practices for each component. The study applies a multilevel evaluation approach, the equifinality principle, Boolean logic, and Qualitative Comparative Analysis to build the TFEP index. Data were collected from 34 service companies in Albania through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and company documentation analysis. The research findings indicate that the most critical component of the TFEP index is the training organizational climate, which varies by the company's sector, size, and maturity. Furthermore, the study shows that the deficiency of training system elements increases after the needs assessment. The TFEP index has practical value for human resource specialists to continuously improve policies and practices, and it also contributes to the theoretical research on training evaluation.

Keywords: training and development, training evaluation, multilevel evaluation approach

Paper

Not applicable.

Presentation - Training Function Expected Performance index – a new HR measurement instrument for service companies

See below

Training Function Expected Performance index - a new HR measurement instrument for service companies

1

Content

- i. Research background
- ii. Literature review
- iii. Methodology
- iv. Results
- v. Conclusions
- vi. Discussions & implications

Background

- Organisations must show **resilience** toward social, technological, economic, and political **change** and build their **human capital** with broad, deep, and flexible competencies (Salas and Kozlowski, 2010), thus creating a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Porter, 1990).
- **Approaches** such as: knowledge management, continuous learning, just in time and on-demand learning applications, optimisation of training methods, team training, cross-training, flexible competencies, and combined learning strategies - designed to increase training effectiveness (Salas and Kozlowski, 2010).

3

Background

- Evaluating the training effectiveness has been the focus of many researchers
 - focusing on the trainee level (Goldstein, 1989);
 - extending the effects of training Kirkpatrick (1959);
 - identifying the importance of expectations before and after training, and the role of technology, review of learning theories, motivation, and performance (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001; Tannenbaum et al., 1992);
 - training as part of new interdisciplinary human resource strategies such as high-performance work practices (HPWS), talent management, learning organisations etc. (Glaveli, 2011)

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5

Training evaluation approaches

	Influencing factors	
	Training/trainee system elements	HRM system elements
Trainee effect	<p>Micro Industrial psychology</p> <p>(Gully & Chen, 2010; Goldstein & Ford 2002; Tannenbaum et al, 1992; Goldstein 1980)</p>	<p>Multiple levels Several training factors that impact learning (Noe, 2010; Tannenbaum 2002; Kozlowski et al., 2000, Mathieu et al., 1992)</p>
Level of results	<p>Combined <i>Configurative training approach, exploration & equity principle</i> (aims horizontal + vertical integration)</p> <p>(Mathieu & Tesluk, 2010; Barrett & O'Connell, 2001; Kozlowski & Klein, 2000; Wright & McMahan, 1992; Lepak & Snell, 2002; Delery & Doty, 1996)</p>	<p>Macro Universalist & situational approach</p> <p>(Prašnikar et al, 2012; Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2009; Gomez-Meja, et al., 2006; Barnard & Rodgers, 2000; Delery & Doty, 1996; Huselid, 1995; Osterman, 1995; Pfeffer, 1994)</p>
Organisational performance		

Research goal

- develop a comprehensive model for the **training function expected performance** (TFEP)
- to identify how the (open) training system elements can be combined into different valuable variants
- Outputs
 - Expected training performance model
 - Expected training performance index
 - Testing the model in 34 organisations

7

Literature review

- Training: development of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Nadler & Wiggs, 1986; Reilly, 1979) related to the job, in a planned manner (Noe, 2010), aiming career advancement (Wright & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003; Deutsch, 1979).
- A systematic learning and development approach aiming to improve individual, group and organizational performance (Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

Theoretical frameworks

Human capital investment

- Training improves individual and organisational training (Strober, 1990, Becker, 1964)
- Training speeds turnover Pigou (1912)
- Skills market (Rosenstein-Rodan, 1943)
- Efficient level of general training (Becker, 1964)
- Multiple intelligence (Lazear (2003; Gardener, 1983)
- Training & schooling (Ben-Porath, 1967)
- *neo theories* of HCI in dynamic environment (Bartel e Lichtenberg, 1987)

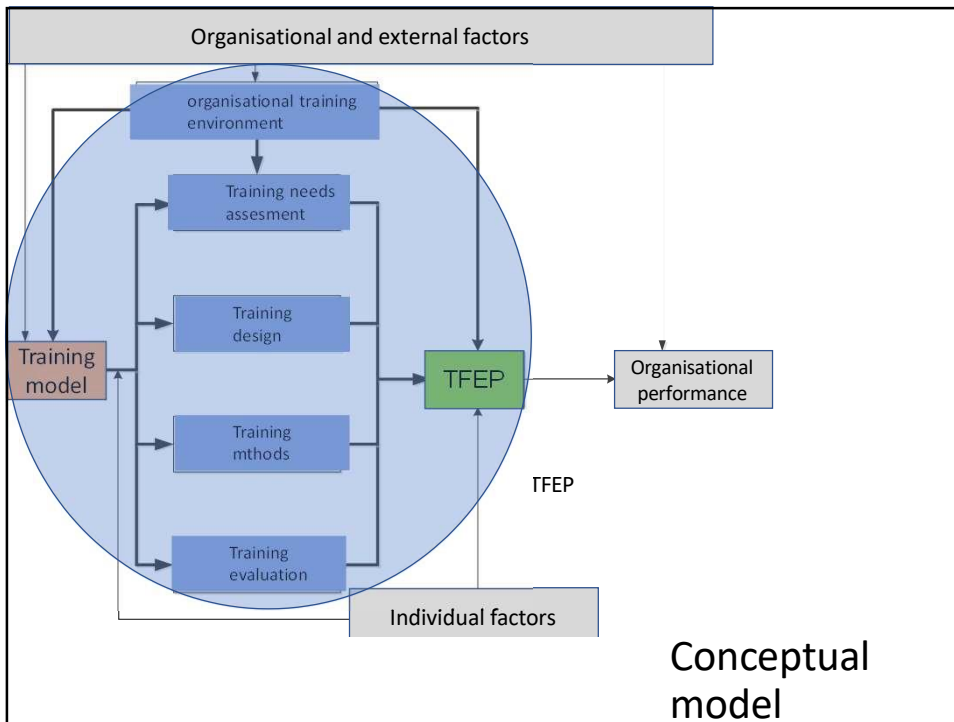
Strategic human resources

- Training as HRM strategy – Harvard Model (Beer et al., 1984)
- Aligned with organisational mission & objectives (Barney & Wright, 1998) and structure & stratgy (Schuler&Jackson, 1987)
- Resource based approach (Barney, 1991)
- Behavioral approach & kibernetic systems (Wright & McMahan, 1992)
- Structure, actors, network, **systems approach** (Krogt dhe Warmerdam, 1997)
- HPWS (Huselid, 1995)
- Learning organisation (Senge, 1990)

9

Training system components

- Based on different training models (Nadler, 1982; Goldstein, 1986; Camp, Blanchard e Huszczo, 1986; Chang 1995; Osborne, 1996; Blanchard e Thacker, 1999; Bellis e Hattingh, 2003)
- Internal elements
 - Training needs assessment
 - Training design
 - Methods to implement training Horizontal integration
 - Training evaluation
- External elements Vertical integration
 - organisational training environment



11

Methodology

- nature of study
 - qualitative (Storey & Westhead, 1994)
 - Exploratory comparative with a strong base on theory (Becker & Gerhart, 1996)
- Population
 - organization as unit of analysis (Glaveli, 2011)
 - service sector (Tsui et al., 1997),
 - big organisations (Eerde et al., 2008; Storey, 2004),
 - mainly international (Majeed, 2009)
 - intensive knowledge capital (Alvesson, 2000)

Research instruments

- *Questionnaire aiming pre-structuring* (Bickman, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994)
- *Indepth interview* with open questions (Yin, 2009)
- *Documents review* (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2008)

13

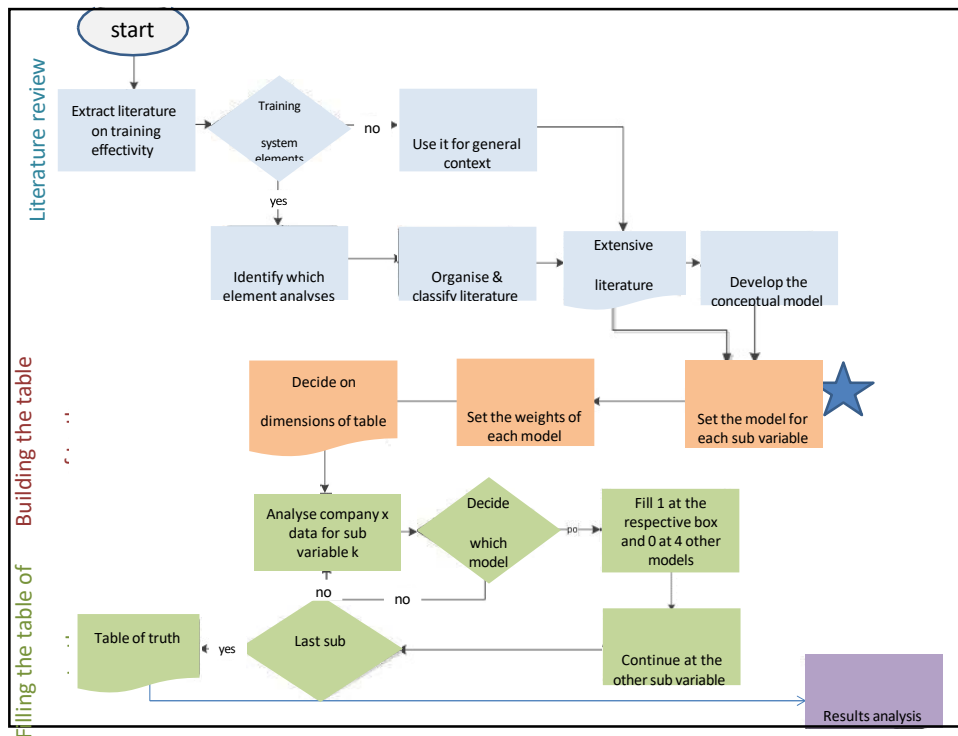
Validity & reliability

- Triangulation of methods (Glaveli 200; Patton, 2001)
- Developing a dataset (Yin, 2009)
- Evidence chain
- Quasi statistics (Becker, 1970)
- Front validation (Carmines & Zeller, 1979)

Analysis

- **Qualitative comparable analysis**, suitable for:
 - Small sample
 - configurational approach, equifinality, complex causalities with strong influence of organizational factors
 - Multiple case study based (Fiss, 2007)
 - Based on cases of qualitative combinations as per Booleane logic (Ragin, 2000)
 - Information is coded and results are calculated as per table of truth (Namey et al., 2007)

15



Organizational training environment

Elements (variable)	Sub-variable	Variant	Level	Literature	Question in the questionnaire	Question in interview	Documents
Organizational environment	Responsibility on training function	1	Not defined	Bucley e Caple, 2007; Adamson e Caple, 1996	18, 19, 23, 28, 35c, 35d, 35e, 39, 40	3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 21, 28, 30, 31, 34, 37	HR manual, training policy; organisational structure
		2	supervisors				
		3	HR department				
		4	Training unit				
		5	Training unit and managers				
	Strategic positioning of training	1	Only minimal urgent/compulsory trainings	Capelli, 2008; Burke e Hutchins 2007; Tennant et al., 2002; Montesino, 2002; Al-Khavyat et al., 1997; Tannenbaum et al., 1993, 1992	20a1-20a16; 20c1-20d8	4, 5, 7-19	HR manual, training policy; organisational structure; mission; vision; annual reports
		2	There are annual training plans				
		3	Training budget				
		4	Instruments for strategy implementation				
		5	Talent management				
	Transfer climate	1	Employees are informed	Diamantidis & Chatzoglou (2014); Burke e Hutchins 2007; Gilpin-Jackson e Bushe, 2007; Kontogiorgos, 2004; Lim e Johnson 2002; Bailey, 1993; Tannenbaum et al., 1993, 1992; McDonald, 1991	20b1-20b5	11-18	HR manual, training policy; organisational structure; pay structure
		2	Support during training				
		3	Support before training				
		4	Support after training				
		5	Support before and after				
	Learning organisation	1	Individual training incentivised	Garvin et al., 2008; Burke e Hutchins 2007; Gilpin-Jackson e Bushe 2007; Al-Khavyat et al., 1997; Tannenbaum et al., 1993; Cohen, 1990	20a1-20a6; 20b1-20b5	6, 8-18	HR manual, training policy; organisational annual reports and directors' opinion
2		Many possibilities for training					
3		Supportive managers					
4		Opportunity for different opinion					

17

Organizational training environment

□ Responsibly for training function

Variant	Responsible	number
Variant 1 (20%)	Not defined	2
Variant 2 (40%)	Supervisor	5
Variant 3 (60%)	HR department	11
Variant 4 (80%)	Training unit	4
Variant 5 (100%)	Training unit & the managers	12

Organizational training environment

□ Strategic positioning of training

Variant	Levels	Number
Variant 1 (20%)	Only necessary/compulsory training	8
Variant 2 (40%)	There is a training plan	10
Variant 3 (60%)	There is a budget for training	1
Variant 4 (80%)	Training is an instrument to implement organizational strategy	6
Variant 5 (100%)	Applied talent management	9

19

Organizational training environment

□ Levels of training transfer climate

Variant	Levels	Number
Variant 1 (20%)	Employees are informed	8
Variant 2 (40%)	Support during training	10
Variant 3 (60%)	Support before training	10
Variant 4 (80%)	Support after training	3
Variant 5 (100%)	Support before and after training	3

92

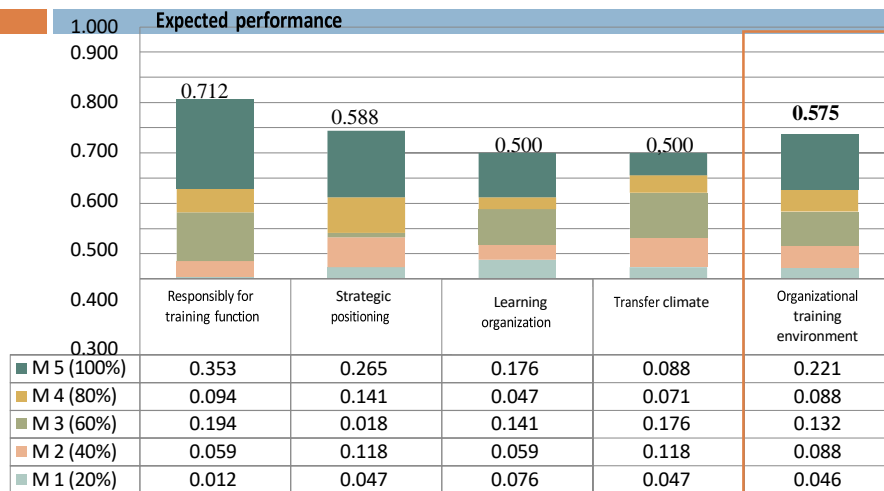
Organizational training environment

Levels of learning organisation

Variant	Levels	Number
Variant 1 (20%)	Individual training is promoted	13
Variant 2 (40%)	Many possibilities for training	5
Variant 3 (60%)	Supporting supervisors	8
Variant 4 (80%)	Possibility to apply different ways of thinking	2
Variant 5 (100%)	Leadership supporting learning	6

21

Organizational training environment



Training needs assessment

Elements (variable)	Sub-variable	Variants	Level	Literature	Question in the questionnaire	Question in interview	Documents
Training needs assessment	TNA levels	1	Only position	Eerde, et al., 2008; Rouiller, et al., Goldstein, 1993; Tannebaum, 1992; Sonnenfeld e Peiperl, 1988; Latham, 1988; McGehee e Thayer, 1961; Fleishman et al., 1955;	24-34	20-23	Training policy
		2	Only person				
		3	Only organisation				
		4	Two levels				
		5	Three levels				
	TNA methods	1	No method	Wilson e Wester, 2000; Latham, 1988; Tucker, 1985	25, 28, 31	22	Training policy; evaluation forms; training needs assessment forms
		2	Check list/questionnaire				
		3	Several methods				
		4	Performance assessment				
		5	Several methods and instruments				
	Source of information	1	Only the employee	Maddox, 1994; Tannebaum et al., 1992; Baldein et al., 1991; Noe (e Schmitt 1996; Ford e Noe 1987; McEroy e Kilburg 1978; Mabe e West, 1982	23, 25, 28, 31	21	Training policy; evaluation forms; training needs assessment forms
		2	Only the supervisor				
		3	The employee and supervisor				
		4	Other resources as well				
		5	High variety of resources				
Training design	Training plan	1	There are no training plans	Noe, 2010, 2008; Goldstein e Ford, 2002; Campbell, 1998,	20d7	9, 24, 25, 26	Training policy; requested planning format
		2	Plans are build by trainers				
		3	There are plans but not for all trainings				
		4	General training plan for the unit				
		5	Individual development plan				

23

Training design

Elements (variable)	Sub-variable	Variants	Level	Literature	Question in the questionnaire	Question in interview	Documents
Training design	Training plan	1	There are no training plans	Noe, 2010, 2008; Goldstein e Ford, 2002; Campbell, 1998,	20d7	9, 24, 25, 26	Training policy; requested planning format
		2	Plans are build by trainers				
		3	There are plans but not for all trainings				
		4	General training plan for the unit				
		5	Individual development plan				
	Training plan elements	1	There are no training plans	Salas et al., 2001; Adamson e Caple, 1996	36	27	Training policy; training plans structure
		2	participants				
		3	Need for training and participants				
		4	Need for training and time				
		5	Consolidated plan				
	Trainers	1	Only external	Noe, 2010, Kjerfve e Gold, 2000; Tannebaum et al., 1993; Eden e Shan, 1982	35a13, 37	31	Training policy
		2	Managers				
		3	Trained trainers				
		4	Employees and managers				
		5	Employees, managers, external translators				
	Learning environment	1	Five information	Goldstein e Ford 2002; Campbell, 1988; Cannon-Boeters, et al., 1993; Thorndike, 1927	35	29	Training policy; annual training report
		2	Aims trainee satisfaction				
		3	Social learning is incentivised				
		4	Opportunity for practice				
	objectives	5	Opportunity for feedback	Noe, 2010; Aquino, et al., 2009; Sels, 2002;	35a1-35a5	28, 30	Training policy
1		No objectives					
2		Decided by the trainer					
3		Dedicated by the managers					
4		Internalised as part of each employee					
5	Employees participate						

Training methods

Elements (variable)	Sub-variable	Variant	Level	Literature	Question in the questionnaire	Question in interview	Documents
Training methods	Training methods	1	Only on job training	Chatzimouratidis, et al., 2012; Roëll, et al., 2010; Aquino, et al., 2009; Keith dhe Frese, 2008; Kraiger, 2008; Sitzmann et al., 2006; Sitzmann et al., 2006; Welsh et al., 2003; Heimbeck et al., 2003; Arthur et al., 2003; Sánchez et al., 2003; Aragón et al., 2003; Salas et al., 2001; Tannenbaum et al., 1992; Shoenfelt et al., 1991; Goldstein, 1980; Carter dhe Ginsberg, 1976	37, 38	32, 33, 34	Training policy; observations
		2	Mainly traditional methods				
		3	Methods that incentivise feedback				
		4	High variety				
		5	There is an on-line learning platform				
	Physical training environment	1	Trainer responsibility		35a14, 35a15, 36k, 40d	32, 33, 34	observations
		2	Only equipment ensured				
		3	Opportunity created as per occasion				
		4	Special environment within the organisation				
		5	Environment with capacity at the organization				

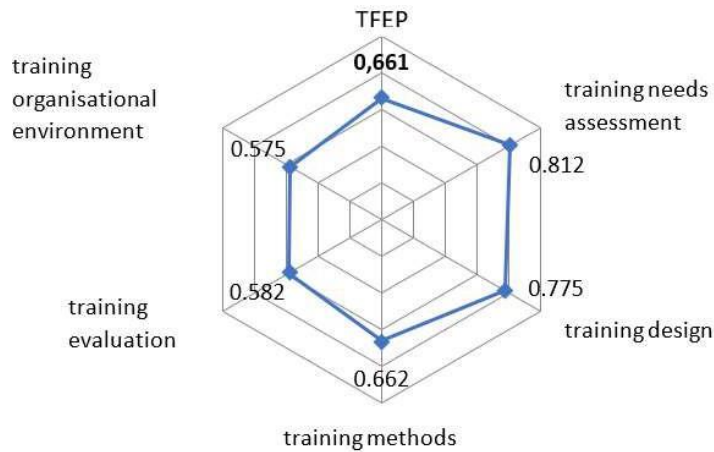
25

Training evaluation

Elements (variable)	Sub-variable	Variant	Level	Literature	Question in the questionnaire	Question in interview	Documents
Training evaluation	Levels	1	Trainee opinions	Noc, 2010; Krikpatrick, 2006; Arthur et al., 2003; Phillips, 2003; Ford o Goldstein 2002;	41a2-41a7; 42	35-38	Training policy
		2	learning				
		3	Changed behaviour at work				
		4	Organisational performance				
		5	Return on environment				
	methods	1	Questionnaire	Yang, 1995; Dristol et al., 2002; McMillan et al., 2000; Sadri dhe Snyder, 1985; Mathis e Jackson, 1991;	42	35, 36	Training policy, performance evaluation forms
		2	+ post tests				
		3	Pre and post test				
		4	Performance evaluation				
		5	Control group				
	Goals	1	Documents	Brown e Cerhardt 2002; Goldstein, 1993; Scriven, 1987;	41a1, 41a8, 43	35, 38	Training policy
		2	Learning outcome assessment				
		3	Training results assessment				
		4	Summative and formative assessment				
		5	Full feedback for the programme				
	People involved	1	Only the employee	Ademson e Caple, 1995; Worthen et al., 1997; Weiss, 1972	42	35, 37	Training policy
		2	The employee and the trainers				
		3	HR				
		4	Employcos and managers				
		5	many stakeholders				

95

Training activity expected performance



27

Highlights & Conclusions

- High diversity among training policies and practices but exploratory comparative analysis enabled the identification of distinctive features
- Training environment is the most important factor in TFEP
- Training needs analysis has the most positive impact (is more advanced)
 - performance evaluation mostly used
 - training budget is not always secured
 - More focus on technical training and less on interpersonal skills
- Effectivity falls after training needs assessment
- Training design
 - low individual plans & participation
- Training methods
 - OJT is the most frequent & only half apply high variety
 - Organizations with online platforms have higher TFEP
- Training evaluation
 - Mostly limited to change of behaviours at work
 - Low coordination between TNA & training evaluation
- TFEP varies as per company size & level of maturity

Discussions & implications

- From a configuration perspective, effectiveness of training (conceived as a system) is determined by the degree of coordination of vertical and horizontal integration (Mathieu and Tesluk, 2010; Wright and McMahan, 1992).
- *combined approach* instrumental for organisational research & filling the space between the micro and macro perspectives (Kozlowski and Klein, 2000), enabling evaluation at several levels of training.
- Training system horizontal integration is higher & more achievable than vertical integration (Kozlowski and Klein, 2000; Becker and Gerhart, 1996)
- limited budget; lack of strategic positioning of the training, non supportive organisational climate & leadership
- this does not encourage assessing the impact of training on organisational outcomes, preventing horizontal integration as well
- Positive organisational training environment and low horizontal integration is observed in organisations in the growth and consolidation phase --> top-down approach
- combined training evaluation approach highlights the complex relationships between horizontal and vertical integration
 - Lack of coordination is not enough to reach conclusions on an inefficient situation of the training system (Mathieu and Tesluk, 2010). Advantage of vertical integration indicates a top-down approach & higher stability in the long run
- Systems evolve and are dynamic – thus regular checking & update is needed

29

Further research

- Update and improvement of TFEP index in view of mega trends
- Include more organizations in the study
- Expand to comparative analysis
- More in-depth analysis to reveal «the black box» between TFEP and organisational performance

OPEN TO QUESTIONS,
RECOMMENDATIONS &
COLLABORATION

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31

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