

CONFERENCE SERIES

Lynne Chisholm, Katharina Lunardon,
Annette Ostendorf & Pier Paolo Pasqualoni (Eds.)

Decoding the meanings of learning at work in Asia and Europe

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Contents

Preface

Claus Holm 7

Decoding the meanings of workplace learning in Asia and Europe:

Introduction

Lynne Chisholm, Katharina Lunardon, Annette Ostendorf and Pier Paolo Pasqualoni 9

Section I

Work-based learning: Individual and organisational perspectives 21

Exploring spaces for learning at work

Karen Evans and Natasha Kersh 23

Motivational and affective components of workplace learning in some sectors in the Netherlands

Theo van Dellen 37

Connection between individuals and organisations through workplace learning

Kenji Hirata and Nanae Ibuchi 55

Informal workplace ‘educators’: The hidden protagonists of workplace learning

Annette Ostendorf 67

The role of the relationship with the company tutor on the perception of stress and the career commitment of young people in alternating training

Valérie Cohen-Scali, Noëlle Lallemand and Emmanuelle Vignoli 77

The school: On organisational, interpersonal and individual dimensions of organisational learning

Milan Pol, Petr Novotný, Martin Sedláček, Bohumíra Lazarová and Lenka Hloušková 95

Learning in organisations: The case for a code of ethics in education

Vaiva Zuzeviciute, Daiva Bukantaite and Dalia Kraskauskaitė 107

Section II

Work-based learning: Asian and European patterns and analyses 121

Workplace learning in China

Jian-Min Sun 123

Workplace learning, motivation and benefits in the automotive parts and hotel industries in Thailand

Patcharawalai Wongboonsin 137

Learning cultures among employees in the education and tourism sectors: A comparative analysis <i>Ruhizan M.Yasin, Noraishah Buang, Lilia Halim and Shamuni Kunjiapu</i>	157
Workplaces as key transformative learning spaces for facing socioeconomic crisis in post-Soviet contexts: The case of Latvia <i>Elina Maslo, Genoveva Levi Orta, Aija Persevica, Alena Nikolaeva and Manuel Joaquín Fernández González</i>	181
A room of one's own: Intrinsic commitment, educational ownership and work-related learning in Austria <i>Lynne Chisholm, Katharina Lunardon and Wolfgang Hagleitner</i>	199
Contributors list	221

Preface

In 1880, Karl Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue published *The Right to be Lazy* with the subtitle "Refutation of the Right to Work of 1848". The subtitle demonstrated his contempt for bourgeois human rights and the revolutionary principle of the French proletariat: the right to work. In Lafargue's opinion, the right to work equalled a legal claim to sell oneself as a slave. Instead, he was an advocate for the view on work in Ancient Greece. The Greeks had listened to the ancient philosophers, who despised work and praised laziness as the gift of the gods, and recognised physical training and intellectual games.

In his own words, Lafargue's battle was a break with the doomed lust for work. This is no longer the case. Today, we work not just to make a living. In the modern world, more and more of us live to work. The reason is that our relationship to our job has changed. It has changed from a master's right to force people to toil themselves half to death like mere slaves of the household, to the worker's right to have a share of the outcome of the work effort. The pressing question is how you establish a win-win relationship between the exploitation of working capacity and your self-realisation through work. The pressure is no longer merely an external pressure in the form of behavioural regulation. Your inner self is increasingly becoming the primary factor: the individual's motivation to do a good job. It may be for your own sake as well as for the sake of the company. The thing is that the conflict is not as clear as in the days of Lafargue.

Instead, people in Asia and in Europe live, in 2012, more and more as part of a modern knowledge economy, where jobs are increasingly emphasised as one of many learning environments, for instance parallel to the formal education system. Work and development coincide in learning in what we call lifelong learning. For the same reason, retirement is not a situation where one is 'free of learning', but at best a situation where you also learn for your own sake: at times, learning for your own enjoyment of developing exciting skills that are also useful beyond workplace demands for skills development. This means that a learning workplace with stimulating work changes our notion of the good life in and outside the workplace.

This book has inspired me to make these observations. The book contributes with research, analysis and assessment of specific examples of perceptions of – and motivation for – workplace learning in Asia and Europe. The contributions in this book indicate, not least, how the individual can connect his or her own development with the interests of the organisation – or society for that matter. It also indicates when this relationship fails. These kinds of considerations are absolutely essential in a modern knowledge economy, and that makes this book an inspiring and rewarding contribution to how different types of workplace serve as communities for the learning human being.

With my warmest recommendations

Yours sincerely,

Claus Holm, Chairman for ASEM LLL Hub

Lynne Chisholm, Katharina Lunardon, Annette Ostendorf and Pier Paolo Pasqualoni

Decoding the meanings of workplace learning in Asia and Europe: Introduction

This volume is the outcome of a workshop held at the University of Innsbruck in July 2011, held within the framework of the ASEM LLL research network on competence development as workplace learning. It follows an initial workshop held in Innsbruck in 2006, whose proceedings were also published in a first volume (Chisholm, Fennes & Spannring, 2007).¹ Since its establishment in 2005, the number of researchers and countries participating in the network and contributing to its research agenda has increased considerably. Currently, our research network on competence development as workplace learning includes five Asian and nine European countries: Austria, the People's Republic of China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Japan, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Thailand and the United Kingdom. For this second workshop, network partners were invited to present research on workplace learning that they had conducted in their respective countries. Some chose to elaborate on the results of a joint survey conducted by the network, using a previously agreed research focus and design developed by the network members.

The claim that both work and learning are not only highly context dependent, but also deeply rooted in cultural meanings, can be traced back to Weber's treatise on *The Protestant Ethic* (2002 [1920]) – a thesis that has long since become part of the classic social science literature with respect to the analysis of western modernity, and that counts as a cornerstone reference for specialists in organisational studies. Essentially, Weber's thesis underlines the significance of individual responsibility for the shaping of one's destiny, and the significance of productive activities in their own right for acquiring and maintaining moral virtue. Allied as it is to the emergence of a specific set of institutionalised religious beliefs and practices – those of Protestantism – it follows that this is a historically and culturally specific account. It does not automatically hold for the whole of Europe, although the dominance of mercantilist capitalism in which the Protestant ethic arose and to whose subsequent development it (perhaps decisively) contributed certainly spread throughout Europe and later across the globe.

Yet not only frameworks of meanings but also socio-cultural and economic contexts vary considerably across the heterogeneous national contexts and organisational segments which are discussed in the following contributions. In the first network volume, Chisholm and Fennes

¹ The first volume brought together reviews of research on workplace learning in three Asian countries (China, Malaysia, Thailand) and five European countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, United Kingdom). The network has also published a related volume (Novotný, 2009) in Czech. The network's activities, membership and reports are available for download at <http://www.dpu.dk/asem/researchnetworks/workplacelearning/>.

(2007) proposed some initial parameters of difference and similarity between Asian and European contexts, based on initial reviews of relevant workplace learning literature in network countries. The network studies that inform the contributions within the current volume provide further material for reflection in this respect – however, it is abundantly clear that cogent analysis of the shared and specific patterns of concepts and meanings of learning in general and workplace learning in particular remains in its infancy. Progress will certainly take considerable time to achieve, not least because the global dominance of Western scholarship, both in publications and in researchers' minds, favours the uncritical adoption of perspectives and knowledge as developed in western societies and cultures – including for the purpose of understanding ideas and practices extant in other civilisations, not least those that have developed in Asia. Under such circumstances, that which is not of the West is 'seen' through westerner's spectacles, which, furthermore, are likely to be poorly focused, rendering the picture in view to appear hazy and unspecific, that is, over-generalised (for example, see Merriam & Kim, 2008), which purports to offer an account of 'non-western' perspectives on learning and knowing).

The network's exchanges and discussions over the past seven years ensure that its members are at least constantly aware of these pitfalls. Alternatively phrased, we are more than aware of the scale of the challenges faced by comparative research on workplace learning between Asia and Europe. The coding of the meanings of learning, working and combining learning and working do seem to differ between the countries represented in the network, or rather, between the societies and cultures these countries represent. Some of these differences may turn out to belong to the defining features of 'Asian' as opposed to 'European' civilisations and their contemporary economic and political structures. Others may prove distinctive for specific constellations of cultural, economic, political and social features within Europe and within Asia. In this case, similarities between nationally-framed research findings may well also emerge, prompting theoretically stimulating questions about the antecedents of parallels between particular Asian and European countries. Ultimately, both differences and similarities might illuminate nothing very much in some cases. At the moment, it is too early to draw firm conclusions along any of the above axes. Not only much more evidence, but also much more rigorous evidence is needed to delineate and to account for these undoubtedly complex patterns and the ways in which they both prefigure and are themselves amended by internationalising, globalising and equally glocalising economies, cultures and their systems for education, training and learning. The image that appears on the cover of this volume – and which identifies the network's published work – is hence intended to convey the idea of puzzling complexity in theorising and researching concepts and practices of learning, working and learning at or through work in very different framing contexts.

Four guiding commitments now shape the network's approach to developing its activities:

Firstly, empirical research remains the only way to calibrate and recalibrate underlying assumptions about patterns of differences and similarities between Europe and Asia.

Secondly, research has to take a collaborative shape, in order that all perspectives have initially equal claims to legitimacy and are open to interrogation from potentially divergent standpoints. The same applies to designing and implementing empirical studies, both in order to consider differing schools of the rules of evidence and to ensure that the practicalities of undertaking research in specific kinds of environments are not neglected.

Thirdly, it follows that at this stage of development, demands for variety take priority over demands for coherence. An over-insistence on the conceptual and methodological coherence of research activities risks the insurgence of hegemony of perspective and interpretation; the network thus prefers to cope with variety – which may well mean coming to terms with a certain incoherence at the evidential level, thus relying on the capacity of its members to deliver plausible accounts and to reject implausible ones constructed by members unfamiliar with the context in which the evidence has been collated.

Finally, the network currently favours constructivist over deconstructivist perspectives, whilst remaining vigilant with respect to the potential risks entailed in doing so. Constructivism as a stand-alone principle is not well-suited to critical deconstruction/ reconstruction of and comparison between heterogeneous socio-cultural entities and phenomena; on this problem, see for example Knapp (1997) and Fraser and Honneth (2003). Once again, the balance between constructivist and deconstructivist analytic strategies will certainly be re-set as the network's body of evidence and interpretation expands.

The risk of overstating differences between socio-cultural entities which themselves constitute heterogeneous and contested spaces is ever-present, but the way forward can only be to formulate tentative propositions and subject these to continuing interrogation. In this spirit, we return to the initial points assembled by Chisholm and Fennes (*op. cit.*) in the first network volume. To begin with, they observe that the research reviews for the three Asian countries represented in that volume (China, Malaysia, and Thailand) equate lifelong learning with CVET (continuing vocational education and training) and do not regard the location and the modality of workplace learning as particularly significant (*ibid.* pp. 16–17). The four Asian contributions to the present volume (China, Japan, Malaysia and Thailand) do not modify that observation, and this is not simply due to the fact that the network studies that inform these contributions focus on adult learning at, through and alongside paid work.

Given that the philosophy of lifelong learning is very much part of Chinese and Japanese cultural traditions, this seems paradoxical. But it may well be that there is a gap between cultural tradition and contemporary research perspectives, in the sense that here, western approaches have come to dominate conceptual and empirical frameworks. In Europe, lifelong learning as an overarching principle of provision and participation has only recently been rediscovered, initially marked by the 1970s Faure report for UNESCO (1972) and only entering into mainstream education and training policy after the EU Lisbon Declaration in 2000 (European

Communities, 2000; Eurydice, 2000) The dominance of CVET as quasi-equivalent to lifelong learning is characteristic in EU and national policy documents (notwithstanding the current rise of interest in early childhood learning) and ironically, it is this primarily economically coded concept of lifelong learning that has been exported to and integrated into current policy developments in Asia – and, as in Europe, the direction of education and training research is significantly influenced by policy developments.

Nevertheless, the transfer of perspectives and understandings between Asia and Europe is unlikely ever to be straightforward or to take place in unabated fashion. One significant intermediary factor may lie in differing constructions of the teaching-learning relationship between the two regional macro-traditions of thought and action. In Asian countries, those who are teachers – in general, not simply in schooling contexts – enjoy higher regard and recognition than is the case in European countries. This is related, amongst other things, to the value placed on the conjunction between knowledge and experience together with the capacity for explication, interpretation and guidance that this is held to bring. Western commentators are prone to describe this pattern in terms of a hierarchically structured role-set and division of labour between teachers and learners, a conclusion that jars with contemporary western norms promoting symmetry of teaching-learning relations, especially in adult learning contexts.

Thus accounts and understandings of (in this case, work-related) adult learning in Asia may appear to the western eye as overly formalised and hence restricted in purview – but this may be a consequence of incapacity to capture and appreciate different conceptualisations of teaching-learning relations and their antecedent cultural values. This is an issue that the network intends to address more closely in its future collaborative work, but for the present, we might usefully reflect on the problematic nature of the (relative) autonomy of the learning subject, an issue that attracts considerable attention in current educational theory and research in Europe.

Today's normative expectation – and thus a criterion for defining good practice in education and training contexts – coalesces around the concept of active learning subjects who can and do observe, assess and reflect on their own learning experiences. This capacity is generally summed up in the phrase 'learning to learn', is now included in the EU's list of key competences (European Commission, 2007) and is presently the focus of considerable research effort (for example, see Chisholm, Fennes, Reich & Karsten, 2010). The growing attention that policy, research and practice pays to this issue is an interesting development per se. Nevertheless, it carries the risk that commentators *assume* the existence of autonomous and active learning subjects as a majority empirical pattern in European societies. It is also prone to under-recognise the extent to which learning (of all kinds) takes place wholly informally in an incidental, routinised manner, as part of the very process of everyday life (cf. Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Eraut, 2004). This fundamentally implicit and contextualised acquisition of knowledge and skill is known to be a significant and arguably paradigmatic dimension of workplace learning, most particularly that which takes place on the job and in working processes. It follows

that in such contexts, separation of teaching and learning roles and activities is generally neither relevant nor useful. Rather, peer-based and social interaction frame individual learning processes and outcomes – with the support and guidance of mentors, specialists and experts according to the purpose and topic at hand.

The European accent nevertheless remains upon the individual, whose knowledge and skill contributes to productivity, innovation and quality of service at the workplace and in the organisation. In Asian countries, individual competence development is placed much more consistently in the framework of service to the employer, the community and the society as a whole. The task of the teacher/trainer is not only to support knowledge and development at the individual level, but equally to assure that both teachers and learners appreciate the overriding social purpose of learning as rendering service to the community at large. All those who have acquired knowledge and skill hence have a duty to share their resources with others – and thus from this point of view, ‘teachers’ are not only demonstrably socially responsible, but they are also those holding recognised experience and not necessarily in the first instance a formal teaching qualification. This perspective is consonant with Vygotsky’s (1962, 1978) concept of the zone of proximal development and also recalls Weber’s distinction between specialist knowledge and insider organizational knowledge (Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–29; see also Burtscher, Pasqualoni & Scott (2006) for an application of this distinction to higher education organisations).

Chisholm and Fennes (*op. cit.*, p. 17) also concluded that the European contributions to workplace learning research in the first network volume were inclined to immerse themselves in debating conceptual issues at the cost of the concrete problem of raising knowledge and skill levels in the workplace. They paid scant attention to societal needs or employers’ interests, setting the focus on the interests and accounts of individual employees – which are, moreover, frequently taken at face-value with respect to the benefits and outcomes of workplace learning. The eight contributions to this second volume from European countries (Austria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands and United Kingdom) continue to frame workplace learning in predominantly individualised terms, but – as a result of the intervening network studies – have developed greater sensitivity to different constellations of work-related teaching-learning relations and processes. As a whole, however, network interests have shifted towards organisational learning, which also implies growing awareness of context dependency and the added value to be drawn from ‘thick descriptive’ accounts of specific working settings. In this spirit, network members have now initiated discussion on the challenge of designing collaborative qualitative studies in specific kinds of working-learning contexts.

Indeed, European research is frequently criticised for displaying an individualist bias (learning as an individual enterprise, with too much emphasis on personal development), whereas Asian research risks falling into a collectivist trap (learning as a collective demand, and as a consequence, focusing on company/societal benefits). On the assumption that these observations

hold at least a grain of truth, the main challenge for collaborative research between the two world regions comprises a constant balancing act between divergent bodies of knowledge and the key questions to which these give rise. The theoretical and empirical resources that make up these bodies of knowledge are, after all, genuinely related to respective patterns of everyday life. Each interpretive framework captures relevant dimensions of realities on the (workplace) ground, but positions these differently in their overall salience – most evidently with respect to individual vs. collective outcomes and benefits of learning.

Ultimately, such divergences reflect deep-seated cultural value systems, and thus require neither consensual nor hegemonic reconciliation, but rather, in the first instance, mutual recognition. As such, this statement takes the form of a moral imperative for learning to live together on a global scale. For the purposes of theory and research, a positive recognition of diversity is quite simply a valuable impulse for the development and renewal of critical knowledge, fuller understanding and intellectual debate per se. Last but not least, the kinds of interrogations that the network's activities prompt do promise practical usefulness. Exploration and analysis of the frameworks of meaning that imbue workplace learning in concept and practice hold potential relevance for facilitating the acquisition of intercultural competence as part of staff training and development policies and strategies in companies and organisations in globalising contexts – that is, learning for diversity *both* within their own staffing and client profiles *and* with respect to their multiple markets and locations.

All chapters included in this volume have a common purpose: they contribute to the understanding of relevant dimensions of a shared network research agenda, and they help to identify topics for the network's future research on workplace learning. Some contributions share a focus on organisational learning and are more likely to include a general discussion of issues related to workplace learning (these are brought together in the first section of the volume); others report on national contributions to a comparative study conducted by network members in 2009–10 (these comprise the second section of the volume). The national studies covered a variety of industrial and occupational sectors, but shared the following set of research questions. What do people interpret to be 'voluntary' and 'compulsory' with respect to workplace learning? What does their company/organisation offer in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning? Which of these are 'voluntary' and which 'compulsory'? How do objective opportunities and subjective perceptions influence employees' motivation to learn at work and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken?

The first set of contributions to this volume all address *dimensions of organisational learning*.

The set opens with a contribution from *Karen Evans and Natasha Kersh*. Their exploration of spaces for learning at work argues that the history of work-based learning is strewn with oppositions and exclusions: tensions between participatory and acquisition views of learning; insufficient attention to power relations and inequalities of access to learning; and failure to com-

bine organisational, individual, and wider socio-economic perspectives. Evans and Kersh consider ways in which significant theoretical domains ultimately intersect, leading to a more integrative social-ecological perspective on workplace learning. Research findings suggest that the workplace as a distinctive type of learning space may play a significant part in enhancing the learning processes and aspirations of adult learners. They conclude by considering the implications of their analysis for practice, with particular reference to the spatial aspects of workplace and mobility in learning.

Theo van Dellen goes on to report on the motivational and affective components of workplace learning in selected Dutch industrial sectors. He begins with the observation that workplace learning is a complex issue because it simultaneously concerns individual and organisational perspectives, both of which are constructed within immediate contextual, societal circumstances, which in turn significantly influence the provision and experience of workplace learning. Van Dellen uses his research data to show how the above factors can be expressed through motivational and affective dimensions of learning at and through work. He argues that individual and collective learning in organisations takes its cue from motivation and emotion emanating from the power relations around work; these features lead to the construction of learning provision and experience as voluntary or compulsory. This explorative study thus attempts to uncover these constructions and to identify possible sector-specific similarities and differences in their inter-relationships in Dutch employment contexts.

Kenji Hirata and Nanae Ibuchi seek ways of establishing connections between individuals and their employing organisation through workplace learning. Their starting point is a set of empirical evidence that suggests organisational approaches to providing learning opportunities directly influence individual workplace learning activities. Organisations not only provide employees with learning opportunities and foster a learning climate, but workplace learning opportunities must also match the needs of the current and future jobs of employees. Their results show that career orientation affects intrinsic work motivation, but not extrinsic work motivation. In parallel, workplace learning motivation is associated with career orientation. Using a career-workplace learning model, the study found intrinsic motivation to be a key mediator between organisational commitment and employment tenure. The authors conclude that intrinsic motivation occupies a nodal position with respect to engendering and maintaining positive feedback loops between motivation for work-related learning and career progression, which in turn influence organisational commitment and intention to remain with the same employer to a significant extent.

The focus of attention in the following contribution falls on those who act as informal educators in the workplace, specifically on the basis of a qualitative case-study conducted in a medium-size Austrian company. *Annette Ostendorf* starts from the premise that for research into business education, interest lies not only in learning processes at and within the workplace, but also in processes that facilitate learning – the other side of education and pedagogy. She identi-

fies the hidden protagonists of workplace learning – those who facilitate knowledge and skill development in their everyday working practices, thus acting as teachers/trainers but not possessing a formal title or responsibility for doing so. Ostendorf develops a grid for the classification of workplace learning facilitators, and goes on to discuss the specific case of the internship advisor as a type of workplace learning facilitator. The contribution concludes with outlining important issues and approaches for further research.

Valérie Cohen-Scali, Noëlle Lallemand and Emmanuelle Vignoli consider the role of the relationship with the company tutor for the perception of stress and career commitment of young people in ‘alternating training’. In France, initial vocational training in the form of new-style apprenticeship has been subject to intense development and renewal since the mid-1990s. The system now extends into the higher education sector in the form of periods of alternation between learning at the university, at a training centre and at a workplace. These student-trainees have an employment contract and they receive supervision and guidance from company tutors as well as teachers/trainers in their educational institution. Employers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance employees’ psychological well-being, but to date emotions and stress have rarely been studied for young student-trainees. The results reported here - covering 300 young people pursuing an accountancy qualification – confirm the major impacts both of perceived stress and of the quality of the relationship with tutors on student-trainee perception of their occupational future and their career commitment.

The chapter that follows focuses on organisational, interpersonal and individual dimensions of organisational learning in schools as workplaces. *Milan Pol, Petr Novotný, Martin Sedláček, Bohumíra Lazarová and Lenka Hloušková* present the key findings of two case studies from a larger-scale Czech research project on school leadership. Their purpose is to identify the nature of organisational learning in the specific context of the school, and to uncover the factors that facilitate and hinder organisational learning in this context. The contribution emphasises two important dimensions of organisational learning: the potential versus the reality of organisational learning in a given environment; and the three learning loops proposed by Argyris & Schön (1996). The application of these two dimensions enables the authors to provide preliminary evidence that schools are likely to remain encapsulated within the first loop, and at the same time to highlight the role and significance of school leadership support for collectively proceeding to higher levels of learning.

Finally, *Vaiva Zuzeviciute, Daiva Bukantaite and Dalia Kraskauskaitė* discuss the case for a code of ethics in educational organisations. Ethics are frequently treated as a quasi-natural attitudinal phenomenon that manifests itself via individual conscience. The authors take the view that this is a restricted approach: modern educational organisations are called upon to serve as an example to others by fostering and developing human values by means of a code of ethics. Developing and making available a code of ethics can be seen as a manifestation of

organisational learning and this contribution reports the findings of a study based on semi-structured interviews on this topic with educational organisation personnel.

The second set of contributions to this volume includes a selection of national reports on the findings of the network's joint survey on *workplace learning through the eyes of employees*.

The national studies cover different sectors, occupations and populations. They are not directly comparable in their present form, but network members are currently working on a comparative analysis for those data-sets appropriate to the task. The opening chapter reviews workplace learning in China, based on a research project directed by *Jian-Min Sun*. He begins by noting that lifelong learning has become a popular notion both in Chinese policy discourse and in daily life; it is held to serve both human development in learning societies and sustainable development in knowledge economies – but targeted research remains scarce. The Chinese survey covered the banking and manufacturing sectors and the results suggest that employees are strongly motivated to improve their job-related knowledge and skills, are eager to participate in workplace learning and expect to benefit in terms of career progression. Employers not only generally lend a degree of support; respondents to this survey report that participation can be compulsory, but do not define this as problematic.

The Thai survey reported by *Patcharawalai Wongboonsin* selected two contrasting sectors: automotive parts and hotels. Thailand is a middle-income economy with a policy drive to reposition upwards as a global economic player; the last three decades have witnessed development into a dynamic and diversified Southeast Asian economy. The Thai study presents its results in terms of similarities and differences between the two sectors, but against the background of divergent staffing profiles (gender, age, education/qualification, job status) and differently structured working environments. In both sectors, employees see workplace learning as part of employers' strategies to upgrade competitiveness; employees accept this rationale and take the view that workplace learning improves productivity and quality. They also favour the development of organisational learning cultures in which employee motivation and involvement in designing workplace learning provision is taken seriously.

The Malaysian survey sampled employees in the education and tourism sectors. *Ruhizan M. Yasin, Noraishah Buang, Lilia Halim and Shamuni Kunjiapu* consider the nature of learning cultures in these two quite different working environments. Similar to Thailand, Malaysia is striving to achieve greater national affluence through strong economic development via improving its global competitiveness. To this end, national policies insistently formulate plans that place an educated and skilled workforce at the centre of the economic development strategy. The chapter discusses how the two sectors are responding to initiatives of employee empowerment through workplace learning and also how employees perceive their roles in learning for both individual as well as organisational needs. The findings indicate generally positive employee attitudes towards workplace learning; respondents report that their employers are

also positively supportive. At the same time, the findings suggest the need for greater flexibility of provision and method, whilst employers display a marked reliance on compulsory participation as a precondition for promotion rather than encouraging voluntary participation (which would be likely to strengthen motivation for learning in general).

Elina Maslo, Genoveva Levi Orta, Aija Persevisa, Alena Nikolaeva and Manuel Joaquín Fernández González use the Latvian survey to launch reflection on the idea of workplaces as key transformative learning spaces for the post-Soviet countries of eastern Europe having to cope with multiple social and economic crises – beginning with transformation in the early 1990s and currently on the heels of the global financial crisis. In addressing the commonly agreed research questions, the authors do not limit themselves to describing the theoretical and legal framework, the methodology and the outcome of their comparative study, but they equally engage in drawing conclusions and deriving recommendations for improving workplace learning in the Latvian context.

The second section, and hence the volume as a whole, closes with the report of the Austrian national survey from *Lynne Chisholm, Katharina Lunardon and Wolfgang Hagleitner*. In this case, the sample is composed of adult employees who are also pursuing a job-related higher education qualification alongside their regular employment, largely in accounting/banking and finance/business management. The findings show that gender together with length of working experience in a given job and with a given employer appear to exert an impact on motivation for and appreciation of the potential benefits of pursuing work-related learning. Essentially, time may bring greater disillusionment; and there are suggestions that access – in its broadest sense, including social networks and sponsoring by colleagues and managers – to opportunities for workplace learning are to some extent more restricted for female employees. At the same time, both female and younger employees (younger in terms of length of job tenure) display greater intrinsic motivation for (work-related) learning. However, the most interesting aspect of the findings relates to the values attached to education as an intrinsic activity that requires no other rationale than personal development or self-actualisation. This might not have been expected for respondents who are currently pursuing further education and training that is directly linked to their occupations and jobs – and which, in many cases, receives concrete employer support in the form of funding and/or time investment. The vast majority of the Austrian respondents adhere to this philosophy of the purpose of learning; and they are notably critical of the extent to which employers are ready to deliver benefits to employees who have invested their time and effort in improving their knowledge, skills and qualifications. Furthermore, they are particularly insistent that all learning should be voluntary – any form of compulsion is rejected as unacceptable. These findings may be explained, at least in good part, by reference to the cultural value attached to education as a human right and as an expression of free will and individual autonomy. They also diverge from the patterns uncovered by the network's survey in other participating countries – but interestingly, not on a simple division between

Asia and Europe. This is an intriguing aspect of the results of the network's shared inquiry agenda and it deserves much closer attention in its future activities.

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Section I

Work-based learning: Individual and organisational perspectives

Karen Evans and Natasha Kersh

Exploring spaces for learning at work¹

The history of work-based learning is strewn with oppositions and exclusions that have to be resolved if work-based learning is to become more strongly positioned as well as better defined. These are encapsulated in tensions between participatory and acquisition views of learning; insufficient attention to power relations and inequalities of access to learning; failure to combine organisational, individual, and wider socioeconomic perspectives in much current theorising and practice. This paper considers ways in which some significant theoretical domains intersect, leading to a social-ecological view of workplace learning. Finally, the paper considers the implications for practice, with particular reference to the spatial aspects of workplace and mobilities in learning. The research has suggested that the workplace as a type of learning space may play a significant part in enhancing the learning processes and aspirations of adult learners.

Rethinking workplace learning – and its relationship with work-based learning

What activities and processes do workplace learning and work-based learning entail when our understanding of what counts as work, the spaces that can be considered ‘workplaces’ and the meaning of learning itself are all undergoing fundamental redefinition? In *The Sage handbook of workplace learning* (2011), work is seen by Cairns and Malloch as “enabled purposive effort towards some (perceived) productive end” (p. 6). The places in which we engage in work (paid and unpaid) extend far beyond the physical boundaries of the office, shop, hospital or factory and increasingly have virtual dimensions. In the same handbook, we have shown (Evans, Guile & Harris, 2011; Evans, Waite & Kersh, 2011) how the processes of defining and scoping the fields of work-based and workplace learning have brought oppositions of perspective, and tensions and exclusions, to the fore. We have argued for an inclusive approach that focuses on learning at work, for work and through work:

- that expands human capacities through purposeful activity; and
- where the purposes derive from the contexts of (paid, unpaid, contract-based, voluntary) employment (Evans, Waite & Kersh, 2011).

Theories and perspectives cluster in ways that are of particular significance to an inclusive understanding of ‘at, for and through work’. There are clusters, for example, that focus respectively on cognition/expertise and on practice-based, organisational learning with critical theories bringing insights that problematise and challenge some of the dominant assumptions in the

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field. Sawchuk (2011) in an authoritative review of the field asks the question ‘what counts as robust research and inquiry in the field?’, concluding that each of these domains contains robust lines of inquiry that are both empirically grounded and theoretically informed. Each of the domains encompasses a sufficient, if not complete, set of factors and considerations that are salient in understanding the complexities of workplace learning in its myriad of forms and contexts. This incompleteness points to the need for a more dialogic approach in which robust lines of inquiry in different domains are opened up more fully to an exploration of overlaps, gaps and points of connection. Furthermore, an understanding of how learning is mediated by the contexts of work leads into a social-ecological approach that allows the relationships between work and learning to be explored through the dynamics of different scales of activity: societal, organisational and personal. For example, while the agency of the learning individual can be foregrounded as highly significant for some aspects of learning at, for and through work, a social-ecological approach avoids the pitfalls of individualistic perspectives. It does this by capturing the interdependent and embedded processes involved as people cooperate in activities and their activities are mediated by the contexts of work.

Conversely, situated analyses of work and learning also often fail to make connections between the organised and planned (often termed ‘formal’) types of programmes that incorporate elements of work-based learning and the workplace learning that is embedded in ‘everyday work’ within the social dynamics of organisations; between the workplace and wider life-work relationships and the careers of workers as they move into and out of communities of social practice (and indeed participate in several simultaneously). When the analytic lenses of the social organisation of learning in the here and now of the enterprise are used exclusively, the learning individual is either out of focus or beyond the range of view.

Mappings of theoretical domains can highlight their areas of potential and actually overlap. A first step towards a more dialogic approach is to explore new thinking at their intersections. For example, establishing connections between the three significant theoretical domains introduced above potentially offers a framework for exploring the spatial aspects and mobilities of work-based learning.

Domain 1, focusing on the development of expertise and individual competence, is rooted in theoretical perspectives on behaviour and cognition. These range from those that have behaviourist roots that equate behaviour with performance, to the generative versions (Norris, 1991) that emphasise capabilities. Many of these pay attention to the processes and contexts in ways that move well beyond some of the narrower preoccupations of ‘human resource development’ (HRD) with individual, organisational and economic outcomes, for example Eraut’s work on the ways in which different types of cognition are linked to the social situation and the particular work context (Eraut, 2007).

Domain 2, focusing on power relations, raises more fundamental concerns over the politics of learning and work that shape policy discourses and pervade the contemporary workplace. Here, significant lines of research inquiry are rooted in various versions of critical theory. They show

how the realities of the employment relationship, particularly in paid employment, are manifested in the intensification of work; gender stereotyping; differential access to informal learning opportunities and career progression; 'learning poor' as opposed to 'learning rich' environments; power relations between managers and workers and the extent to which employee 'voice' is heard or unheard (see Edwards 2003, p. 16; Evans, Hodgkinson, Rainbird & Unwin, 2006; Evans & Rainbird, 2002; Rainbird, Fuller & Munro, 2004).

Domain 3, focusing on practice and micro-interaction in workplace activities, provides detailed insights into naturally occurring processes – what actually happens in everyday workplace interactions. A focus on structural factors can lose sight of the complexities of practice and how social practices both reflect and shape culture and social structures including work organisations. In the domain of practice-focused studies, leading theoretical perspectives linked to strong lines of research inquiry are offered by Lave (2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Luff, Hindmarch and Heath (2000). While these studies do not focus on learning per se, they connect with the kinds of questions about the 'situated' nature of learning that Lave, from a social-anthropological perspective, has influentially tackled elsewhere (Lave, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991). A key construct is the 'community of practice' – the idea that learning is constituted through the sharing of a purposeful activity.²

The three domains overlap in ways that have already produced some key points of connection. At the *intersection between practice/mediation and expertise*, Gherardi's studies are influential in showing how the 'texture' of work organisations is continuously created and recreated through the complex interplay of historical, cultural, material, structural and normative factors. Gherardi (2000) and Gherardi (2006) recognise organisational learning as relational and dynamic. Gherardi's work, while analysing texture, also focuses strongly on 'ways of knowing', 'knowing in practice' and the range of knowledge forms (procedural, declarative, implicit, reactive) that are central to Eraut's research. At the *intersection of power relations and expertise/competence*, Livingstone's research programme has collected large-scale data sets in North America and beyond that have been utilised to explore social regularities in patterns of participation, outcomes, learning and skills. Livingstone (2006a, 2006b) has argued that inadequate skills utilisation in workplaces, rather than skills deficits, is the problem for workers and the issue to which public policy should be attending, a stance also confirmed by Evans and Waite (2009) and Felstead, Fuller, Jewson and Unwin (2009) in the UK context. Livingstone's surveys and those of Felstead et al. (2009) have provided strong evidence of large-scale and widespread involvement in learning activity among adults in the workforce coupled with evidence that little of this is effectively captured and utilised in the work processes of their paid employment. At the *intersection of 'situated' theories of practice and critical theories of power relations* in workplace learning, Engeström's work (2001, 2008; Engeström & Kerosuo, 2007)

² Lave, whose concepts have been appropriated, critiqued and misrepresented in various ways, in 2009, revisited her accounts to explain their theoretical roots in historical-materialism.

has played a leading role in drawing attention to the workplace dynamics of power and control through detailed, practice-focused analyses of organisational change processes. These differ from interaction studies and analyses of situated cognition in their focus on boundary crossings and multiple mediations between 'subject' and 'object' within divisions of labour, community and workplace rules, as well as their distinctive 'change laboratory' approach.

Through these intersections, further connections can be forged that facilitate a holistic, integrative approach. At the intersection of all three domains, models by Illeris and colleagues (Illeris, 2009, 2010; Illeris & Associates, 2004) and the perspectives developed by Evans et al. (2006) show how learning at work is enmeshed in the dynamics of technical-organisational, social-cultural and individual factors. Illeris's model starts with the learning individual, revealing organisational and societal tensions and also spaces for action. By contrast, Evans et al. (2006) start with the workplace as a site in which production of goods and services is the driving purpose, not learning per se. They show how research struggles to pay due attention to all of these scales of activity. Yet all have to be kept in view if we are to develop understandings of the spatial aspects of learning at, for and through work and the mobilities in work and learning that increasingly play their part in everyday activity. The concept of the learning space, in particular, at, for and through work, can be considered from various angles and perspectives. Firstly, the learning space can be perceived as a physical space where learning takes place, such as a classroom or any other form of teaching space. Secondly, the learning space can refer to a space where learning occurs unintentionally, as informal learning, for example at work where employees learn from each other's experiences. Thirdly, the recent expansion of digital technologies has resulted in the development and growth of virtual learning spaces that ultimately change the boundaries of learning spaces, making them more flexible and mobile. Finally, the learning space can be perceived as a combination or overlap of a range of components, such as physical space, learning contexts and environments, formal/informal learning and virtual learning. Recent trends in economic, political and educational developments have resulted in somewhat blurred boundaries between the spaces in which learning, work and leisure occur.

Spaces, places and mobilities in learning

The perception of the space in which education and training traditionally take place has been experiencing a process of change. Learning that takes place outside the classroom is as significant as learning that occurs in formal educational settings (Edwards, Gallagher & Whittaker, 2006). Different modes of learning such as experiential, community-based and work-based learning have become more prominent in recent years. The latest reforms as well as the demands of the market economy and the 'knowledge society' have emphasised that learning may occur in settings other than the classroom, in a range of formal and informal environments, including workplace sites, virtual learning, and home or leisure settings. The significance of learning that takes place in settings other than the classroom is emphasised by the findings of Evans et al. (2006), which indicate that learning in the workplace setting provides learners with opportunities to acquire a number of significant work-related skills and personal skills. Learn-

ers' spatial associations with their workplaces are often perceived as positive, as they may contrast with their previous negative experiences associated with formal education and training.

The evidence of Evans et al. (2006) and Kersh, Waite and Evans (2011) suggest that the benefits of skills acquisition within workplace spaces are not restricted to the development of skills to be employed at work only. The research has indicated that participation in the various training courses at work enables employees to develop their confidence and self-assurance in general. There are, for example, positive effects on the learners' family lives and leisure activities that have been associated with their basic skills training as they are able to recontextualise their acquired basic skills in environments other than their workplaces. Although various types of workplace training provision generally aim to boost skills relating to economic productivity and are focused quite narrowly on one spatial environment – the workplace – learners'/employees' motivations are much broader. Apart from using their newly acquired skills in the workplace, learners can also recontextualise their skills to other contexts, for example to their family environments.

Workplace spaces are characterised by being both work and learning spaces where the boundaries between the two are considerably blurred (Solomon, Boud & Rooney, 2006, p. 6). Solomon et al. (2006) further draw on the term 'workplace learning', arguing that this notion has particular meanings and practices because of its location and because that location is not an educational institution. One of the implications of the shifting of the learning space from the classroom to the workplace is associated with improved learning outcomes and motivation of individuals participating in workplace learning provision within their working environments. Research by Kersh, Evans, Kontiainen and Bailey (2011) has shown that, if embedded and contextualised in relevant work activities and tasks, workplace-based training provision could increase learners' engagement and motivation.

A key hypothesis is that learning at work can be enhanced through the use of creative technologies. Drawing on new intellectual resources to deepen and expand our understanding and practice is made more possible, and more feasible, with digital technologies now available. 'Mobility' in learning has new meanings as the locations and social spaces in which work is carried out diversify and work itself becomes mobile and distributed. One configuration of an overlap of the different types of learning spaces has been associated with the development of modern technologies which allows learners to extend their learning spaces to a variety of environments, including home and workplace settings. The use of devices such as computers, laptops, mobile phones and netbooks has contributed to the development of the virtual learning space where learning may not be associated with a specific site or specific time. The virtual learning environment provides a degree of flexibility for the learner, enabling them to acquire learning at a time and place convenient for them.

Computer literacy and skills related to the use of technologies are becoming of utmost importance in the context of workplace and college learning settings. The use of technologies has

been gradually changing approaches to and ways of teaching and learning in work-related environments. In this context the concept of mobile learning has been emphasised. As Pachler (2011) stresses, mobile learning is not simply about delivering content to mobile devices but, instead, about the processes of coming to know and being able to operate successfully in and across new and ever-changing contexts and learning spaces. The expansion of new technologies, such as the internet, email, mobile phones, etc., has an impact on the concept of the learning space. Certain skills and knowledge can be acquired in so-called virtual settings (e.g. via electronic resources). The notion of the virtual learning space further loosens the boundaries between different types of environment. As the research of Kersh, Waite and Evans (2011) has shown, what motivated employees towards engaging in workplace computer literacy training was the fact that their newly acquired IT skills could be applied immediately within their workplace settings. In some cases, learners felt that their IT skills really ‘make a difference’ – in other words, it enabled them to perform their jobs better. In addition, being computer-literate enabled them to expand their learning environments by engaging in many types of ‘virtual learning’ (e.g. through the internet), either tacitly or explicitly. However, it is important to bear in mind that modern (digital) technologies alone do not facilitate learning in the workplace. To be meaningful, e-learning processes need to be grounded in various workplace activities. As e-learning becomes embedded in adult learning in workplace settings, it may further contribute to facilitating the development of expansive learning environments for adult learners in both workplace and college contexts. Technologies have the potential to enable learners to shape and personalise their learning environments in order to respond to their individual requirements and provide meaningful learning. In addition, e-learning or modern technologies provide opportunities to facilitate and support teaching practices in the workplace context, in particular, by providing flexibility of time and place of delivery; allowing the sharing and re-using of resources; enabling collaborative working; and fostering learning.

With the starting point that the workplace is a crucially important site for learning and for access to learning, analytical perspectives on work-based learning have to take the social and organisational context of work and learning more fully into account. They also have to explore work-based pedagogies that originate from research into how people learn in, for and through work (Pachler, Pimmer & Siepold, 2011).

These are further aspects that have to be addressed in our search for ways to improve the relationship between learning and work. The relationships between work and learning have to be explored at different levels, ‘zooming’ in and out (to use a metaphor derived from use of an internet map or viewing tool) to gain an integrated view of the ‘whole’ and how the integral parts come together in ways that are best understood interdependently, holistically and in terms of location and cultural context.

Learning that is ‘for’ people in work, at all levels of the workforce, and at different ages and life stages goes far beyond assisting people into work by having some experience of the workplace to offer employers. According to whether the worker is a ‘learner’ preparing for work, a

new entrant to work or an experienced worker developing supervisory or managerial responsibilities, learning takes place very differently depending on the specific context, on the status and role of the worker and on their prior work and learning experience. Different types of worker-learners require different arrangements in the workplace and, where applicable, in the educational support provided beyond the workplace, to maximise learning. Work-based learning may start with shop-floor activities that focus on ‘health and safety’ perhaps, or on overcoming a technical problem – in which subject-based, procedural and personal forms of knowledge are utilised. The impetus may come from trades union membership or membership of a professional body. Specific work-based learning activities such as projects, cases or problems can take their impetus from the job, the wider environment of work or the knowledge base. They might start with a work challenge or problem that has to be solved, or they might be triggered by the need to share knowledge and experience with others as part of a participatory management strategy. Finding ways of responding to unforeseen occurrences or new circumstances often engages groups and teams in, in-company or intra-organisational learning while professional networks often respond to challenges by forms of co-operation that operate far beyond organisational boundaries.

The purposes that derive from the wider contexts of work include enculturation (or learning ‘how we do it here’); learning for competence development and performance standards; learning for innovation and continuous renewal; learning for the development of wider capabilities – for the next role as well as the present role and for different cultural contexts – and in pursuit of ethics and equity at work. Finally, the shaping and reshaping of occupational or professional identities are processes that run throughout working life and across contexts.

Knowledge recontextualisation

The dynamics of knowledge and pedagogy have always to be kept in view in this expanded view of learning at, for and through work. The pursuit of all these purposes brings different types of knowledge (personal, procedural, ethical, propositional) with fundamentally different logics into play. At the heart of work-based learning lie processes of knowledge recontextualisation, as knowledge is put to work in different environments. A fresh approach developed by Evans, Guile and Harris (2009) and Evans, Guile, Harris and Allan (2010) concentrates on the ways in which different forms of knowledge are recontextualised as people move between sites of learning and practice in universities, colleges and workplaces. All knowledge has a context in which it was originally generated. Contexts are often thought of as settings or places, but contexts in our use extend to the ‘schools of thought’, the traditions and norms of practice, the life experiences in which knowledge of different kinds is generated. For knowledge generated and practised in one context to be put to work in new and different contexts, it has to be recontextualised in various ways that simultaneously engage with and change those practices, tradi-

tions and experiences.³ At the level of the learning individual, knowledge recontextualisation is aided when aspects of the learning process are situated in *work practices*, in the *culture* of the workplace and in the *social world* of the participants.

Mobile work-based learning has more potential to situate learning in these ways than has been realised to date. Mobilities in work-based learning focus on the learning individual and the creation of new learning spaces but are also enmeshed in the multiple purposes of the contexts of work. Furthermore, the ways in which adults learn in and through the workplace are rooted in educational trajectories and their complex intertwining with social institutions (of labour market, workplace, and community) and social roles (of employee, citizen, family member) at different stages of the life-course.

The spatial dimensions of workplace learning can facilitate learners' motivations and outcomes towards skills development. Kersh, Waite and Evans (2011), for example, demonstrate how the workplace, as a type of learning space, can be associated with positive attitudes and outcomes for adult learners. It often symbolises an environment free from the associations of classroom-like settings where the learner might have had negative prior experiences.

Similarly, understandings of on-the-job learning are connected to the place of that kind of learning and, in particular, that this place is not off-the-job (Solomon et al., 2006, p. 3). In addition, the workplace may offer rewards such as improved career prospects (for example promotion), which provide an additional incentive for learning (Fuller & Unwin, 2004). Developing confidence in the workplace is another crucial stimulus. Research into UK Workplace Skills for Life (SfL) provision (Wolf & Evans, 2011) yields important examples. Whilst the aim is to boost skills relating to economic productivity, SfL is focused quite narrowly on one spatial environment – the workplace – but learners' motivations are much broader and relate to a wider range of differing environments and resources. Apart from using their newly developed skills in the workplace, employees are shown to recontextualise their skills in other contexts, for example their family environments and community activities (Evans & Waite, 2009, 2010). Explorations of mobilities in learning in adult life are most often focused on highly mobile professional workers, who take the lion's share of any company's resources for training and staff development. Yet mobilities are at least as significant for employees on the 'shop floor' and those involved in providing a range of public services. Many of the SfL workplace literacy learners referred to above valued the relative convenience and accessibility of workplace learning in so far as it fitted in more smoothly with their lives at work and at home. The benefit of

³ The starting point (Evans, Guile & Harris, 2010) is the idea that concepts and practice change as we use them in different settings. This approach to recontextualisation has drawn on (1) developments of Bernstein's idea that concepts change as they move from their disciplinary origins and become a part of a curriculum (Bernstein, 2000; Barnett, 2006) and (2) Van Oers' (1998) idea that concepts are an integral part of practice and that practice varies from one sector or workplace to another. Both of these notions have been substantially expanded in order to embrace the ways in which learners/employees change as they recontextualise concepts and practices and the extent to which this process may spur innovation in workplaces as much as in educational contexts.

learning with colleagues in a familiar setting was important for the bus driver “because at least it’s in familiar settings as opposed to I’ve got to find a room, J49, and Fred Bloggs will be in there waiting for you”. Similarly, an employee of an engineering company told us that he preferred “learning at work because you’re working with the people you’re learning with... they can have the chats, and... conversations and... discuss it amongst yourselves if they’re struggling with anything”. The important point here is that the access to learning through the workplace space is supported and enriched by the social interactions of the workplace. It is not, in that sense, ‘individualised’ (see also Evans, 2009). The expansion of new technologies, such as the internet, email, mobile phones, etc., also makes an impact on virtual *working* space, further loosening the boundaries between different types of environments. However, in order to engage in various types of virtual learning and virtual working space, employees need IT skills. There is a growing tendency for ‘online paperwork’ and in many organisations it is expected that employees are able to complete or work with various forms (e.g. reports, orders, invoices, etc.) online. All those factors may create some stress and pressure for the staff in a range of workplaces. Employees who lack confidence in their IT skills may feel threatened and demotivated if they are ‘forced into’ doing or engaging in IT-based activities without prior training. On the other hand, once trained, the use of electronic resources for mobile learning can open up new possibilities for employees.

A social-ecological approach

Building on Bronfenbrenner (1979), the usefulness of the social ecology metaphor is that it provides a way into understanding the complexity of factors that impact directly or indirectly on education and lifelong learning without losing sight of the whole. Every contextual factor and every person contributing or influenced is part of a complex ecology, or system of social relations and relationships, that sustains the system through a set of interdependencies. According to Weaver-Hightower’s (2008) overview, the four categories of *actors*, *relationships*, *environments* and *structures*, and *processes* lie at the heart of social-ecological analyses. These differ in the degree of significance that is accorded to personal agency, through which actors “depending on their resources and power, are able to change ecological systems for their own benefit” (p. 156). Because ecologies are self-sustaining through interdependencies that operate without centralised controls, individuals and groups have spaces in which to exercise agency in ways that can influence the whole dynamic, through the interdependencies involved. Furthermore, Biesta and Tedder (2007) argue that people do not act *in* structures and environments – they act *through* them. This resonates with conceptualisations of agency as bounded rather than structured (Evans 2002, 2009). These perspectives are significant for the ways in which workers can use the workplace as a learning space for ends that extend far beyond it.

Conclusion

Mobilities in learning have to be understood as part of a wider dynamic, keeping in view the macro-organisational and policy environments and the interdependencies set up within and beyond the workplace. This has to include the recognition that workers are both part of the work system and have lives outside it; they are engaged in multiple overlapping structures and ‘communities of social practice’ that can themselves be analysed in terms of social-ecological interdependencies. The spatial dimensions of workplace learning facilitate learners’ motivation and outcomes towards the acquisition of a range of skills, including basic skills as well as personal skills and competences. The research findings indicate that the workplace as a type of learning space is associated with positive attitudes and outcomes for our respondents. Different types of learning space such as the microsystem and mesosystem may play a significant part in enhancing the learning processes and aspirations of adult learners. Although workplace provision aims to boost skills relating to economic productivity and markets, this paper has demonstrated that learners’ motivations and outcomes are much broader. Learners’ skills and motivations could be related to a wider range of differing environments. Apart from using their newly acquired skills in the workplace, learners can also recontextualise their skills to other concurrent contexts, for example their family environments. Thus, a social ecology of learning can be used as a key to understanding motivations of adult learners in using technologies in work and in related learning; in research into adults’ experiences of the spatial aspects of learning as they move between settings; and in first attempts to model interrelationships in ways that enable practitioners and learners to design interventions and plan for change (see Evans, Kersh & Kontiainen 2004; Kersh, Evans et al. 2011). Improving work-based learning means paying attention to what people want and need; and to the different expressions of interest that come from work groups differently located in the changing social landscapes of organisations and labour markets.

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Theo van Dellen

Motivational and affective components of workplace learning in some sectors in the Netherlands

Workplace learning is a complex issue because it concerns individual and organisational perspectives at the same time. Moreover, the immediate contextual, societal circumstances influence the issue of workplace learning significantly. The idea behind this research was that these individual, organisational and societal aspects show themselves in the motivational and affective components of the workplace learning experience. Individual and collective learning in organisations starts with motivation and emotion emanating from the power relations around work, which can be experienced as voluntary or compulsory. In this explorative study the motivational and affective components of workplace learning are uncovered, and similarities and differences in the relationships between them in different Dutch sectors of the labour market are described and discussed.

Introduction

The slogan ‘lifelong learning from the cradle to the grave’, which we hear preached on all sides, is one that is impressed (if not pressed) upon the public at large. On the one hand, the authorities, employers, unions and sector organisations seek to encourage responsible citizenship in people’s lives and work. On the other hand, organisations wish to make it absolutely clear to employees that their employability is their own responsibility and that they will need to learn. It is indeed strange that this brandishing of the slogan ‘lifelong learning’ stands in such stark contrast to the ambiguous situation of adult education and to training and development within organisations. In adult learning practice, we see this ambiguity in the contrast between autonomous voluntary learning and learning in order to adjust, or even ‘compulsory’ learning. Lifelong learning that is fully autonomous and voluntary or chosen freely is the preserve of only a small proportion of adults. Adult learning is a more or less compulsory affair that obliges people above all else to adjust. But policymakers and managers deny this, as do many learning and development professionals.

The following study focuses on a research effort directed at identifying the characteristics of the workplace experienced by employees who are connected with their learning (motivation) in the workplace on a compulsory or voluntary basis and, in addition, their perceptions of benefits and effects of the workplace learning. Motivation (to learn) is considered crucial for the participation in and impact of learning or developmental activities, such as training programmes and (non-)formal work (place)-related learning behaviour (Ashton, 2004; Colquitt, LePine & Noe, 2000). According to Ford (1992), motivation (to learn) is a sensitive concept (process) with attributes such as emotions, beliefs about one’s own competence and the context, and personal goals (see Figure 1). Understanding and enhancing the motivational aspects of work-

related learning in organisations is of great interest to both employers and employees as well as scientist and practitioners.

Ford (1992) describes his motivational systems theory (MST) in *Motivating Humans*. This comprehensive, integrated motivational theory – based on the work of father and son Ford – is known as the living systems framework (LSF). The framework approaches humans as a living and learning system maintaining a reciprocal relationship with its context. Ford has attempted to combine and integrate the different views of humans and empirical scientific findings into a single coherent theoretical framework. It is premised on the notion that motivation underlies the origin of and solution to the problems of individuals, organisations and society. Thus for Ford, motivation is both the source of and what drives personal development. It is in essence a *psychological*, future-oriented and *evaluative* phenomenon. Ford does not provide a clear-cut definition of ‘motivation’; but rather defines it as the process outcome of three psychological functions underpinning all human activity or behaviour. “In Motivational Systems Theory, motivation is defined as the organized patterning of three psychological functions that serve to direct, energize, and regulate goal-directed activity: personal goals, *emotional arousal* processes and personal agency beliefs” (Ford, 1992, p. 3; italics added by the author). Symbolically, this gives the formula: motivation = goals x emotions x personal beliefs (in Ford’s terms, 1992, p. 248).

Ford defines personal goals as thoughts about the desired or undesired outcomes that individuals seek to achieve or avoid through their behaviour/learning behaviour. It is important to point out that Ford sees personal goals as being both process (mental) and substantive. Thoughts focus attention and determine the content of behaviour. Ford describes a taxonomy of goals that illustrate the consequences that individuals choose in relation to themselves and their environment. Ford explains the importance of clarifying or activating goals as follows: “Thus, although goal activation is just one step in the process of facilitating effective functioning, it is an essential prerequisite for the entire process. A job, activity, task, or experience *must* afford the attainment of personally relevant goals that are of sufficient strength to generate some degree of commitment if there is to be any hope of effective functioning” (Ford, 1992, p. 206).

In Ford’s opinion, goals are always personal because they are the process property of the individual. Although goals may be developed, supplied or even imposed by the environment, individuals must in all cases accept and personalise them if the goals are to play a part in motivation.

Alongside personal goals, Ford sees ‘personal agency beliefs’ as playing a key role in motivated and non-motivated behaviour. These personal beliefs are the evaluative outcomes of perceptions of an individual’s own present and future reality. The term ‘agency’ in relation to personal beliefs means that these beliefs determine whether or not there is motivation for a goal. There are two types of personal belief: beliefs about our own ability to perform, or learn to perform, certain behaviour; and beliefs about the context. In other words, does the environment provide us with enough support to be able to manage certain behaviour/learning behav-

your or goals? In short, it is about the evaluative deliberations an individual makes with respect to the future opportunities and implications of a chosen behaviour. Here is an example. You really want to stop smoking and there are ample rational reasons for stopping: your own health, your child's health, it makes your teeth go yellow, and your non-smoking partner tells you that you 'stink of cigarettes'. Yet you still cannot find the motivation to stop. You are convinced that in order to function socially you need to clutch a cigarette, that you can't manage without nicotine. You are also convinced that no one in your environment, except perhaps your child and partner, is keen for you to stop, which means you'll receive little support from others. Where will your motivation come from?

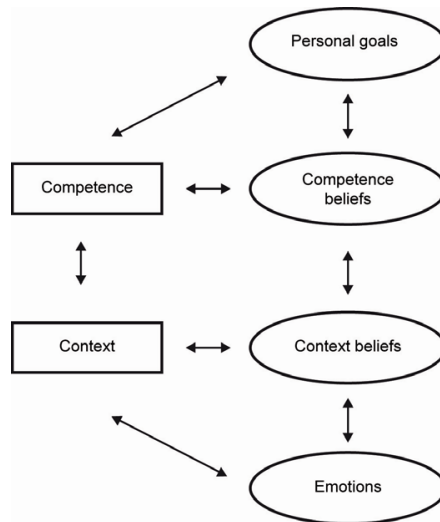


Figure 1: Ford's view of motivation: process and content simultaneously

Ford identifies no fewer than four aspects of contextual beliefs: "A. The environment must be congruent with an individual's agenda or personal goals. B. The environment must be congruent with the person's biological transactional and cognitive capabilities. C. The environment must have the material and informational resources needed to facilitate goal attainment. D. The environment must provide an emotional climate that supports and facilitates effective functioning *and learning*." (Ford, 1992, pp. 130–131; emphasis added by the author). An individual's wider environment should therefore be congruent with the individual's biological and psychological capabilities and should match their personal goals. It should also provide material, substantive and emotional support for the individual's personal development.

Ford describes emotions as having three gradations or components. First there is a physical and physiological component, which is the experience of biological (i.e. emotional) processes (e.g.

sweating, heart palpitations, butterflies in your stomach, etc.). According to Damasio (1994), these emotions (i.e. the physical, original sensations or expressions of what we often call feelings) govern “the functioning of the brain and our cognitions” (p. 182). Second is an affective component, which involves the manifestation of the subjectively experienced and expressed ‘feeling of the emotion’. In a sense, the evaluative component of Ford’s theory is also an expression of this. Third is a transaction component – the verbal and non-verbal expressions that arise out of the first two components and which may influence relevant aspects of the context. Emotions are almost always linked to events or behaviour. They can be linked to the beliefs described above that arise out of an evaluation of the context and a belief in our own competence, perhaps based on earlier goals that may or may not have been attained. Thus emotions can either stimulate development and learning (i.e. goal-setting) or hamper and slow them down. These emotional components can be both a conscious and unconscious part of the learning and development process.

In summary, Ford sees motivation as a process bringing together emotions, beliefs about one’s own capabilities and the context, and *personal* goals. Motivation to learn is the outcome of regulating emotion. From the outset, the chosen behaviour must ‘feel absolutely right’ both internally and externally (i.e. contextually). This is what gives goals, which are part of motivation, their personal characteristic from the outset. Stewart (1996) provides a similar description of the three psychological domains of experience, action and behaviour: the affective domain of values, as he calls it (‘we feel’); the cognitive domain of knowledge (‘we think’); and the action and goal-oriented domain of skills (‘we do’). Like Ford, Stewart emphasises that these domains are inseparable elements of behaviour – and learning behaviour is no exception.

Along very similar lines to Ford, Hoekstra (2005) stated in his inaugural lecture entitled *Weten wat je wilt. Zelfregulatie en verandervermogen van individuen in organisaties* [Knowing what you want. An individual’s self-regulation and capacity to change in organisations] that the self-regulation of emotion, goals and *attention* plays a major role in learning and work behaviour. In his view, self-regulation is about “the ways in which people direct – and above all adjust – their behaviour, thoughts and feelings” (Hoekstra, 2005, p. 15). He goes on to emphasise that what the different self-regulation processes have in common is their adaptive function.

Eraut (2000) differentiates between learning in a deliberate mode after a situation of change and learning in a reactive mode after an error. Both modes of learning have compulsory and voluntary aspects. It seems that learning in both modes involves an adaptive process as a reaction to a situation that can be coped with by more or less self-regulated engagement in (learning) activities (Van der Wiel, Szegedi & Weggeman, 2004). A plausible thought is that the situational organisational structure and practices have an impact on the characteristics and outcomes of workplace learning (see Ashton, 2004). Clarke (2005, p. 201) suggests on the basis of descriptive research in healthcare organisations “that more democratic workplaces, characterized by open flow of communication, staff participation in decision-making, and clear organisational vision, are likely to have more impact on workplace learning”. Van Dellen and

Hauwen (2007) and Bolt and Van Dellen (2006) conducted a qualitative investigation into the human resource development (HRD) policy, activities and content in the metal and healthcare sectors. These studies showed clear differences between these sectors. The differences can be summed up by the primary focus of HRD policy, activities and content, namely on ‘organisational development’ in the metal sector, and on ‘professional development’ in the healthcare sector. These different focuses have implications for the way configurations of HRD are formed in these sectors (Van Dellen, 2003).

Probably the organisational structure and practice differences in HRD between sectors may account for significant differences in the experiences with workplace learning of the employees within them. Independently from, but at the same time in agreement with, Ford’s motivational system theory (MST), Ashton (2004, p. 45) proposed a type of process model with “areas where organisational structure and culture impact on the learning process”. While Ford differentiates between emotions, personal and context beliefs, and personal goals to become motivated (to learn), Ashton puts concepts such as ‘support for learning’, ‘opportunity to practise’ and ‘distribution of knowledge and information’ in between ‘motivation and prior experience’ and ‘reward for learning’ to understand the learning process. These elements consist of the necessary requirements to learn (Ashton, 2004). All the elements mentioned by Ashton can be understood and connected with Ford’s MST. In Ford’s system, theory motivation (to learn) is an internal process belonging to the individual, who incorporates and evaluates the context (of work and learning) by experiencing (being conscious of) related emotions, context beliefs (of support, etc.), personal beliefs (of capacities or competence in work) and personal goals leading to chosen learning activities and behaviour. In this way, to be as well as to become motivated and handle in this respect is the actual outcome of an affective process. In this explorative study, the focus lies on this affective process with a range of elements. *What do employees experience around workplace learning in terms of compulsion and voluntariness that influences their learning? Do these experiences differ between sectors as motivational, affective and/or evaluative indicators for organisational structure and culture differences?*

Method

Context

Due to prior research projects and student activities within various organisations, the author of this study had forged existing positive links with members of organisations mainly in the public services, health and welfare, metal and technical installation, and commercial services sectors. Consequently, for reasons of convenience, these people were contacted personally to ask for their participation in the study. The intention was to reach two to five individuals in each organisation. The people were contacted either by directly visiting organisations, by phone or by email. They were informed about the study’s goals with respect to workplace learning. Most respondents were able and willing to use the online questionnaire. Others, however, preferred paper and pencil format.

Table 1

Number of respondents working in different sectors

Sector	Respondents (n = 168)	
	Number (Organisations)	Percentage
Public services	37 (11)	22.0
Health and welfare	58 (19)	34.5
Metal and technical installation	28 (11)	16.7
Commercial services	34 (14)	20.2
Various	11 (9)	6.5
Total	168	99.9

Sample

To obtain a reasonable sample within a reasonable time frame, 212 people were asked to participate in this study. Of these, 176 employees (83%) participated. However, after accounting for missing data, the final sample size was 168 (79.2%). The numbers for each sector are presented in Table 1. The health and welfare sector was the most strongly represented with 58 employees from 19 organisations. The metal and technical installation sector (a typical Dutch sector) was represented by 28 participants from 11 organisations. Public services and commercial services participated respectively with 37 and 34 respondents from 11 and 14 organisations. Finally, the ‘various’ sector included 11 participants from 9 organisations, mainly working in education. The size of organisations were classified into three categories. More than half of the respondents (86) came from large (100+ employee) organisations. Organisations with 1–20 or 20–100 employees were represented by 23% (n = 37) and 24% (n = 39) respectively of the respondents. In the sample both men and women were almost equally represented: 47% male and 53% female. Unfortunately, due to a bug in the questionnaire, a differentiation between non-higher and higher education could only be made. The respondents were well educated: 52.7% of the respondents finished higher education (higher vocational education or university) and 47.3% finished non-higher education (e.g. secondary education). The age of the respondents were classified into four categories: 20–30, 30–40, 40–50 and over 50. The age categories were distributed with 48, 41, 40 and 35 persons respectively. Finally, the tenure of the respondents in their current organisation was divided into three categories: 0–8, 8–15 and more than 15 years. The first category constituted almost 60% of the respondents (n = 97), the remaining categories contained 37 and 33 persons respectively.

Instrument

It is important to emphasise that the study was explorative in nature. There is currently a lack of available questionnaires to assess motivational and affective components around work and learning in organisations. In response, we – the ASEM LLL Research Hub Network for Workplace Learning – developed a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained items concerning general descriptive sample indicators, work motivation, learning and work, employers’ intentions towards work and learning, and organisational practices in this respect. The responses to

items of the questionnaire that referred to personal experiences used a five-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), or not at all (1) to a high extent (5).

Procedure

Data was collected using an online LimeSurvey questionnaire over a period of three to four months ending in 2010. Respondents who preferred pen and paper received the questionnaire by post and returned it free of charge. If respondents failed to reply they were reminded to do so one to three times. Participation was voluntary. The participants were guaranteed that data would only be used for research purposes, to ensure confidentiality.

Analysis

The collected data was analysed by means of SPSS, using explorative factor analyses, multiple regression (least squares method for organisations) and analysis of variance (ANOVA). To explore the possible underlying constructs concerning experiencing work-related learning in organisations and the compulsory and voluntary aspects of it in particular, the survey items were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis. The Dutch results presented here are based on an overall factor analysis which was applied to the accumulated research data from Austria, Latvia, Lithuania and the Netherlands (see Table 2). Items were considered to belong to an independent factor if their load on this factor was close to or higher than .6 and lower than .4 on all the other factors (see Table 2). An overview of all the scales based on these factors and their meaning is provided in the results section below.

Results

Conceptualisations

The explorative factor analysis outcome showed 12 factors useful for this research. The constructs (scales) that resulted from the analysis are presented below. Together these factors explained 54.3 % of the total variance.

Factor 1: Workplace learning activities satisfaction. The first factor of the factor analysis (explaining 14.4% of the total variance) showed four items concerning satisfaction with workplace learning (WPL) activities. The satisfaction scale consists of items such as enjoying the WPL activities, the emotional importance of the activities for the employees, the support and engagement of the employees with the activities, and the content of the activities relating to employees' individual knowledge and experience. Chronbach's alpha (α) of .77 demonstrates the relatively high reliability of this scale..

Factor 2: Learning opportunities. The four items loading on the second factor (explaining 6.8% variance) clearly indicated the amount and quality of the learning opportunities offered by the respondents' employer (see Table 2). The α of this scale is .76.

Factor 3 (Work motivation) and Factor 4 (Work satisfaction). Factor 3 (4.4% explained variance) contained two items: ‘I work only for the reason that my work provides the means to survive’ and ‘I have more financial satisfaction than personal satisfaction from my work’. Factor 4 (4.2% variance) concerned the emotional bonds with work through the two items: ‘The work I’m doing makes me feel good’ and ‘I feel appreciated for the work I’m doing’. The α ’s of these scales are .65 and .67 respectively.

Factor 5: Compulsion–voluntariness. In the questionnaire there were a number of generic questions about experiencing compulsion or voluntariness in (workplace) learning. The fifth factor explained 4.0% of the total variance with three items which express the dialectic between compulsion and voluntariness (see Table 2). The α of this scale is .41. This is quite low, meaning that the consistency between the items of the scale is not very high; nevertheless this factor may be of interest because it is independent from the other factors.

Factor 6 (Employer’s necessary consent) and Factor 7 (Employer’s job-related approval). In addition to the preceding dialectic factor, the next two factors are about the conditions under which the employer lets the employee participate in learning when the employee has decided to do so (Table 2). Factor 6, with an α of .52 (3.6% of explained variance), concerns two items: ‘My employer never agrees ...’ and ‘My employer only lets me participate when the course is required by the organisation’. Factor 7 contains two items that concern additional employer’s job-related approval (3.5% of explained variance): ‘...my employer wants to see its relevance for my job’ and ‘...to show why it is important for my job’ ($\alpha = .70$).

Factor 8 (Context expectations to take courses) and Factor 9 (Context beliefs to learning). Factor 8 (3.2%; $\alpha = .62$), which expresses the context expectations to take courses, consists of two items (see Table 2). Factor 9 (2.9%; $\alpha = .40$) is about the belief that learning contributes to one’s productivity on the one hand and that unemployment is a risk if one does not keep up learning on the other hand (see Table 2).

Factor 10: Strategic WPL activities. This factor (2.6%; $\alpha = .55$) refers to a top-down as well as management-imposed introduction of WPL activities in the employee’s organisation.

Factor 11 (Learning volition belief) and Factor 12 (Learning freedom belief). Each of the two final factors contains two items that express general beliefs about the role of learning around work and organisations. Factor 11 concerns learning volition belief: learning ought to take place and it takes place while work is being done (2.4%; $\alpha = .19$). Finally, factor 12 is learning freedom belief meaning the respondent’s belief that ‘freedom’ to participate in decision making and choosing the content of learning positively influences their desire to learn (2.3%; $\alpha = .34$).

Table 2

Factor analysis: Overview of the main factors with according items, reliabilities and factor loadings

Factor 1: WPL satisfaction ($\alpha = .77$)

In my organisation workplace learning activities:

- are mostly enjoyed by participants .64
- receive strong support and engagement from employees .70
- reflect the fact that individual exchange of knowledge and experience is important. .69
- are something emotionally important for the participants. .72

Factor 2: Learning opportunities ($\alpha = .76$)

My employer:

- offers such attractive learning opportunities that most of us want to take them up .59
- offers a lot of learning opportunities compared with other similar employers in my kind of work .71
- tries to make sure that there's enough time and space to learn in working times .66
- gives recognition to employees who improve their knowledge and skills (e.g. salary rise, promotion, more responsibility, written appreciation). .65

Factor 3: Work motivation ($\alpha = .65$)

How would you judge your current situation at work?

- I work only for the reason that my work provides the means to survive. .69
- I have more financial satisfaction than personal satisfaction from my work. .74

Factor 4: Work satisfaction ($\alpha = .67$)

How would you judge your current situation at work?

- The work I'm doing makes me feel good. .77
- I feel appreciation for the work I'm doing. .72

Factor 7: Employer's job-related approval ($\alpha = .70$)

If you decide yourself to pursue work-related learning, how does your employer usually respond?

- If it takes place in working hours, my employer wants to see its relevance for my job. .76
- If it costs a lot my employer expects me to show why it is important for my job. .81

Factor 8: Context expectations to take courses ($\alpha = .62$)

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- In my organisation everyone expects you to take courses sometimes. .68
- Most employers insist that their employees follow training courses at regular intervals. .77

Factor 9: Context beliefs to learning ($\alpha = .40$)

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements

- Learning inevitably contributes to the productivity and output of employees. .57
- Everyone has to keep up learning because otherwise they risk becoming unemployed. .65

Factor 10: Strategic WPL activities ($\alpha = .55$)

In my organisation WPL activities:

- are set up in a top-down way .70
- are imposed on everyone by the management. .74

Factor 5: Compulsion–voluntariness ($\alpha = .41$)

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- It's no good waiting for people to decide for themselves – you have to make people learn, whether they want to or not. .57
- The more you force people to learn, the less they will want to learn and the worse the results will be. .56
- When people can decide for themselves about learning, they learn more and get better results .63

Factor 6: Employer's necessary consent ($\alpha = .52$)

If you decide yourself to pursue work-related learning, how does your employer usually respond?

- My employer never agrees to my participation in work-related courses. .73
- My employer only lets me participate when the course is required by the organisation. .60

Factor 11: Learning volition belief ($\alpha = .19$)

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- The trouble with work-based learning is that it is not really something people want to do, but something they think they ought to do. .65
- People learn best while they are just doing their jobs – they don't have to take courses to learn more and do their jobs well. .53

Factor 12: Learning freedom belief ($\alpha = .34$)

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- When employees can actively participate in making decisions and solving problems, they want to improve their capacity to do a good job. .60
- If employers would support more general education (and not just for their jobs) for their employees, more people would want to improve their knowledge and skills. .77

Description of variables

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics and inter-correlations for the constructed variables. The descriptive statistics show means in the range from 2.81 to 4.27. The Dutch respondents most certainly believe (agree with the statements) that employees' freedom to decide and to learn positively influences their willingness to improve their competence ($M = 4.27$). Moreover, their work satisfaction is considerably high ($M = 4$). These two variables 'Learning freedom belief' and 'Work satisfaction' both show, in addition, a significant correlation of .24 (see Table 3).

With the 'Employer's job-related approval' construct, the respondents also show a considerably high level of agreement ($M = 3.95$). This means that their employer expects some checks and balances (relevancy as well as importance for the job) if the employee decides independently to pursue work-related learning. This variable shows significant correlations with the constructs 'Context expectations to take courses' and 'Context beliefs to learning', indicating that the employer's approval is not independent from what can be called aspects of the contextual 'learning climate'. This learning climate has two levels: the immediate level of colleagues and the employer(s) as well as the broader level of society. The job-related approval of the employer also relates to the experienced dialectic dimension 'Compulsion-voluntariness'. This

means that the more strongly employees agree that ‘voluntariness is important for learning’ the more strongly they experience the need for the approval of their employer. This seems to be quite plausible.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations for the constructed variables

Constructed variable	N	M	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. WPL satisfaction	153	3,07	0,78	.58**		.17*				.22**	.19*			
2. Learning opportunities	163	2,9	0,89			.23*		.27**		.44**	.16*		-.16*	
3. Work motivation	165	3,34	0,52											
4. Work satisfaction	165	4	0,82											.24**
5. Compulsion– voluntariness	168	3,35	0,55						.26**					
6. Employer's necessary consent	164	3,6	0,96											
7. Employer's job-related approval	160	3,95	1,02							.23**	.22**			
8. Context expectations to take courses	167	3,3	0,98									.17*		
9. Context beliefs to learning	168	3,49	0,76											
10. Strategic WPL activities	153	3,11	0,89											
11. Learning volition belief	168	2,81	0,87											
12. Learning freedom belief	167	4,27	0,66											

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed); ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

The constructs ‘WPL satisfaction’ and ‘Learning opportunities’ are distinguished and separated in the factor analysis clearly, but they are both strongly interdependent ($r = .58$) and both have clear relationships with a number of other distinguished variables (Table 3). ‘WPL satisfaction’ can be understood as the motivational and affective experience of workplace learning activities

(Table 2) proposed by Ashton (2004). ‘Learning opportunities’ describes the possibilities given and recognised by the employer to participate in learning. This is also an area Ashton mentioned to be of importance. Table 3 shows that, overall, ‘WPL satisfaction’ and ‘Learning opportunities’ have intermediate mean levels close to 3 (neither disagree nor agree).

Both ‘WPL satisfaction’ and ‘Learning opportunities’ show relationships with ‘Work satisfaction’, ‘Context expectations to take courses’ and ‘Context beliefs to learning’. Feeling good about and appreciated for the work one is doing relates positively with both. In particular, when colleagues and employers in general have a higher expectancy of employees to take courses, learning opportunities are more strongly recognised and experienced (Table 3; $r = .44$).

Finally, Learning opportunities’ on its own shows a positive relationship with ‘Employer’s necessary consent’ (if you decide yourself to pursue learning) and a negative relationship with ‘Learning volition belief’ (the idea that employees ought to be willing to learn).

Relationships between constructs and sample descriptors

To better understand the relationships between the motivational and affective constructs, and the descriptive sample variables, two multiple regressions were executed. Table 4 shows that satisfaction with workplace learning activities is lower in the commercial and public services sectors. In addition, within the tenure category of 8–15 years (working for the same employer) the WPL satisfaction decreases to a small extent compared with the two other tenure categories. Finally, the agreement with ‘Learning opportunities’ strongly increases the satisfaction with WPL. The other sample predictors – such as gender, age categories, size of the organisation and education level – do not demonstrate any influence. Moreover, other motivational and affective variables (Table 3) do not influence WPL satisfaction directly.

Table 4

Multiple regression analyses between WPL satisfaction and the independent predictors

	B	WPL satisfaction		R^2
		SE B	B	
Commercial services sector	-.58	.12	-.30**	.07
Public services sector	-.46	.13	-.22**	.12
Tenure 8–15 years	-.09	.11	-.05	.14
Learning opportunities	.55	.05	.62**	.51

Weighted (by organisation) least squares regression; ** $p < .01$, two-tailed, $R^2_{adj} = .50$.

Next it is of interest to understand how ‘Learning opportunities’ are related to the earlier mentioned predictors. Table 5 shows the relationship of ‘Learning opportunities’ with ‘Tenure 8–15 years’ (again, and rather small) and three motivational and affective constructed variables. ‘Context expectations to take courses’ is strongly related (almost 17% explained variance) with ‘Learning opportunities’. Thus, when everybody in the organisation as well as employers in general expect, even insist, that employees take courses, employees indeed see or experience

more opportunities offered by their employer. The same but to a lesser extent holds for ‘Employer’s necessary consent’ and ‘Work satisfaction’.

Table 5

Multiple regression analyses between ‘Learning opportunities’ and the independent predictors (with the exception of WPL satisfaction)

	B	Learning opportunities		R ²
		SE B	B	
Tenure 8–15 years	-.35	.14	-.17*	.03
Context expectations to take courses	.35	.06	.40**	.20
Employer’s necessary consent	.18	.07	.19**	.24
Work satisfaction	.15	.08	.14*	.26

Weighted (by organisation) least squares regression; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed, $R^2_{adj} = .24$.

Sectors compared

The lower satisfaction with WPL activities in the commercial and public services sectors have already been presented above. There is one other motivational and affective construct that is different between the sectors, namely ‘Context expectation to take courses’. In the metal and technical installation sector this variable is significantly lower than in the other three sectors (ANOVA, $F = 6.48$, $p < .01$).

Discussion

Research on the compulsion and voluntariness of workplace learning has long and often been called for. The problem with the concepts of compulsion and voluntariness is that they have not been previously ‘operationalised’. It was similarly not possible in this study to empirically validate a distinction between compulsion and voluntariness of workplace learning. Nevertheless some of the operationalised (by factor analysis) constructs contained aspects of both concepts. Only a few constructs were functional, meaning they were reliable as well as plausible to understand.

When employees *decide themselves* to pursue work-related learning, two kinds of conditional agreements seem to be asked of the employer. The first one, called *necessary consent*, is quite a good indication of the power position of the employer. The mean level of agreement with this construct is 3.6. So, while employees may decide themselves to pursue learning, they agree quite strongly about the required consent from the employer. In addition, also with respect to the *job-related approval* (Table 2) from the employer, the employees show a clear mean agreement (4). In conclusion, in the Netherlands it may be the case that true voluntariness of workplace learning does not exist.

The dependent dialectic between compulsion and voluntariness also combined in one of the factors (see Table 2, Factor 5). The statements in the items of the corresponding construct express very well the ambiguous entanglement between compulsion and voluntariness concerning

workplace learning. On the one hand we believe or think that adults are free to (choose to) learn throughout their lives, but on the other hand adult learning is a more or less compulsory affair that obliges people, above all else, to adjust to work or the broader context (see the beginning of the Introduction).

Following Ford (1992) in the 'Introduction', a process model of motivation was presented (see Figure 1). In this, motivation (to learn) model, *(the setting of) personal goals* is a very essential element. The discussed necessary consent and job-related approval from the employer (which have an intermediate level) are both nevertheless to some extent contradictory to personal goal-setting.

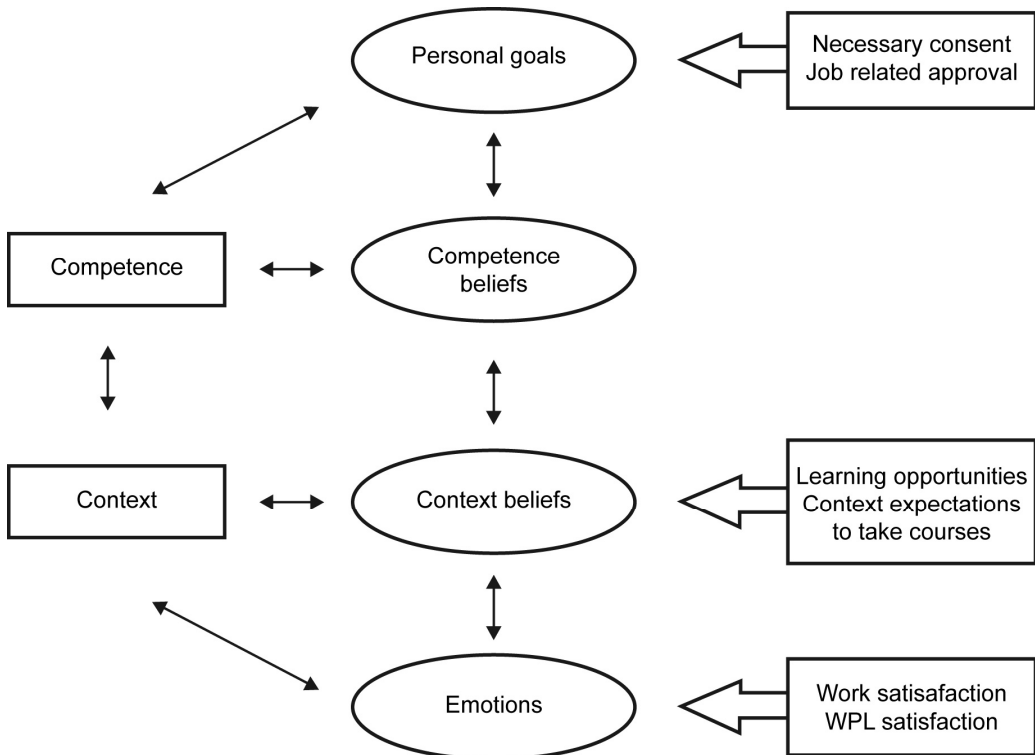


Figure 2: The constructed variables added to Ford's theoretical motivational model

In Figure 2 the relevant outcomes of the study are added to Ford's motivational model. It shows that these motivational and affective process components may be indications for what Illeris (2007) called the *social-cultural learning environment*. The experience with learning concerning the workplace is an expression of the dependence of the employee and the em-

ployer (or organisation). In this study the social cultural learning environment has been shown by this dependence through experiencing (and evaluating) WPL satisfaction, learning opportunities, work satisfaction, necessary consent, etc. (see the right-hand side of Figure 2).

These results together are indicative for a preliminary conclusion that motivational and emotive aspects of learning in the workplace are important. The results also provide an insight into the complicated issue of compulsion and voluntariness. Workplace learning appears to be a sensitive matter. The outcome indicators of the psychological and relational processes between the employer (manager) and the employee suggest that the employer is in the leading position, while the employee is adapting in an enjoyable and volitional way with some illusion of autonomy.

The different sectors in the study showed some differences. WPL satisfaction is significantly lower in the commercial and public services sectors. In the metal and technical installation sector the context expectations to take courses are experienced by the employees to a lesser extent. Together, however, this does not indicate that the social- cultural environment is different in the different Dutch sectors.

Implications for theory and practice

The analyses did not provide clear results to indicate that the compulsion or voluntariness dimension of WPL adds to any significant extent to our understanding of the motivational and affective components of workplace learning. Future theory-building on the compulsion or voluntariness of WPL should focus on the issue of decision-making (see Holton III & Naquin, 2005) and the impact of this on the psychological and relational processes between the employee and the employer (or the organisation). Compulsion or voluntariness seems not to be the issue for employees and employers, for the reason that learning is a continuing secondary necessity in the context of employment, work and organisation. Moreover, the contract between employer and employee seems to be empowered by economic dependence in the first place and psychological relatedness in the latter.

Limitations and perspectives for future research

The flawed data and several other limitations of the study (see below) should be taken into consideration to avoid drawing conclusions that are too simplistic and speculative. Moreover, the explorative character of the research should also be emphasised in this discussion.

Several limitations of the study should be taken into consideration. Firstly, the study used data from a limited number of individuals within a limited number of organisations. From some organisations only one person contributed to the research; therefore the multiple least squares regressions were weighted by organisations to control for outliers. Secondly, due to the explorative character of the study, the validity and reliability of a number of intermediate constructed variables were rather low. Finally, although all variables were inputted into the regression

analyses, the significant and relevant results concerned mainly variables with relatively high reliabilities, such as WPL satisfaction' and 'Learning opportunities'.

Despite these limitations, the present study is a rich starting point for further research and a stimulus for research into the crucial aspects of the psychological contract between employee and employer that influence the configurations and outcomes of learning in the workplace.

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Kenji Hirata and Nanae Ibuchi

Connection between individuals and organisations through workplace learning

Hirata and Morimoto (2010) verified that organisational approaches to providing learning opportunities influenced individual workplace learning activities directly. Organisations not only provide employees with learning opportunities and foster a learning climate, but also workplace learning opportunities must match the needs of the current and future jobs of employees. This paper focuses on the nature of organisational learning climate and individual career orientation. The purpose of this study is to clarify the relationship among work motivation, workplace learning style and career orientation as a mechanism of organisational climate. Intrinsic work motivation is influenced by career orientation, but extrinsic work motivation is not affected by career orientation. Workplace learning motivation is associated with career orientation. The learning belief that exists in an organisation, whether voluntary-driven or requirement-based, increases motivation for workplace learning, but professional career orientation is a key element for both workplace learning motivation and intrinsic work motivation. The study found intrinsic motivation to be a key mediator between organisational commitment and tenure, by pass analysis of the 'Career-workplace learning model'. As the results show, professional career orientation and workplace learning belief should be combined to increase workplace motivation and intrinsic work motivation. Then intrinsic work motivation influences organisational commitment and intention of tenure.

Introduction

Since the burst of the economic bubble in Japan, Japanese employment practices have changed. The typical conventions, which were the promise of lifetime employment and the seniority system, were no longer sustainable. Along with these changes, it was expected that the traditional learning climate in Japan, in which employees' learning depended on their organisations, might be replaced by a culture of independent self-learning. In the past, almost all Japanese companies provided training and development opportunities systematically and regularly for their employees. Employees could develop their skills and competences, and also attain their career aspirations, throughout the whole of their working lives without investment or consideration on their part. However, nowadays learning no longer simply means knowledge acquisition and skills training, but it has multiple functions. Learning has to be provided throughout the life course, to provide high-end and practical learning content, to connect and support the employee's career development, and to help individual development in the workplace.

Gouldner (1957) pointed out that career orientation could be classified into two main groups: the 'cosmopolitan' and the 'local'. Gouldner's cosmopolitan and local orientation variables

include a person's commitment to job skills, loyalty to an organisation, and reference group. The cosmopolitans are low on loyalty to the organisation in which they are employed, high on commitment to specialised skills, and they have an orientation for outer reference groups. On the other hand, locals are high on loyalty to the organisation, low on commitment to specialised skills, and have an orientation for inner reference group/company. According to the categories of 'career anchors' described by Schein (1985), there are eight types of career orientation. The main two types are 'technical/functional competence' and 'general managerial competence'. It can be considered that cosmopolitans have 'technical/functional competence' while locals have 'general managerial competence'.

It is notable that although employees with technical/functional competence are low on commitment to their organisation, most of them tend to remain with an organisation for a long time in Japan. It seems that there is a problem for organisations in how to manage their employees who have technical/functional competence: because the organisation may not provide employees with regular opportunities for technical training and development, they may become disappointed in the organisation. There also seems that there is a problem for organisations in how to manage their employees who have general/managerial competence: because the organisation may not keep them in permanent employment, they may fear for their career development. It is relevant at this stage to turn to a discussion on the relationship between individuals and organisations, focusing on workplace learning and career development in Japanese organisations.

There is a famous concept and theory relevant to the relationship between the individual and the organisation, called organisational commitment. This is the view of the psychological state that characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation, and has implications for their commitment to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The authors classified commitment into three main groups: 'affective', 'normative' and 'continuance'. Affective commitment refers to an employee's positive emotional attachment to the organisation. The normative commitment refers to an employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation. The continuance commitment refers to the employee's awareness that costs are associated with leaving the organisation. The affective commitment is based on positive feelings towards an organisation. Employees who have a strong affective commitment to an organisation stay with the organisation because they want to do so. It is important to increase affective commitment in employees because it improves the employee's attachment to an organisation and prevents them from leaving. It has also been found to lead to an increase in productivity.

In addition, the effect of career orientation on an organisation is not the only organisational commitment. Hirata (1999) showed that superior performers have a strong career commitment. According to Hirano (1994), career orientation affects work motivation. Moreover, Hirata and Nakanishi (1999) showed that career orientation affects learning and action, and also the results of work. Career orientation is supposed to affect not only the relationship between employees and organisations, but also work motivation and learning belief. The organisation should un-

derstand the employee's career orientation and manage this in order to match their orientation. This leads to dignity and the first step towards improvement of the employee's organisational commitment and performance.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to make clear the effects of 'career orientation' on 'motivation for workplace learning', 'work motivation', 'organisational commitment', and modification by 'organisational approach for workplace learning'.

Hirata and Morimoto (2010) focused on the mechanism of workplace learning (WPL), especially on the workplace learning situation and the actual activities of WPL. Both 'providing learning opportunities' and 'providing indirect opportunities' affected 'positive workplace learning activities (WPL positive)'. WPL positive was one of the actual learning activities of WPL. On the basis of this research, the effect of career orientation on WPL positive and the effect of WPL positive on work motivation will be made clear. An organisational approach to WPL is also discussed as a moderator for the mechanism.

Hypothesis

Employees have various values. Career orientation and learning belief are considered as human values they possess. These values must influence their work and learning motivation.

Hypothesis 1. *Career orientation interacts with learning belief, and affects both work and learning motivation.* Hypothesis 1 has three working hypotheses. Both career orientation and learning belief are considered as human values: the former for working life, the latter for lifelong learning. They interact with each other and have a correlation between career orientation and learning.

Working hypothesis 1-1. *Career orientation and learning belief affect each other.* According to Gouldner's idea mentioned earlier, employees who have the orientation to a reference group with specialised skills would show a high commitment to acquiring domain-specific skills. Then it is considered that they ascribe working to learning as WPL because they want to improve their specific and practical skills. They take a positive approach to WPL. Therefore learning belief reflects motivation for WPL.

Working hypothesis 1-2. *Career orientation and learning belief affect positive learning motivation (WPL positive).* Ryan and Deci (2000) pointed out that 'motivated' was to be moved to do something, a person who felt no impetus or inspiration to act was thus characterised as unmotivated, whereas someone who was energised or activated towards an end was considered motivated. Intrinsic motivation refers to initiating an activity for its own sake because it is interesting and satisfying in itself, as opposed to doing an activity to obtain an external goal (Deci, 1975). Individuals who have a strong orientation for their careers, whether

cosmopolitans or locals, and a strong belief in learning, might be activated to learn not only from formal training, but also from work activities.

Working hypothesis 1-3. *Positive learning motivation (WPL positive) affects intrinsic work motivation.* Many researchers, for example Super (1957) and Schein (1985), have studied conflicts between the employee's career orientation and the orientation of the organisation. They have indicated that employees encounter these conflicts as a career plateau or a career crisis between the individual's work and life purposes and the purpose of the organisation. Hirata (2000) found the importance of matching individual career and organisational policy through an empirical study. If an organisation considers an employee's needs and manages them appropriately, the conflict will be reduced. As a result, an organisation can maintain and raise their work motivation. Hence work motivation should be managed not only from an extrinsic viewpoint, but also from an intrinsic one. Employees with a professional orientation need to get their satisfaction in their work and their expertise through self-development.

Hypothesis 2. *Keeping the employee's work motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, is a key element in building the relationship between the individual and the organisation.* Motivation is not a stable concept, as it depends on individual recognition and situational factors. In this paper, this relationship is discussed as the matching between career orientation and organisational learning climate. As mentioned above, motivational status is determined by the interaction or integration of individual need and organisational policy and approaches. Accordingly motivation is to lead to attitude and behaviour in practice, motivation might promote relationship-building between an individual and an organisation.

Working hypothesis 2-1. *Work motivation increases organisational commitment, moreover intrinsic work motivation has a high influence on affective commitment.* Work motivation is the concept focusing on work, while organisational commitment is the concept focusing on the organisation. Both concepts are psychological states from the viewpoint of reason for each object. If a person who works with high emotional state, he/she will have a good psychological state towards the organisation. While extrinsic motivation is the concept relevant to getting external rewards – money, a stable life, and employment – intrinsic motivation is the concept relevant to growth and enjoyment of work itself. That means that employees with intrinsic motivation would feel satisfaction in doing their job for the organisation.

Working hypothesis 2-2. *Organisational commitment, especially affective commitment by employees with a professional orientation, allows increased intention of tenure.* Motivation might be assumed in the current and future intention for employment in the current organisation. It is reasonable that employees with high motivation build a relationship continuously with their current organisation, in other words 'tenure'.

Method

Survey operation

From April to August 2010, the ASEM workplace learning survey was conducted, with the addition of a couple of items in the Japanese version. Eight companies and organisations participated in this survey voluntarily by correspondent mail survey. These organisations represented various industries and various organisational sizes allied with Hirata Laboratory. The organisations were a travel agency, consulting service, IT service, healthcare service, laundry wholesaler, finance and so on. 106 respondents participated in the study, with a response rate of 92.2%.

Key elements and items. The questionnaire was constructed by the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub (ASEM LLL). It consisted of 25 questions and about 200 items, and was translated into Japanese by Hirata laboratory. This report considers the items regarding five questions; career orientation, learning climate, work motivation, and organisational commitment, and tenure.

Career orientation. Career orientation is a combination of perceived areas of competence, motivation, and values that humans would not give up. These items were based on the Career Anchors questionnaire by Schein (1985). The question was 'How true is each item for you?'. The items were 'I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to integrate and manage the efforts of others', 'I would rather leave my organisation than accept a rotational assignment that would take me out of my area of expertise', etc. Ten items were used.

We created synthetic variables based on Schein's research. The first variable was 'managerial orientation', which consisted of five items. The other variable was 'professional orientation', which also consisted of five items. For example one of the managerial orientation items was 'I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to integrate and manage the efforts of others', and one of the professional orientation items was 'I would rather leave my organisation than accept a rotational assignment that would take me out of my area of expertise', etc.

Learning belief. Learning belief is an intention or conviction about learning by employees. Learning belief will be influenced by the organisational situation. If an organisation promotes learning strongly and continuously, employees might adopt the organisation's belief. It can be said that learning belief is a status reflected by the organisational learning climate.

The question from the ASEM workplace survey questionnaire was 'Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements', and there were eight items, 'Employers have the right to insist that employees follow certain courses and obtain certain qualifications', 'People learn best while they are just doing their jobs – they don't have to take courses to learn more and do their jobs well', and so on.

Factor analysis was conducted to learning belief items. Learning belief was divided into two

factors (varimax, cumulative contribution ratio 55.6%). These are ‘requirement-based learning belief’ and ‘volunteer-driven learning belief’. One of the key items of requirement-based learning belief was ‘Employers have the right to insist that employees follow certain courses and obtain certain qualifications’, while one of the key items of volunteer-driven learning belief was ‘People learn best while they are just doing their jobs – they don’t have to take courses to learn more and do their jobs well’.

WPL positive (motivation). ‘WPL positive’ means that employees positively and/or spontaneously commit to WPL activities. It can be said that WPL positive as motivation is a status reflected by the organisational learning climate also.

The question from the ASEM workplace survey questionnaire was ‘In my organisation, workplace learning activities ...’. Items were ‘mostly enjoyed by participants’, and ‘something emotionally important for the participants’, and so on. Based on Hirata and Morimoto’s paper (2010), we created a synthetic variable, WPL positive, as a positive learning motivation.

Work motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) focused on the reasons of action and decision known as the self-determination theory (SDT). The reasons have two ends, extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is to perform actions in order to get reward, money or evaluation by others. Intrinsic motivation is to perform actions because of their curiosity or self-fulfilment.

For our research, both variables, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation, were assumed to combine with items of question 3 in the ASEM workplace survey questionnaire. The question was ‘How would you judge your current situation at work?’. There were five items, ‘How would you judge your current situation at work?’, ‘I have more personal satisfaction than financial satisfaction from my work’, ‘I have more financial satisfaction than personal satisfaction from my work’, and so on.

We created a synthetic variable based on SDT. One variable was ‘intrinsic motivation’, and the other variable was ‘extrinsic motivation’. For example one of the key extrinsic motivation items was ‘I have more financial satisfaction than personal satisfaction from my work’, while one of the key intrinsic motivation items was ‘I have more personal satisfaction than financial satisfaction from my work’.

Organisational commitment. Organisational commitment is the view that commitment is a psychological state that characterises the employee’s relationship with the organisation, and has implications for their commitment to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen described three components of commitment: affective, normative and continuance.

These items were taken from the questionnaire of Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). The question was ‘How important is each item for deciding your career?’. The items were ‘I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my own’, ‘I would feel guilty if I left my organisation

now', 'Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now', and so on.

We created synthetic variables based on Meyer and Allen's idea. The first variable was 'affective commitment', the second variable was 'normative commitment', and the third variable was 'continuance commitment'. For example one of the affective commitment items was 'I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own', one of the normative commitment items was 'I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now', and the continuance commitment item was 'Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now'.

Result 1: Career orientation and learning climate

Correlation of career orientation and learning belief

A correlation analysis was conducted with career orientation and learning belief variables (Table 1). Both variables have two sub-variables each. As a result, correlation was found between 'managerial orientation' and 'requirement-based learning' ($r=.198^*$).

Table 1

Correlation of career orientation & learning belief (n=106)

	Career orientation		Learning belief	
	Professional	Managerial	Requirement-based	Volunteer driven
Professional	-	-	-	-
Managerial	.133	-	-	-
Requirement-based	.042	.198*	-	-
Volunteer driven	-.083	-.065	.048	-

The effect of career orientation and learning belief on learning motivation

To research the effect of career orientation and learning belief on WPL positive as learning motivation, multiple regression analysis was conducted (Figure 1). The explanatory variables were career orientation and learning belief. The criterion variable was WPL positive. Both learning belief and learning motivation are considered as a learning climate in their organisation.

Professional orientation of career orientation affected WPL positive ($\beta=.305$). From learning belief, requirement-based learning belief affected WPL positive ($\beta=.175$) and volunteer-driven learning belief affected WPL positive ($\beta=.175$).

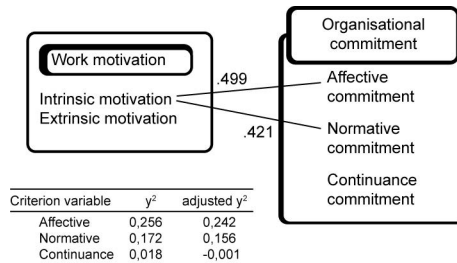


Figure 1: Career orientation and learning motivation (WPL positive)

Result 2: The effect of work motivation on organisational commitment

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to discuss the effect of work motivation on organisational commitment (Figure 2). The explanatory variable is motivation, with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation variables. The criterion variable is organisational commitment: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Analyses were run for each of the three variables.

In this survey, Japanese employees showed intrinsic motivation moderately ($mean = 3.08$) and have little extrinsic motivation ($mean = 2.26$). Intrinsic motivation affected affective commitment with a high score ($\beta = .499$) and normative commitment with a middle-high score ($\beta = .421$). Volunteer-driven learning belief did not affect organisational commitment at all.

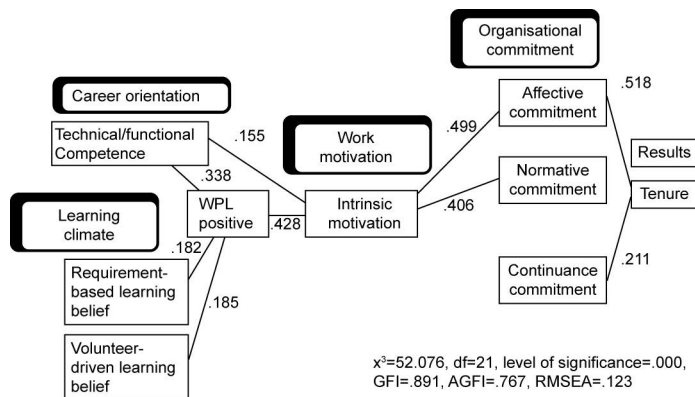


Figure 2: Work motivation and organisational commitment

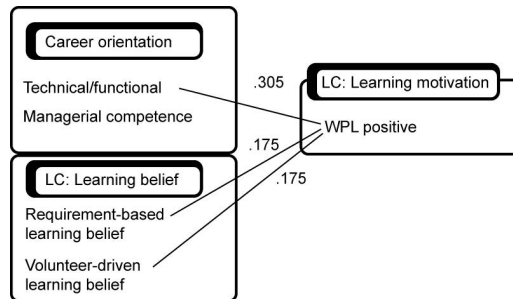


Figure 3: Career-workplace learning model

The relationship of career orientation, learning motivation, work motivation, and organisational commitment

A path analysis was calculated based on the previous research studies in order to identify the relationship between career orientation, learning climate, work motivation, organisational commitment, and tenure as the desired tenure model for professionals (Figure 3). Career orientation is the basis of work attitude as human belief. Learning belief also is the basis of learning attitude which an individual can have in a certain organisation or situation. Both the motivational variables, WPL positive and work motivation, are situational variables moderated by the organisation and system. Organisational commitment also consists of situational variables moderated by the organisation and system.

As a result, the degree of model adaptation was not enough to verify it, but considering the number in the sample, the model had implications. Professional orientation affected WPL positive ($\beta=.338$). Requirement-based learning belief affected WPL positive ($\beta=.182$), volunteer-driven learning belief affected WPL positive ($\beta=.182$).

Conclusion

Employees have different career orientations, so the purpose of this research is to make clear the effects of ‘career orientation’ on ‘learning motivation’, ‘work motivation’, and ‘organisational commitment’. According to the hypotheses, the results are considered as follows.

Working hypothesis 1-1 was ‘Career orientation and learning belief affect each other’. As shown in result 3-1, correlation was found between general managerial competence and requirement-based learning. This is because employees with general managerial competence (managerial orientation) want to become general managers or achieve high-level managerial positions in the future. That is to say, they want to manage their organisation and subordinates. In most cases, managers have to train their subordinates and improve their employees’ skills. Requirement-based learning belief is based on the idea that ‘the employee has to learn whether

or not they want to learn'. It can be said that these common points of idea are connected with general managerial competence and requirement-based learning.

However, correlation was not found between technical/functional competence (professional orientation) and learning belief. This is because technical/functional competence has neither requirement-based learning belief nor volunteer-driven learning belief but has a different learning belief. Therefore, working hypothesis 1-1 was partially supported.

Working hypothesis 1-2 was 'Career orientation and learning belief affect WPL positive'. As shown in result 3-2, technical/functional competence (professional orientation) affected WPL positive ($\beta=.305$), requirement-based learning belief affected WPL positive ($\beta=.175$), and volunteer-driven learning belief affected WPL positive ($\beta=.175$).

General managerial competence (managerial orientation) did not affect WPL positive. In career orientation, professional orientation was more effective than managerial orientation to WPL motivation and learning belief; each of them affected WPL motivation to almost the same degree. Requirement-based learning belief was 'passive' and volunteer-driven learning belief was 'active'. Of course, passive and active were different, but both concepts of belief had a common idea, that is 'should learn'. Therefore, whichever belief employees had, they tried to learn positively to engage with WPL.

Career orientation has a different effect to actual learning activity as WPL positive, but learning belief had no different effect to WPL positive. Consequently, working hypothesis 1-2 was not supported.

Working hypothesis 1-3 was 'WPL motivation affects intrinsic work motivation'. As shown in result 3-3, WPL motivation affected intrinsic work motivation ($\beta=.484$). WPL motivation had no influence on extrinsic work motivation. Therefore, building the workplace climate and situation is important for employees' engagement in and enjoyment of WPL. Building the workplace climate and situation leads to employee's intrinsic work motivation, because WPL positive did not affect WPL positive extrinsic motivation.

Working hypothesis 2-1 was '...intrinsic work motivation has a high influence on affective commitment'. As shown in result 4-1, intrinsic work motivation affected affective commitment ($\beta=.499$) and normative commitment ($\beta=.421$). Volunteer-driven learning belief did not affect organisational commitment. Therefore, it is important to increase intrinsic work motivation. And intrinsic motivation did not affect continuance commitment. This was because continuance commitment referred to the employee's awareness that costs were associated with leaving the organisation. Therefore it did not relate to intrinsic work motivation. Working hypothesis 2-1 was supported because intrinsic motivation affected affective commitment. However, it was found that intrinsic work motivation also affects normative commitment.

Working hypothesis 2-2 was 'Organisational commitment, especially affective commitment by employees with a professional orientation, allows increased intention of tenure'. The relation-

ship between organisational commitment and tenure was also tested. As shown in result 4-2, affective commitment affected intention of tenure ($\beta=.489$), continuance commitment also affected intention of tenure ($\beta=.202$), but normative commitment did not affect tenure. Normative commitment referred to an employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation. Thus, an employee with a strong normative commitment would remain with an organisation by virtue of their belief that it was the 'right and moral' thing to do (Meyer & Allen, 1991). From result 4-2, this 'right and moral' did not very much affect the employee's intention of tenure.

Continuance commitment also affected tenure. However, employees who had a strong continuance commitment to an organisation stayed with the organisation because they had to do so. Therefore, increasing affective commitment relates to the employee's desired tenure. As a result, professional orientation promoted positive learning motivation and positive workplace learning motivation promoted intrinsic work motivation. Then intrinsic work motivation also promoted affective commitment, and influenced to tenure. While managerial orientation was related to requirement-based learning belief and extrinsic motivation. It would be considered that managerial orientation had no direct relation to a relationship between organisational commitments. However managerial orientation had no direct relation to voluntary-driven belief and intrinsic motivation. Nevertheless, managerial orientation in the Japanese context, where it is commonly defined as (exclusive) in-group orientation, might increase the dependency of employees on their organisation.

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Annette Ostendorf

Informal workplace ‘educators’: The hidden protagonists of workplace learning

Formal and informal workplace learning are currently under intensive investigation. The new SAGE Handbook on Workplace Learning (Malloch et al., 2011) produces evidence on this. For a researcher in business education, not only learning processes at and within the worksite are of specific interest but also the other side of educational phenomena – the facilitation processes. There is quite a considerable amount of research and knowledge on formal workplace educators such as trainers. The particular focus in this paper is on informal workplace educators or the hidden protagonists of workplace learning. There is only rather weak empirical evidence on their role taking and making, task interpretation, preparation or attitudes.

In this paper a grid for the classification of workplace learning facilitators is developed. Against the background of this grid the specific case of the internship advisor as a type of workplace learning facilitator is investigated and discussed in more detail. The results of a qualitative case study conducted in a medium-sized Austrian company in summer 2010 are presented and discussed.

Introduction

Geert Biesta (2006, pp. 13ff., 2010, pp. 15ff.) recently critically analysed in his seminal work the so-called ‘learnification syndrome’ in educational sciences. He identified a semantic change in education, a “new language of learning” (Biesta 2010, p. 17). It is obvious that there is a shift from ‘teaching’ to ‘facilitation of learning’, from ‘student/pupil’ to ‘learner’, from ‘permanent education’ to ‘lifelong learning’, and so on, in practical and academic contexts. Constructivist learning theories, the post-modern critique that exposes the belief on control over educational processes, the enhancement of informal learning and the idea of the learner’s responsibility for their learning process supported by neoliberal policies – are all supposed to contribute to the so-called learnification syndrome. The power of language should not be underestimated. Talking about education as (only or predominantly) learning, and hence as a process phenomenon, often excludes other educational elements – such as teaching, the relationship between individuals, of content and aims – from our thinking. ‘Education’ is derived from the Latin word ‘educere’, which means to conduct somebody to a higher level of knowledge and agency. This process has something to do with activity, with targets, with involvement of more experienced persons, with supportive environments – even though the central process is self-development and self-learning and cannot be replaced by other activities from outside the subject.

Keeping this in mind, the workplace learning discourse should also give attention to the other side of the coin. In particular, social relationships between novices and the worksite staff are worth being investigated in terms of their influence on work-related learning and development (see also the contribution of Cohen-Scali, Lallemand and Vignoli in this volume). It has been shown that relationships between newcomers and more experienced people at the worksite are a primary source of knowledge development and successful participation in a community of practice (Gherardi, 2006, pp. 88–90).

In this paper, it is precisely this relationship that is more deeply investigated in a typical arrangement where young people are introduced into the world of work – in business internships. Business internships are, on the one hand, for many employees the first contact with a firm and often a sort of entrance ticket. On the other hand, internships anchored in vocational school curricula are seen to fill the gap between academic knowledge and practice or to foster key skills.

There is currently a lively discussion in Austria on internships in medium and higher vocational business-related schools brought on by the implementation of new curricula. A central issue hereby is quality assurance of internships (Ammann & Thoma, 2011; Ostendorf, 2008; Ostendorf & Ammann, 2010). These discussions can be seen as a part of the broader debate on ‘connectivity’ dealing with the integration of work and learning (Tynjälä, 2009).

Classification of workplace learning facilitators

So far, Stephen Billett (2001) has most clearly shown the relationship between learning and guidance in the context of workplace learning in his work. He developed a curriculum for the workplace where *guided learning* is the core element. The guide is an experienced person who has the important task of accompanying a novice on their way from peripheral to full participation in communities of practice (in the sense of Lave & Wenger, 1991, see Billett, 2001, pp. 105f.).

Guidance can take place in an indirect or a direct manner. Direct guidance is characterised by close interpersonal interaction between expert and novice, while indirect guidance encompasses observation and listening (Billett, 2004, p. 114). The guide is described as task oriented, characterised by their expert status with intrinsic motivation to share knowledge and supervising functions.

But as Illeris (2011, p. 90ff.) shows, there are also other agents of workplace learning. He additionally mentions ‘mentors’, ‘coaches’, ‘ambassadors, super-users and gardeners’ and ‘consultants’.

In addition to Illeris’ list of supporting persons and roles, one can also add others, known in different educational settings as ‘facilitators’ (particularly framed by a constructivist view of learning, and also used in organisational development issues), ‘scaffolders’ (in a Vygotskian

sense), ‘teachers’, ‘instructors’, ‘carers’, ‘custodians’, ‘persons in charge’, ‘counsellors’, ‘tutors’, ‘assistants’ or ‘advisors’.

A particular set of attributes and role descriptions is connected to all sorts of wording. First and foremost, the differentiation is linked to their positioning between two categories:

- On the one hand, they can be seen as a sort of knowledge transmitter, focusing on the cognitive dimension of the learning process, particularly with regard to the content of the work.
- On the other hand, they meet the needs of novices to become part of a new community of practice. They facilitate social learning and community involvement.

This description of the two categories is quite extreme. In reality both are necessary to some extent – knowledge transfer *and* social integration. Therefore both categories do not exclude each other and there has to be a reasonable mixture for workplace learning facilitation.

In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report *Learning for Jobs* (Fields, Hoeckel, Kis & Kuczera, 2010), a whole chapter is devoted to ‘effective teachers and trainers’. They are seen as a critical factor for effective learning in vocational programmes. It is explicitly stressed that “supervisors of trainees and apprentices in workplaces need relevant preparation, particularly to carry out their pedagogical role” (Fields et al., 2010, p. 91).

Although the authors of the OECD report are aware of the existence of formal and informal education processes, the report itself focuses exclusively on formal vocational trainers and teachers. They are seen to be the responsible actors, but that is only true in some respects. In the German or Austrian dual system of vocational training, for example, there is, particularly in the in-company phases of apprenticeships, a plurality of educational tasks in the hands of people not responsible in an official sense for the trainee. There are clerks or craftsmen supervising apprentices during a specific period of time at or near to their workplaces covering a considerable part of educational work. In German they are called ‘nebenberufliche Ausbilder’, which could perhaps (crudely) be translated as ‘part-time trainers’.

Although they do not usually have any special training for guiding apprentices, they often have long experience in supervising novices in the workplace. They can be described as the *hidden protagonists of workplace learning*, a type of informal teachers or facilitators.

In official documents, as well as in research on vocational education, they do not receive much recognition, but can they really be described as acting totally informally? In reality probably both characteristics – formal and informal – can only be found in combination. Every formal acting trainer/teacher has some informal aspects in their work – in the school-linked literature, this is known as ‘pedagogical freedom’. Furthermore, every informal actor has some formal guidelines and official functions to fulfil. Consequently, that category too can be interpreted in terms of degree and not exclusively as a standalone feature.

Due to these two dimensions, in order to characterise workplace facilitators in more detail, we can produce a classification grid as shown in Figure 1.

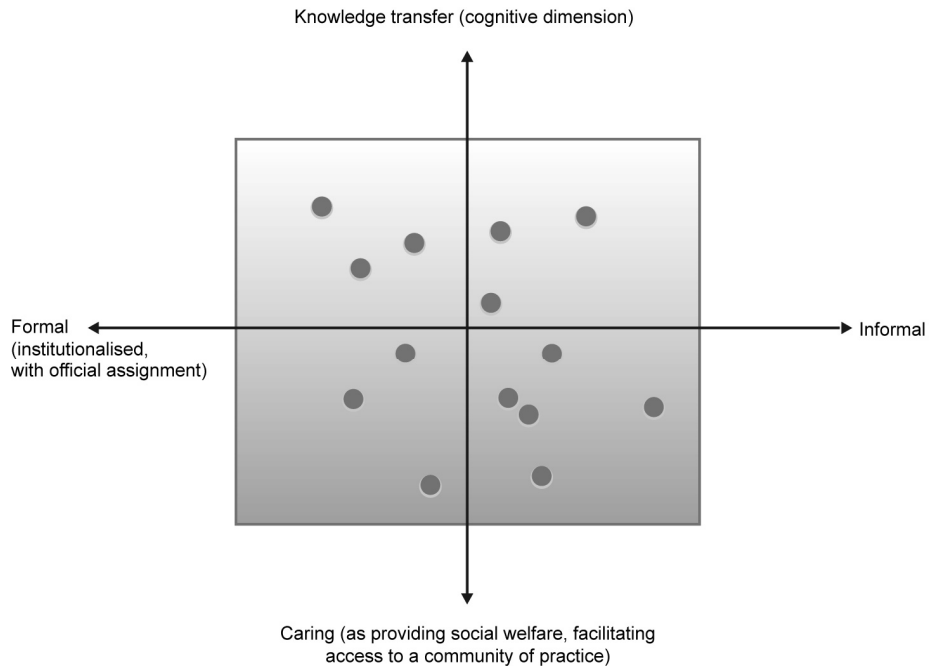


Figure 1: Grid for classification of workplace learning facilitators

The square illustrates that extreme positions are not considered feasible. The single points express the undefined bulk of positioning in that square representing a bundle of characteristics.

For the workplace learning discourse, it is regrettable that there is a remarkable lack of empirical data concerning workplace learning facilitators. We do not know much about their role interpretation, attitudes, conditions for quality supervision and guidance among other things.

The following case study may open a small viewing slot to their living world and identify their special role and meaning for the facilitation of workplace learning.

The case study: Business internship advisers as an example for workplace learning facilitators

In the case study, the focus will especially be on the workplace advisors of business internships. This group of ‘educators’ can be considered as hidden ones. There is not much transparency on their involvement in workplace education processes. Empirical evidence on their tasks, roles, attitudes and behaviour is rather weak. Quality criteria exist only in some legal acts for a small number of school types (as, for example, in the regulation for practical studies of the ‘Fachoberschule’ in Bavaria, Germany, see ISB, 2000). Given that, particularly in full-time vocational schools, business internships are often part of the curricula, we do not really know much about the care and guidance of pupils over a considerable period of time. This may lead us to investigate structures and conditions for high quality in business internships more intensively.

Business internships as a type of experiential learning setting are supposed to foster students’ abilities to connect theoretical and practical knowledge, to support their personal and emotional development and to help them find the right career path. There are many hints that they do so but we also have to face that these outcomes – highly desirable from an educational perspective – are not guaranteed or in any sense achieved automatically.

This may lead us to investigate structures and conditions for high quality in business internships more intensively. The construct ‘quality’ in this context should be properly judged not only in terms of educational aims (as opportunities for personal development and learning) but also in terms of contributions to economic achievement.

That focus also depends on the precise definition of internships. In our interpretation one attribute of internships is that they combine learning as well as working situations. If only one of these processes is exclusively stressed, it cannot be called an internship any longer – in that case it would simply be called ‘work’ or ‘schooling’. A second attribute of internships is the existence of a sort of didactic framework. That means that there has to be a minimum of planning concerning learning outputs, work-related aims, processes, advisers and workplace conditions. Following Lave and Wenger's (1991) analytical perspective of situated learning, an internship is a form of peripheral but legitimate participation in a community of practice (see in detail Ostendorf, 2007).

Methodology and methods

In the face of a lack of theories and empirical data on business internship advisory practices, a qualitative empirical case study was conducted in summer 2010 in a medium-sized Austrian company in the public sector. It is important to mention that the company provides public services, because it makes the case to some extent special and provides an ideal set of circumstances. Companies in the public sector have to function according to an economic logic but they are also responsible for fulfilling societal interests. In Austria and Germany this also arises

from the special constraints of a social market economy. Therefore, public firms have a special social responsibility, which manifests, for example, in a special interest in and commitment to youth care (for example offering internships and apprenticeship opportunities).

Many types of case studies are described in the literature (see, for example, Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2010, p. 255), however our case study is more exploratory in nature. The main aim is to generate hypotheses and provide some suggestions for theory building. In the classification of Stake (2005, p. 445), the investigation was designed as an instrumental case study. This means that the special case was investigated mainly to facilitate understanding of the issue and for (limited) generalisation purposes. The present case study is one component in a broader project on business internships funded by the Tyrolean Science Fund (2009–11) at the University of Innsbruck.

An interpretative approach seems to best meet the research goals. Business internships are very different depending on the type of business field, the company’s size and location, and its cultural context, including the educational system. Therefore comparison between different internships is difficult.

The company under investigation has approximately 500 employees and provides a total of 48 internships (data from 2009) for pupils and students of higher educational institutions in technical, administration or service fields. The company offers internships with a duration from one week to two months. The company has a long tradition in offering apprenticeships within the dual vocational system in Austria. It has equally won prizes for its dedication to apprenticeship programmes. Currently around 16 apprentices are undergoing training at the company in technical and business vocations.

Besides the document analysis and some effort to summarise the company’s background, four semi-structured qualitative interviews were administered at the firm. Criteria for the selection of interview partners (two male and two female, in the following positions: customer services, marketing, purchasing, technician) were on the one hand their direct responsibility for the intern and on the other hand their long-term experience in counselling interns. One participant was also the coordinator for apprentices. He was asked because he has a good overview, particularly of the tasks of other internship advisors. All were questioned as experts on their working environment. With these four individuals the most relevant protagonists of internship advisory practice in the focused company have been covered.

The interviews were transcribed and analysed using a qualitative content analysis.

Findings

Perception of workload. When the adviser’s commitment to young people is highly valued by the leaders, the additional and voluntary work as an adviser is not considered a significant burden. But that also depends on the character of the intern. Good perception, self-

reliance and secondary virtues such as accuracy, diligence and a minimum of motivation are expected.

Experiences and qualification. There is a close nexus between experiences in trainee supervision within the Austrian dual vocational system and their ability to deal with interns. Amazingly, they refused more or less an organisational link between the two types of learners' – apprentices and interns – within the company. Apprentices and interns sometimes share the same advisors but there was no interest in coordination of the peer learners.

Personal attributes of internship advisors. In the eyes of the internship advisors, one of the most relevant personal attributes of an adviser should be their identification with the work and the company. That is considered an indispensable attribute for facilitating interns' participation in the world of work. A further important and necessary attribute of internship advisors is the ability to deal with young people. Very important for the successful work as an adviser is an appreciative and respectful attitude towards the interns.

Advisers network and support. There is no link between schools, teachers and the advisers. Even though there is a strong wish for cooperation, nobody cares about an initiative in that direction. Internship advisors do not receive any support regarding the design of educational situations. Didactic support in the task arrangements provided by the teachers for the interns would be seen as very helpful and not as constricting. Procedures for apprentices within the dual system are often used for orientation in internship advisory practice. Finding tasks for interns in daily business is sometimes a huge challenge for advisers. Support for this would be warmly welcomed.

Prior knowledge and knowledge transfer tasks. Internship advisors do not expect specialised prior knowledge of their interns, only the most basic knowledge on business. More important are basic IT skills and good language skills in their mother tongue (here, German). Connections to academic programmes are only seen for long-term or repeated internships and also for that particular group of interns in a loose manner.

Workplace conditions. The ideal workplace for interns is near to the adviser's desk to foster communication, support and control. There is a tendency towards formalisation noticeable in reporting procedures, certification and organised exchange opportunities for advisers. Nevertheless, the individuals questioned seem to fend for themselves and benefit from their own experiences with interns.

Discussion

Coming back to the grid in Figure 1 in this paper, business internship advisers seem to belong to the informal (weak value) and caring (medium value) sectors. The two dimensions of the grid formal – informal and knowledge transfer – caring can also be used to interpret the findings of the case study above. Business internship advisory practice is informal but also includes some formal aspects. Internship advisors have a kind of assignment to care for the intern and

they undertake this as part of their job – however, without a specific job description. There are tendencies recognised indicating a wish for more formalisation in terms of cooperation with responsible persons from educational institutions, support in task finding and formal attention.

In the dimension knowledge transfer and caring, clear emphasis is set on caring in the sense of social integration in a community of practice. Interns are not required to bring knowledge to their workplace and there is no attitude of expectation that specialised knowledge gained in schools should be applied in workplaces. That point is interesting because business internships are strongly discussed in the Austrian school community in terms of their strengths in combining theoretical and practical settings of education. They are regarded as a powerful tool to improve the weakness of medium and higher vocational schools (outside the dual system) in offering direct business experiences and opportunities for knowledge transfer into the practical field and vice versa. The relatively weak positioning of internship advisers as knowledge transmitters and the low expectations related to the interns’ prior knowledge in workplaces make claims of knowledge development more in terms of social learning feasible.

We found out that there is also a lack of ‘sense making’ on the positioning and design of business internships between companies and schools. Discussions often focus only on the role of teachers in accompanying their students’ internships. Less strong attention is given to the ‘other side of teaching’ – the advisers. Our paper therefore brings the view of in-company advisers more to the foreground and may open opportunities for the design of high-quality cooperation in that field.

Informal workplace educators seem to be important actors in learning environments. However, there are also other actors influencing the learning and facilitation process. In particular, the expansion of IT tools also plays an important role in workplace learning facilitation. Evans and Kersh (in this volume) explain their function and meaning within learning spaces in more detail. Human actors seem to be important players in the workplace education processes but they are not the only ones. The theoretical work of Bruno Latour (2005), in particular, may bring our discourse on workplace learning here some further spirit. Actor-network-theory (ANT) stresses that non-humans can also be actors in social networks. So, human and non-human actors may be of interest for future workplace learning research, bringing the other side of the coin – mentioned in the Introduction – more into the spotlight and thereby contributing to a holistic view on workplace learning.

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The role of the relationship with the company tutor on the perception of stress and the career commitment of young people in alternating training

The apprenticeship is a training scenario that has been strongly developed in France over the last 15 years, particularly in higher education. The young adults following an apprenticeship scheme have a work contract and prepare for their diploma by alternating between 15 days in an apprentice training centre and 15 days in a company. In the company, they are supervised and trained by a tutor. Since 2008, companies have become increasingly sensitive to employees' psychological working conditions and especially to employees' level of stress (Nasse & Legeron, 2008). Several studies have shown the noxious effects of stress on physical and mental health (Schwartz, Pieper & Karasek, 1988; Van der Doef & Maes, 1999). However, emotional factors and stress have rarely been studied among populations of young people who work while studying. Nevertheless, they are subject to the same kind of working conditions as other employees. These work experiences have been identified as playing an important role in the perception of the vocational future (Cohen-Scali, 2010). The objective of this study is to identify the role of two factors connected with the emotions: perceived stress and quality of the relationship with the tutor, who influences the vocational future, the prospects and particularly the career commitment of the young trainees. Some 300 apprentices from the accounting sector were asked to answer a questionnaire. The results of the analyses confirm the major impact of these two variables on the young people's perception of their vocational future.

Introduction

In France, over the last 30 years, many training programmes within the framework of a dual system (generally called 'alternating training' or 'apprenticeships') have been developed. These kinds of training programmes have existed for a long time at lower levels of qualification (lower than A Levels or *Baccalaureat*). At these lower levels, adolescents are employed in small craft organisations, where they have a close relationship with their tutor. However, over the last 15 years, governments have financed increasingly the development of dual system training programs in higher education (Proglia, 2009). Since 1992, the number of individuals preparing for a higher education diploma through alternating training has multiplied seven-fold.¹ Two main types of work contracts can be signed with an enterprise by young people under the age of 26 in alternating training in France: 'apprenticeship contracts' and 'profes-

¹ Synthesis from the data related to the evolution of the number of apprenticeship contracts between 1992 and 2009 on the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity website: <http://www.travail-emploi-sante.gouv.fr/etudes-recherche-statistiques>.

sionalization contracts' (Arrighi & Mora, 2010). The objectives defined by the French government are ambitious: 800,000 young people are expected to enter alternating training in 2015.² Already it is possible, and it will become more common in the future, to obtain Bachelor or Master's degrees in many subjects through alternating training. From now on, numerous training centres and universities will offer these training programs that allow young people to receive a small salary and to be considered as real employees of a company. The number of girls in these alternating training programs is increasing: from 30% in 2008 to 32% in 2009, of whom 46% are in the tertiary or service sector (against 25% in industry) (Sanchez, 2011). Research studies carried out by the CEREQ³ have shown that young people who have prepared for a diploma through alternating training courses in higher education achieve professional integration in the working world more quickly and are better paid than other young people (Arrighi & Joseph, 2005). However, while these training programmes may facilitate quick integration into the world of work, 17% of the young people in alternating training leave their company before the end of their work contract. In certain French regions, such as the Nord Pas de Calais in the north of France, the drop-out rate reaches 28%. For the young people in alternating training in higher education, this rate is approximately 10%. Apparently, 32% of the young people drop out because they consider the work environment to be unsatisfactory or too difficult (Cart, ToutinTrelcat & Henguelle, 2010).

The aim of this paper is to analyse the role of a key characteristic of these alternating training programs: the tutor in the enterprise. To what extent do positive relationships between young people and their tutor in a company play a role in the young people's management of emotions, and especially in the perception of stress and in their career commitment? This question relates to the way the actors of the company participate in the identity construction of the young people. The tutor is the employee or executive of the company appointed to supervise the vocational training of the young person. The tutor determines the tasks to be carried out in connection with the training program and liaises with the training centre where the theoretical learning takes place. They play a key role in the learning conditions in the work situation. However, alternating training in higher education is a much more recent development than that dedicated to the lower levels of education (traditionally called 'apprenticeships'). Therefore, the executives who are appointed by the companies accepting young people from higher education are still in the process of developing their tutoring skills. Hence, while tutors appear to play a central role in the transmission of knowledge and skills, their role has not been analyzed in terms of their impact on the emotions and identity construction of the trainees. Before presenting the empirical part of the research, the theoretical framework is described. It focuses mainly on the role of the social relationships within the companies on the identity construction of the young people.

² Speech by the President of the French Republic published by the daily paper *Le Figaro*, 1 March 2011.

³ Center of Studies and Researches on Qualifications, Marseille, France.

Identity construction and social relationships

A number of studies related to the symbolic interactionism framework have underlined the importance of other people in identity construction. As far back as 1902, Cooley (1902), with his famous concept ‘the looking-glass self’, suggested that our performances and attributes are shaped by the reactions of others to our behaviour. In order to answer the question “Who am I?” each individual takes into account what they think others perceive them to be. Mead (1934) and Goffman (1969) showed also that individuals define themselves using the reactions of others as information about their anticipated capacities, thus contributing to their self-regulation in the future. For Blumer (1969), individuals act towards social objects according to the meaning they attribute to them. This meaning is strongly connected with the social interactions that individuals develop, since they provide information for the analysis and interpretation of these objects. Then, the meaning of the object can be manipulated and modified. The social interactions within companies, as in any other social context, appear very important for providing frames for understanding the environment. Entering a company drives the individuals to develop new behaviours notably thanks to the relationship with others. They also play a very important role in the gradual development of the individual’s self-perception.

Nevertheless, it appears that positive relationships contribute most to identity construction. Studying the role of social interactions within companies, Roberts (2009, p. 31) defines a positive relationship as a mutual relationship with four dimensions: a mutual profit, a mutual influence, mutual expectations and a mutual understanding. To reach this reciprocity, the relationships have to be more frequent and exchanges provide more feedback. Positive relationships could make positive aspects of identity more salient and help individuals to discover the main sources of their strength, of their competences, and then add value to their work. They can be driven to perceive themselves more positively. For Roberts (2009), positive relationships favour learning and experimentation, identity change and construction, and positive feelings. Individuals who are involved in positive relationships would be less focused on self-preservation, on self-defence strategies, and on self-valuing than those who have more unsatisfactory relationships. Then, the development of the identity would favour, in return, the development of positive relationships.

The organisational socialisation and the tutoring

The relationships occurring within a company in an alternating training framework appear as a set of more or less formalised practices intended to contribute to organisational socialisation. Organisational socialisation has been defined by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) as a process by which the organisation teaches an individual the threads of an organisational role. Doing so, the new employee acquires social knowledge and skills to fulfil their professional role. To acquire this learning, the individual develops relationships with other members of the company, with the aim of the collecting information (Morrison, 1993) about the tasks to be carried out, the professional role, the organisational culture, and the social norms in the work teams.

Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2005) explain that organisational socialisation is developed both through contact with peers and supervisors and by social learning. Indeed, developing relationships with the other members of the organisation decreases the uncertainty that new employees feel (Kim, Cable & Kim, 2005). In the framework of alternating training programmes, young people have a favoured relationship with their company tutor. As Delobbe, Herrbach, Lacaze and Mignonac (2005) suggested, tutoring can be defined as a working relationship between a young person and a more experienced employee in charge of their adaptation to the job and their career development. Tutoring practices have given rise to numerous studies in the field of educational sciences (Gérard, 1997; Ardouin, 1997). A Leonardo da Vinci European study (Gérard, Steiner, Zettelmeier & Lauterbach, 1998) which took place from 1995 to 1997, highlighted the professional profiles and the tutoring practices in four European countries. The results of this study show that tutors have an increasingly important place in companies. However, the practices of tutoring differ a great deal from country to country. They range from strongly formalised (in Germany and Austria) to rather informal practices (in Spain), with France being in an intermediate position. In Germany, the tutor is a trainer with a recognised qualification and an educational vocational certificate in the field of tutoring. Comparative studies undertaken in this research show that the professional activities of the tutors in these different countries can be assigned to three main fields: pedagogy, management, and socialisation. From the *pedagogical* point of view, the tutor defines the objectives of training and translates them into learning activities in working situations realised in the company. As well as organising the learning activities at work, they also control and assess the acquired knowledge. Tutoring acquires a *management* function in its supervision of the in-company training. Tutors have to plan every step of the training at work, managing and coordinating the relationships in the company between the services or persons who participate in the training of the young people. They have to distribute the tasks between the learners and lead a working team. Tutors also play a role in the young people's *socialisation*: they are responsible for supporting the young newcomers in learning the current behavioural standards of the firm. They clarify the rules of the collective life in the occupational environment and introduce the young people to their status of new employee.

Despite these empirical studies, the tutor function has not given rise to real theorising in the (at least French) literature. In order to approach this function on a more theoretical level, the Anglo-Saxon literature on mentoring appeared very enlightening. Mentoring can be considered as a function close to that of the tutor. Mentoring is defined as "an intense relational work between members of an organisation, a senior (mentor) and a junior (protégé)" (Chao et al., 1992, p. 622). This relationship was conceptualised by Kram (1983) based on Erickson's (1972) model of identity development. Kram (1983) designed a model with four phases of the mentoring relationship, which demonstrates the psychological and organisational factors and explains the transition from one phase to the other.

The maximal duration of the relationship is five years, and four phases appear systematically throughout most of the mentoring relationship:

- *The initiation:* The senior partner is recognised and admired for their skills, and the young person begins to feel supported.
- *The development:* The expectations appearing during the first phase are constantly tested in reality, and each partner goes on discovering the value of the other one.
- *The separation:* The relationship evolves. The young person experiments with their new independence and autonomy. The emotional separation allows the young person to test their capacity to work without support and advice.
- *The redefinition:* The relationship evolves to become friendly.

Finally, Kram (1985) identified two complementary functions existing in mentoring practices:

- A function of career development (sponsoring, coaching, protection, challenge to be overcome, creation of opportunities of learning and development)
- A function of psychosocial support (role modelling, counselling, empathy, friendship).

After this short overview of the literature on identity, tutoring and mentoring, the next section is dedicated to the presentation of the main hypothesis and methodology of the research.

Position of the problem, hypothesis, and methodology

Position of the problem

The research presented in this paper aims to contribute to the definition of the main components of the professional identity construction of young people during their first periods of integration in an enterprise. The objective in this research is to analyse the role of the social relationships within the company and particularly that of the tutor in alternating training programmes. This role is analysed regarding two main dimensions for identity construction: the perceived stress in the enterprise, and the career commitment. The management of emotions and particularly of stress in a company is the first dependent variable taken into account. Stress in the workplace is a key issue for the evaluation of the working conditions and the work environment and their propensity to support workplace learning. Some studies by the French National Institute for Research and Security have shown that stress at work involves physical, emotional and intellectual consequences. Some 28% of European employees complain about health problems connected with stress at work (INRS, 2003). A strong perceived level of stress is linked with a greater turnover of employees (Riolfi & Savicki, 2006; Fried, Shirom, Gilboa & Cooper, 2008) and with a weak satisfaction at work (Mansell, Brough & Cole, 2006; Grawitch, Tares & Kohler, 2007), and a weak feeling of well-being (Edwards, Cokerton & Guppy, 2007). Other studies have explored the effects of mentoring practices on stress. Baugh, Lankau and Scandura (1996) have shown that mentoring practices are negatively connected with stress. In the same way, Kram and Hall (1991) have established that mentoring practices could contribute to a decrease in the perceived level of stress during organisational changes

(quoted by Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007, p. 79). Mentoring practices for supporting the young people would be effective in decreasing stress (Strazdins & Broom, 2007).

The second key dependent variable concerns a more cognitive dimension of the identity construction related to the intention to remain, in the future, in the chosen professional field and occupation. Having a mentor is associated with higher salaries and more promotions for the protégés compared with those who do not have a mentor (Fagenson, 1989; Dreher & Ash, 1990). Young people benefiting from a mentor report stronger job satisfaction and lower intention to leave the company (Scandura & Viator, 1994). Nevertheless, negative experiences of mentoring are associated with stress, intention to leave the firm, and dissatisfaction (Eby & Allen, 2002). Mentoring reduces turnover intentions, contributes to the emergence of a feeling of power among the protégés, and favours their promotion. For the mentors, these practices are associated with social recognition, a sense of personal success, satisfaction and higher salaries (Allen, Lentz & Day, 2006). The reactions to mentorship vary according to the gender of the mentor and that of the protégé (Young, Cady & Foxon, 2006). While Ragins and Scandura (1994) showed no difference between female and male mentors, regarding the perception of their experience of mentorship or the costs and benefits connected with the mentoring practices, Ragins and Cotton (1995) highlighted that the young people supported by a male mentor tended to have more professional advantages (promotion, salary, responsibility) than those supported by a female mentor. This difference could be explained by the fact that male mentors usually have better professional positions than female mentors and thus can allow their protégés to benefit from them.

Allen and Eby (2004) found that female mentors provide more psychosocial support to protégés and male mentors provide more career support. Concerning the gender of the protégés, Noe (1988) has shown that female protégés use mentoring relationships more effectively than males protégés in terms of time spent with the mentors. Moreover, female protégés report consistently more psychosocial support than male protégés (O'Brien, Biga, Kessler & Allen, 2010). Other studies suggest that the benefits of mentoring, for the protégés, vary regarding the organisational context. In male-dominated industries, female professionals with a senior male mentor had the highest return on compensation and career progress satisfaction (Ramaswami, Dreher, Bretz & Wiethoff, 2010).

The main variables of the research described in this paper are featured below (Figure 1).

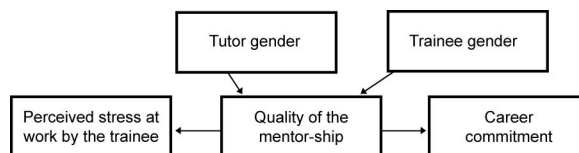


Figure 1: The main variables of the research

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated in connection with the theoretical approaches and the results of past studies:

- Hypothesis 1: The more the relationship with the tutor is perceived as positive (independent variable, IV) by the trainees, the less the trainees will perceive stress at the workplace (dependent variable, DV).
- Hypothesis 2: The more the relationship with the tutor is perceived as positive (IV) by the trainees, the more the trainees will be committed to their career (DV).
- Hypothesis 3: Relationships with male tutors are perceived more positively by the trainees than relationships with female tutors.

A quantitative study on a population of trainees in alternating training programmes in higher education was undertaken.

Population

The data was collected in a training centre in accounting, near Paris, France. A total of 300 young people in alternating training programmes answered a questionnaire. Among them, 252 were preparing for a two-year technical degree (49% in the first year and 51% in the second year of training) and 48 were preparing for a vocational high school diploma in the field of accounting. Each trainee had a tutor in a company to supervise their training in the workplace. Female trainees were higher ($N = 206$ or 69%) than trainee males ($N = 94$ or 31%). The average age was 21 years old. This population comprised three groups of trainees who had been involved in alternating training programmes for one to three years. Of those following the two-year diploma, 64% had a vocational high school diploma, and 24% a technical high school diploma. Only 12% had a general academic high school diploma. This distribution shows that most of the trainees interviewed had difficulties at school that prevented them from following the most valued training in France: the general academic path. The alternating training appears to be a pathway that is less frequently chosen by young people who have good school results. Among this population, 21% had already experienced a breach of contract with a company during their training: 40% of them made this break by mutual agreement with the company, 38% made it on their own initiative, and in 22% of cases it had been on the initiative of the company.

All these trainees were following courses in the training centre and were being trained part-time in a company. The companies in charge of learning at the workplace were very diverse, since accounting activities concern small as well as big firms, in different economic fields. Some 40% of the trainees were in small firms (fewer than 10 employees), 25% were in medium-sized firms (10 to 50 employees) and 21% of the young people were in bigger companies. Of the tutors 57% were females and 43% were males, 10% of them were under 30 years

old, and 63% of them had at least a Bachelor degree. A set of instruments were utilised to construct the questionnaire.

Measures

Self-perception. The Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) (Reifman, Arnett & Colwell, 2007) was utilised for assessing the self-perception of the trainees. This inventory comprises six dimensions related to the level of identity construction of the young adults: identity exploration, experimentation/possibilities, negativity/instability, other-focused, self-focused, feeling ‘in between’.

Stress. The Working Conditions and Control Questionnaire (WOCCQ) is a method of collective diagnosis of stress at the workplace. It was used to assess the perceived stress by the young people in their company (Organisational and Work Psychology, University of Liège, 2005). Stress in the work context is defined according to the answer of the worker regarding the requirements of a situation they have to face and for which they are doubtful about obtaining the necessary resources (De Keyser & Hansez, 1996). Accordingly, stress is a subjective phenomenon depending on how the worker evaluates the constraints of their work environment. The perceived stress is strongly connected with the feeling of control that the worker has over their work environment. The questionnaire was composed of a double scale of 19 items aiming to evaluate the level of positive perceived stress (situation involving a positive stimulation) and the level of negative perceived stress (situation involving a negative stimulation) with a four-point Likert scale.

Career commitment. Career commitment was studied with the help of an inventory of eight items with a five-point Likert scale. This concept has been defined by Blau (1985) as an attitude towards an occupation or a profession comprising three dimensions: the direction of the career, the professional commitment, and the commitment in a specific occupation. In addition, one question was utilized – ‘What would you say of your professional plans?’ – with three possible answers: ‘I’ve got no professional plan’, ‘I’ve got a vague professional plan’, ‘I’ve got a precise professional plan’.

Relationship with the tutor. The relationship with the tutor was analysed utilising the Scandura and Ragins (1993) 15 item-inventory allowing an evaluation of the quality of mentoring relationships. This inventory was built on the basis of Kram’s model (1983) and comprises three dimensions: career development, psychosocial support, and role modelling. The words ‘mentoring’ or ‘mentors’ were replaced by ‘tutoring’ and ‘tutors’.

Results

Specific results related to each measure

Relationship with the tutor. A factor analysis was carried out in order to discover whether the three dimensions of mentoring that Scandura and Ragins (1993) identified in their

studies could be found in this survey. This analysis revealed a pattern, with two factors accounting for 99.9% of the total variance: a factor related to career development and a factor related to psychosocial support, consistent with Kram's work (1985). The first factor, career development (explaining 25.7% of the variance), includes items such as: 'My tutor spends time to allow me to assimilate the job', 'My tutor helps me to reach my objectives', and 'My tutor is interested in my professional evolution'. The second factor, psychosocial support (explaining 21.4% of the variance), includes items such as: 'I sometimes confide in my tutor', 'I sometimes discuss personal problems with my tutor', and 'I consider my tutor as a friend'. The internal coherence of the measure was excellent (alpha of Cronbach = 0.88), except for one item (number 8) that weakly correlated with the whole (0.16), which was deleted before the rotated factor analysis.

Self-perception. Concerning self-perception, a factor analysis was carried out utilising the IDEA, but the original six factor-structure identified by the authors (Reifman et al., 2007) could not be found. Three main factors were found explaining more than 78.4% of the variance. The first factor (38.1% of the variance) has been labelled *uncertainty*. It groups together items expressing anxiety among the young people such as 'I feel that I am living a period of uncertainty', 'I feel a lot of anxiety', 'I am living a confused and a stressful period', and 'I have a feeling of dissatisfaction'. The second factor, *reflection on oneself* (explaining 35.1% of the variance), groups together items expressing an intense reflection of the young people about themselves and about the meaning they give to their lives. The items are 'I feel sometimes being an adult and sometimes not', 'I learn to think by myself', 'I try to define my own values', and 'I look for a meaning to what I am living'. The third factor, *autonomy* (explaining 26.8% of the variance), expresses a feeling of independence and it groups together items such as 'I am living a period of independence', 'It is a period where everything seems possible', 'It is a period where I am responsible for myself', 'It is a period of self-discovery', and 'It is a period of optimism'.

Perceived stress. Two mean scores per person were calculated for the perceived negative stress and for the perceived positive stress. The two scales appear to be linked with a negative correlation (-35). This correlation shows that the more the young people feel positively stressed ('I feel very active at work', 'My job allows me to surpass myself', or 'My work fascinates me'), the less they are negatively stressed ('At work, I am tired', 'I am anxious about my professional life', or 'My job exhausts me totally'). Of the young people 13% feel a weak positive stress and a weak negative stress at the same time. Globally, the distribution of the population on both stress scales corresponds to that of the adult employees already assessed by De Keyser and Hansez (1996).

Results aiming to support the first two hypotheses

Means, standard deviations and correlations for the main variables are found in Table 1. The first hypothesis was: The more the relationship with the tutor is perceived as positive (IV) by the trainees, the less the trainees will perceive stress at the workplace (DV). The results con-

firm this hypothesis. A significant positive correlation between the career development dimension of the relationship with the tutor and the positive perceived stress (+.30) can be observed. A significant negative correlation appears between this dimension and the negative perceived stress (-.36). Hence, career development appears as a key dimension of the tutorship for the management of stress at work. It allows the generation of both positive and negative stress. The psychosocial support dimension of the relationship with the tutor is positively related to positive stress (+.29) but not with negative stress.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations and correlations of studied variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Career commitment	15.75	4.59	—						
2. Negative perceived stress	50.00	9.92	-0.37***	—					
3. Positive perceived stress	50.00	9.93	0.43***	0.35***	—				
4. Uncertainty	0.02	0.93	-0.33***	0.55***	-0.38***	—			
5. Self-reflexion	0.00	0.92	0.02	0.09	0.01	0.21*	—		
6. Autonomy	0.03	0.87	0.12	0.002	0.20	0.06	0.60***	—	
7. Career development	0.00	0.94	0.36***	-0.36***	0.39***	-0.28***	0.12	0.16	—
8. Psychosocial support	0.00	0.94	0.16	-0.13	0.29***	-0.11	-0.03	0.03	0.64***

*** $p < 0.0001$

The second hypothesis was: The more the relationship with the tutor is perceived as positive (IV) by the trainees, the more the trainees will be committed to their career (DV). Several results tend to confirm this. The career development dimension of the relationship with the tutor has a significant positive correlation with the career commitment dimension (+.36). This career development has a positive significant correlation with the item 'having precise professional plans' (+.33). On the other hand, the psychosocial support dimension of the relationship with the tutor is not correlated with career commitment or the professional plans. Besides, the young people who 'have a precise professional plan' are significantly more committed to their career than those who have either a 'vague' or 'no' professional plan ($F(2, 291) = 8.84, p < .01$).

Finally, the third hypothesis was: Relationships with male tutors are perceived more positively by the trainees than relationships with female tutors. The results tend to invalidate this. Concerning the career development dimension, men and women are not assessed differently ($t(273) = 1.74$, $p = ns$). However, male tutors and female tutors are assessed differently on the psychosocial support dimension: women are perceived more positively than men ($t(273) = 2.53$, $p < .05$) (Table 2).

Table 2

Trainees' perception of the career development and psychosocial support dimensions of the relationships according to the gender of the tutor

	Male tutors N = 119		Female tutors N = 156		Df	T	P
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Career development dimension	-0.12	0.94	0.08	0.93	273	-1.74	Ns
Psychosocial support dimension	-0.17	0.86	0.11	0.96	273	-2.53	$p < 0.05$

Consequently, in the accounting field, men are not perceived as more supportive than women from a career development point of view.

However, the gender of the trainees does affect the evaluations they make of their tutor: boys and girls behave differently. Female tutors are assessed more positively by girls on the psychosocial support dimension of the relationships than by boys ($t(190) = 2.12$, $p < 0.05$). Male tutors are perceived in the same way by both genders ($t(81) = -1.12$, $p = ns$) (Table 3).

Table 3

Evaluation by female and male trainees of the psychosocial support dimension of the relationships with their tutor according to the gender of the tutor

	Male tutors			Female tutors			DF	T	
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Males	45	-0.19	0.81	38	0.016	0.93	81	-1.12	ns
Females	74	-0.15	0.89	118	0.14	0.98	190	-2.12	$p < 0.05$

Finally, concerning the perceived stress, the female tutors appear significantly more related to the positive perceived stress ($t(283) = -2.32$, $p < 0.05$) than the male tutors ($t(284) = -0.37$, $p = ns$) (Table 4).

Table 4

Perception of positive and negative stress by the trainees according to the gender of the tutor

	Male tutors N = 122		Female tutors N = 163		DF	T	P
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Positive perceived stress	48.4	9.8	51.2	10.1	283	-2.32	P <0.05
Negative perceived stress	50.4	10.4	50.0	9.6	284	0.37	Ns

The third hypothesis has been invalidated since the female tutors tend to receive more positive assessment from the trainees than male tutors. Female tutors are more related to psychosocial support, especially from girls. For male trainees, female tutors provide more positive ($t(84) = -2.71$, $p < 0.05$) than negative perceived stress (Table 5).

Table 5

Perception of positive and negative perceived stress by male trainees according the gender of the tutor

	Male tutors N=44		Female tutors N=42		Ddl	T	P
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Positive perceived stress	45.59	10.29	51.72	10.30	84	-2.76	P<0.05
Negative perceived stress	49.12	10.95	48.48	9.76	85	0.29	Ns

Discussion and conclusion

This research brings to light several issues of workplace training for young adults. On one hand, these young people have to face stress in the companies where they are trained just as adult employees do. The actions aiming at the improvement of the quality of life at work thus have to take into account the young trainees even if they are present in the company only occasionally and for shorter durations. On the other hand, the research has shown that the perceived stress at the workplace is related to intentions towards the professional future, consistent with the findings of Riolli and Savicki (2006). Positive stress, induced by stimulations and challenges at work, provides incentives to commit oneself to the chosen career, whereas negative stress (associated with anxiety and ill-being) is negatively correlated with professional commitment according to the findings of Strazdins and Broom (2007). These results show that studies concerning the role of stress in the contexts of learning at the workplace should be developed, especially on populations of young adults. Besides, the research has underlined the importance of the tutor, who can either provide stress, or support the young person in self-regulation as already shown by Eby and Allen (2002). It appears very important for the tutors to develop tutoring practices focused on the career development of the trainee that link with positive stress. The tutor has to provide information on the tasks to be carried out, on the best ways to manage one's career, on the opportunities for promotion in the professional field, and on the most relevant professional choices. Therefore, the tutor can support the trainee in managing their stress and in collecting information for the development of professional plans.

The tutors seem to play their role in a slightly different way according to whether they are males or females, as also shown by Allen, Lentz and Day (2006). Females cause more positive stress in the male trainees and are perceived as providing more personal support according to the female trainees. Contrary to the observations of Ragins and Cotton (1999), male tutors are not perceived more positively than female tutors, at least in this accounting field. The modalities of female tutoring should lead to further research, because women seem to develop more effective tutoring practices than men. Nevertheless, numerous factors will have to be controlled to continue the research on the behaviour of tutors regarding their gender, such as the duration of the tutoring experience and the professional sector.

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The school: On organisational, interpersonal and individual dimensions of organisational learning

*In this paper we present some results of an intermediate stage of the research project, *Leadership in the Processes of Organisational Learning in Schools*.¹ Empirical research in primary schools was initiated during this stage. Its aim is to identify organisational learning in schools and to establish an overview of the stimuli and barriers to organisational learning. The case study was chosen as the research design of this quality-oriented stage of the project. The results of the first two case studies are discussed in detail.*

Introduction

In the past two decades or more, there have been intensive debates about the school and its development at organisational and institutional levels as a key element of change in education. This research gradually reveals the contents of the ‘black box’ and shows what happens in schools when innovations are introduced and there is (or is not) a change in the processes of education (Finnan & Levin, 2000). This stream of research has always been multi-layered and works with a variety of concepts, most often with the concept of organisational learning and that of school culture and its transformation (cf. Dalin, Rolf & Kleekamp, 1993; Hloušková, 2008; Leithwood & Louis, 1998; Pol, 2007; Pol, Hloušková, Novotný & Zounek, 2005). In agreement with many authors, we explore organisational learning as one of the main attributes of school development (cf. Dalin et al., 1993; Leithwood & Louis, 1998; Pol, 2007).

The main process of a school’s operation is to support pupils’ learning and teaching (cf. Pol et al., 2005). Therefore, dealing with organisational learning means discussing processes leading to a (positive) change in the capacity of the school to support learning and teaching, in other words to make and implement decisions about the processes of education (Verbiest, 2002). These may be (1) individual learning and development of teachers in the school context, (2) learning that takes place in small groups or teams of teachers in school and (3) learning that takes place across the organisation as a whole or involves a significant number of actors in school life. We know that the concept of organisational learning primarily treats the problems of learning at the level of organisations and their imperative parts (cf. Leithwood & Louis, 1998). Individual learning is something rather different here but we believe that not even this kind of learning can be neglected.

The aim of this paper is to examine the concept of organisational learning in schools, its basis and key points; and also to illustrate the results of the quality-oriented stage of our empirical

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research. Below we present results of the analysis of two case studies undertaken at Czech primary schools.

Organisational learning and capacity for organisational learning as the basis for the interpretation of case studies

Marsick and Watkins (1994) define organisational learning as a process of “co-ordinated systemic change with built-in mechanisms allowing individuals and groups to have access to the memory, structure and culture of the organization and be able to create and use them for the formation of long-term abilities of the organization”. Ellström (in Antonacopoulou, Jarvis, Andersen, Elkjaer & Høyrup, 2006, p. 34) distinguishes two qualitatively different forms of learning in this context, called adaptive (reproductive) and developing (creative). The mastering of a specific task belongs in adaptive learning, representing the reproduction of common situations, while the transformation of a situation and the examination of and quest for new solutions is the subject of development learning. These two forms of learning exist simultaneously but one of them is usually dominant. Organisations need to develop systematic processes of forming and sharing knowledge for the success of organisational learning. However, there is documentary evidence of many instances of failure to support such formation and sharing of knowledge in organisations. Factors that support or complicate organisational learning are studied empirically in organisations. It is not very difficult to identify such factors at the general level: talking about culture, external environment, and openness to sharing, support of management, etc. What is much more complicated is the *description of a specific form and effect of these factors* in various institutions. It is also evident that the same factors can encourage some types of learning and discourage others. It is therefore possible to say that the reasons for the failure of organisational learning are poorly documented and a coherent list of factors affecting the sharing of knowledge is missing (Lu, Leung & Koch, 2005).

In order to understand organisational learning, it might be helpful to have a more accurate definition of the relationships between the concepts of organisational learning, knowledge management and intellectual capital (Bontis, Crossan & Hulland, 2002). Intellectual capital is the stock of knowledge in an organisation at a certain time. It means something that has been learned in the cognitive sense of the word. The management of the flow and development of this intellectual capital over time is referred to as knowledge management. Organisational learning includes problems of both the creation of a stock of intellectual capital and its management, extending the cognitive concept of the behavioural aspect, to include behaviour in organisations. The study of organisational learning can help us understand how the stock of knowledge flows and develops over time. In relation to the creation of a stock of information in organisations, the term ‘organisational memory’ has been introduced, and naturally this has its advantages and disadvantages: it stores important information but can hamper development, as organisational routines are part of organisational memory. To support organisational learning means to enrich the transfer (or development over time, the flow) and the interpretive and integrational component (according to Koenig, 2006). Learning in organisations cannot be reduced

to individuals' learning only, as one of its essential conditions is the social processing of information (cf. Pol, 2007).

Some theoretical discussions on organisational learning in schools emphasise the usefulness of a dual perception of the processes of organisational learning: (1) through the learning itself, its course, topics, initiatory moments and effects, (2) through the existing supportive organisational structure, networks of interactions, mechanisms for sharing experiences and harmonising values, and so on, i.e. through the existing capacity for learning (cf. Goh, Cousins & Elliott, 2006). In data analysis the differentiation between organisational learning and the capacity for organisational learning proved to be productive and became a guide for the structure of data presentation in this text. By that we demonstrate the belief that the processes of organisational learning depend on the functioning of the supportive organisational structures of learning, leadership in organisational learning and the perception of the importance and usefulness of learning by the actors in school life. By the capacity for organisational learning we mean a system or set of attributes that support organisational learning (cf. Collinson, Cook & Conley, 2006; Goh, Cousins & Elliott, 2006; Verbiest, 2002). The set of attributes described can be further structured into *three dimensions of the capacity for organisational learning in schools* (cf. Verbiest, 2002):

- *Organisational capacity*, which is represented by resources, organisational structures and systems of learning; the perceived importance of learning; leadership/management
- *Interpersonal capacity*, i.e. the nature of communication and interaction; collective learning and shared practice
- *Individual capacity*, which is expressed in terms of the extent and nature of the reflection of learning and its benefits; connection between individual learning and the needs of schools.

In these descriptions, these three dimensions are the basis for the empirical part of our study that follows.

Notes on methodology

We think that the case study is the approach that allows the best understanding of the complexity of the subject, i.e. our research on the process of organisational learning in its natural environment (cf. Sedláček, 2007; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The results of the analysis of this qualitative stage will become a guiding principle, and a source of hypotheses, for the subsequent quantitative-oriented research (cf. Mioviský, 2006; Yin, 2003).

The first of our selected cases is referred to as *School A*. According to Yin's (2003) typology, it is a *critical case*. We wanted to explore a school with sufficient space for learning and, thus, development. Theory draws attention to the important role of management in school (see Marsick & Watkins, 1994). Based on analysis of reports of the Czech School Inspectorate and

expert consultation, we chose a school in a rather large city that exhibits of being well managed and had a good reputation in the community. The collection and analysis of data was conducted from January to May 2011. Subsequently, it was decided that the criterion for the selection of the second case, *School B*, would be the strategy of the *contrast case*. We searched for a school in which for some reason leadership was not sufficiently well established. We chose another urban school in which the leaders had been in their positions for only six months at the time of the survey (May to June 2011).

In-depth interviews with all the key adult actors became the main technique of data collection in both schools. Interviews, many of them repeated, were conducted with head teachers, their deputies, teachers and tutors. The analysis of school documents and field notes acquired during visits to the schools became the triangulation methods of data collection. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. All the data material was then processed in ATLAS.ti software. The analysis was carried out subjecting the data to the technique of open coding. The result was the identification of key categories which we then began to process descriptively, in connection with our research questions. We focused on the following research questions: *Why do adults learn in schools? What do people learn in schools? How do adults learn in schools? How and in what ways is learning supported, what are the impediments or hindrances for organisational learning in schools? What is the capacity of schools for organisational learning at the organisational, interpersonal and individual levels?*

Selected results: School A

Characteristics of School A

School A is a primary school with an after-school care centre in a big city. The number of pupils has been approximately 500 in recent years. The school is perceived as relatively successful in its community. The head teacher of the school and her deputies have held their positions for seven years. The evaluation report of the School Inspectorate was very positive for the school: school leadership is evaluated as stable, and support for the achievement of educational goals and school counselling is above standard.

The school is profiled as one with extensive teaching of English (at primary level) and extensive teaching of science, mathematics and informatics (at lower secondary level). At primary level there are parallel grades with programmes of traditional alternatives. The teaching staff consists of 38 employees of whom 36 are qualified, plus 16 members of non-teaching staff. A specific feature of the staff is relatively frequent fluctuation, with an average turnover of three teachers every year in the last five years. This has resulted in the strengthening of the youngest group of teachers (under 35 years).

Initiatory moments of organisational learning

Although teachers and educators do not speak explicitly about learning and professional development, and school leaders do not say that their aim is to achieve the ideal of a learning school,

School A is an organisation in which the learning process, not only that of pupils, is strongly present. Analysis of data obtained indicates that there are two primary sources for learning and the pursuit of the individual and, related to that, organisational development. First and foremost is the *constant pressure from school leaders* in the form of a well-implemented *vision*. The head teacher, together with her deputies, seeks purposefully to build up a high-quality school that is successful and has clearly defined aims. Success is to be achieved mainly by offering a high-quality educational programme. This results in pressure on teachers and tutors to perform well. A vision like this, with which the head teacher and her statutory representative came to the school, is being implemented. Despite initial opposition from various teachers, it seems that most peoples at School A support, or at least accept, this objective.

A long-standing awareness of *affiliation with the school* is another essential motivation. An evident stimulus for the professional development of some teachers is the desire to belong to the good core of the school. It is evident that the *status of a good teacher* is very important for the majority of them. The effort required to obtain and maintain such a position is the second impetus for learning at the school and for the school per se. The adoption of the vision and the gradual adaptation of the staff are expressed in the words of the deputy head teacher.

INTERVIEWER: And other people at school, do they see it the same way? I mean, don't they have problems getting involved in those projects, participating in the activity?

HEAD TEACHER'S DEPUTY (School A): I think in our staff it is all right now but the beginning was terrible. Also, a considerable proportion of the staff have left. Some of them retired, but others just went away. Most of them from primary level, it was even worse there. People are sort of hidden there. I think it's a problem of all primary schools that work like this, very much on their own. Our concept did not suit everyone in the beginning, not at all. It was getting sorted, but the main thing was, we talked about it. We introduced a lot of classroom observation; we were solving problems all the time, with the School Educational Programme for instance. Some people became interested, but not all of them. But today there is a core consisting of people who come to me and suggest I've seen this, I'd like to try that.

Identified topics of organisational learning

Particular thematic areas can be identified from the data gathered. One principal theme is curricular reform, namely the *School Educational Programme (SEP)*, which is considered as an opportunity to demonstrate quality. The school had been one of the pilot schools. The work on the SEP is continuous, with one area of innovation every year. (At the time the study was in progress there was intensive work on the redefinition of evaluation criteria.) Continuous work on the SEP, as required by school leaders, is a frequent topic of communication among teachers at the school. Another theme is the issue of the *methodology of teaching* (various 'tricks' and work with troublesome pupils are shared topics in the school). *Information and communication technology (ICT)* and its application is another area of learning. ICT is at the forefront for two reasons: (1) it is becoming a standard part of school culture, used for mutual communi-

cation and communication with the public, and (2) it affects the everyday work of teachers (pupils' electronic record books are tested now). Younger teachers often help their more experienced colleagues. Another strong general topic that runs through these dominant themes and other sub-themes, such as the 'subject of learning' in school, is the theme of *culture*. The school has a clear vision and requires a lot of effort from all those involved. Newcomers learn to exist in this space, penetrating the culture and participating in its development.

Organisational, interpersonal and individual capacities for learning

School leaders endeavour to create appropriate conditions for the fulfilment of long-term objectives. Steering groups on methodology and subject committees work in the school, and their activities have a realistic content that focuses primarily on the SEP. The head teacher has introduced and supports *peer observation* among teachers, thus constituting a platform for mutual learning. This practice is not entirely accepted in the school but brings results, as is illustrated by the following statement.

INTERVIEWER: How do you feel about peer observation? Do you mind it or does it have something to offer?

TEACHER (primary level, eight years of experience, School A): Well, for some people it's not convenient, obviously. It's not obligatory after all. I myself don't use it that much. Sometimes it's also difficult to synchronise your schedules. But now I've been to the fifth grade, as I know I'm going to teach in the fifth grade next year, so I was interested and went to have a look. I didn't need anything, my colleague agreed but she didn't prepare anything for me. It was more about whether the kids are able to cope with things in time.

It cannot be said that the school works faultlessly in terms of organisational capacity. Evidently there are potential barriers. An example of this may be that the school is based in buildings that are separate from one another, risking the isolation of teachers. Another risk may be potential competition among teachers at primary level because of the existence of two programmes. Data analysis shows that the organisational capacity as a whole, be it in the form of positives or of risks, does not play a decisive role in the school. Much more significant is the fulfilled potential of interpersonal capacity, as driven by the above-mentioned stimuli (vision and sense of affiliation). The individual capacities of individual actors in school life cannot be overlooked either, but our research pays only indirect attention to this kind of capacity.

How is organisational learning supported?

The support of continuous development, at both individual and school levels, seems to be strong. The main means school leaders use is good *implementation* of the vision. One of the tools with which the head teacher and her team have succeeded in getting all the people at the school involved is the strategy of *delegating*. It is common practice in the school that important responsibilities are delegated to 'ordinary' teachers. This style entails greater involvement and, at the same time, increases individual demands on everybody.

HEAD TEACHER (School A): A colleague of mine who teaches informatics and physics then came to me saying he would like to try a project in the European Social Fund scheme for e-learning support.

INTERVIEWER: What is your role in that project?

H: Just support... I was keen to accept it but I don't play any other role in it.

I: And how does it work?

H: That teacher co-ordinates everything. He appointed the guarantors for the subjects, approves these things, allocates fees, and so on. I am satisfied with him.

The support of school leaders can be seen in a number of other examples. One more important aspect is definitely worth mentioning here: a purposeful *recruitment policy*. To a certain extent the leaders are aware of the difficulty of their concept, so they want the vision to be shared throughout the school. Nevertheless, there is not always complete understanding, and if there is misunderstanding there are some teachers who leave the school. It seems that some teachers prefer the school as it was before new leaders took over.

TEACHER (primary level, eight years of experience, School A): I think if I counted it as a percentage then some 80 per cent say yes and 20, no. That's my opinion. I think it's like that. And I can even say that those who did not identify themselves with it left the school. They simply didn't identify themselves with it, it was not their kind of vision.

Summary of the case

The results of the preliminary analyses quite clearly illustrate that learning is an integral *part of the culture* in School A, despite the fact that it is not an explicit goal. Learning continuously tends to *change the quality* of teaching at and the reputation of the school. The motivation for learning at the school and for the school too, is the *complementariness of the pressure of the school vision* (as promoted by the school leaders) and the *motivation of individuals* to be part of the good core of the school. Organisational capacity is developed, organisational barriers are not perceived as crucial, and a *culture supporting interpersonal* (or individual) *capacity* is decisive for adult learning.

Contrast case: School B

Characteristics of School B

School B is a primary school with an after-school care centre and a school canteen. It is attended by approximately 350 pupils in 20 classes. Thirty teachers of diverse ages (including nine special educators) work at the school. Five months before the researchers arrived, a new head teacher and her statutory deputy assumed their posts, while another deputy had been in post one year longer under the previous head teacher. A steering group on methodology works

at primary level and subject committees at lower secondary level, as is common in Czech schools.

The school is engaged in the education of children with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysortographia and dyscalculia, with nine classes for them. In this regard there is a latent conflict in the vision of the school, because the new leaders arrived with the idea of an inclusive school while other people prefer the idea of special classes. The leaders are obliged to make this change by the project with which the head teacher succeeded in winning her position. However, the school still operates under the previous regime and such personal conflict is evident in the study.

Initial moments of organisational learning

Our interviewees at School B share an awareness that the main asset of the school is the quality of its care *for pupils with special educational needs*, which gives the school an opportunity to compete in the ‘marketplace’ of basic schools in the town. This is the main stimulus to learning, although the approach of teachers to the matter varies considerably (see the paragraph below ‘Individual capacity for organisational learning’). Another traditional stimulus to learning, although it is not explicitly reflected, is provided by *events organised by the school*, including those involving the local or regional community, such as competitions for pupils with special educational needs. A new impulse is the pressure to *develop new subject committees* as instigated by the new leaders and based on their critical attitude towards the current situation.

Identified topics of organisational learning

The shared – although rather general – idea of the necessity of high-quality care for children with special educational needs is an important item among the topics for learning that affects the whole school or a significant part of it. Other topics, such as the problems of everyday teaching and discipline in the classroom and support for new teachers, are related to this idea. Problems of methodology, textbooks and working materials and the implementation of educational technologies in teaching seem to be less important. Learning is explicitly reflected in a few specific educational activities such as courses on new teaching technologies and one-off training sessions on bullying in the classroom. The benefit of such education is reflected in terms of feelings rather than specific knowledge or effects of training.

Organisational, interpersonal and individual capacities for learning

The organisational capacity for learning is characterised by the fact that the school has no functional staff room but only a place for gathering information, so the place for meetings of groups of teachers or the whole staff is determined randomly. Among other things this suggests that the capacity for organisational learning in School B is limited. Another important fact is that subject committees at lower secondary level (some of them consisting of one member only) are very formal and deal with very urgent problems only. The steering group on methodology at primary level is more active and more open to sharing and mutual support. This is confirmed

by the statement of the deputy head teacher. The scepticism of teachers about the necessity of these structures is then documented by the statement of a teacher at lower secondary level.

DEPUTY HEAD (School B): The steering group on methodology works very well but the subject boards are very incoherent here. Sometimes they're made up of one person, which is for nothing. Their functioning has usually been formal. We have always come to some arrangement, but people discuss things in corridors, in a rather improvised way... there has hardly ever been a meeting or any kind of conceptual work.

TEACHER (lower secondary level, 19 years of experience, School B): Well, I've never been a supporter of such official meetings but we talk about how to proceed with teaching or lend materials to each other.

An 'office culture' connecting teachers on the basis of proximity (sometimes human, sometimes based on close specialisations) is decisive for the *interpersonal dimension of organisational capacity* for learning in School B. Face-to-face communication is considered functional but usually happens randomly, during breaks or in the canteen. Activities for all pupils of the school, such as inter-class projects, are innovations introduced by the new leaders, for the benefit of pupils but also with potential for the socialisation of the adults. Such germs of communication are promising for the development of interpersonal learning capacity. On the other hand, the resistance to sharing and the fear of peer observation are warning signs.

INTERVIEWER: You have mentioned peer observation. Is this somehow supported by the leaders? Is it formalised in any way or does it depend solely on them?

DEPUTY HEAD: It's solely up to them, yes. We gave them the opportunity to do it. Several times we said that they can do it but they don't have to.

QUESTIONER: Observation is much discussed now. Have you ever seen your colleagues at work?

TEACHER (lower secondary level, 19 years of experience, School B): No, I have not. But I think it makes sense because one can always learn a lot from other people... but no, I haven't seen them.

INTERVIEWER: And has anybody seen you?

TEACHER: Just the leaders... None of my other colleagues.

DEPUTY HEAD: (...) peer observation, there's not much interest in it. I was told, for instance: if it's you I don't mind, but if another colleague was to come, that would annoy me. I get horribly stressed. I know it's not pleasant if someone is sitting at the back, listening to every word. But it depends on the type of the teacher.

Individual capacity for organisational learning in School B is hardly associated with organisational learning. Individual professional development is perceived as separate from the needs of

the school. No matter how much the staff members are aware of the need for special teachers; they show little interest in the opportunities for acquiring more formal education. There are strong feelings about in-service training rather than there being rational reflection on the need for and possible effects of education. Only certain fragmentary training activities are explicitly associated with learning.

INTERVIEWER: I'd like to ask you about in-service training now. How does it work here in your school? (...)

TEACHER (lower secondary level, 19 years of experience, School B): Well, how is it going? In most cases the deputy head distributes offers to those concerned as they arise, so she sends me offers for maths and we choose from them. Obviously, if I like something and I think it could be worth trying, I go and ask whether there's some money for it.

How is organisational learning supported?

The need for guidance and support for organisational learning in School B is expressed mainly (almost exclusively in some respects) by the new school leaders. Yet for the time being this remains in the form of a vision. This vision is carefully presented to the staff, and the leaders are looking for support for it. Specific suggestions are aimed at the restructuring and development of the subject committees and the organisation of educational events for the staff as a whole or many of its members. Also, the leaders manifest the need for management through control and observation. An interesting element is that the new women leaders have started studying special education. There are two reasons for this: to increase the qualifications of the staff and to become models for education and development in the school. Finally, school development through investment in material equipment is under discussion.

Summary of the case

School B is dominated by a culture in which teachers tend to work in isolation. Communication among teachers is limited. Also, learning support mechanisms are weak because the new leaders are still getting their bearings at the school and are cautiously looking for support for their proposals of change. Evidently, the existing capacity for organisational learning in School B is limited.

Preliminary findings of the case studies

We believe that the outcome of the case studies confirms the suitability of the chosen design. The design enabled the perception of the role of specific configurations of attributes supporting organisational learning in schools. The data taken from the case studies make it apparent that the theoretical basis of the study needs to be improved. Some preliminary interpretations connected with the theoretical concepts of organisational learning are emerging. The results of the analysis refer to the following concepts.

First, there is the concept of the capacity for organisational learning, as discussed above. This concept became an essential tool for this stage of the analysis, enabling us to distinguish between the existence of the potential for organisational learning and organisational learning itself. Even though these two things (potential and reality) are undoubtedly linked, it is premature to look for processes of organisational learning in all their breadth and depth if the capacity is missing, which is much more the case of School B.

Another interesting interpretation is offered by the concept of organisational learning in one, two or three loops (cf. Argyris & Schön, 1996). Learning in the first loop (modification of behaviour in order to achieve goals) is part of everyday reality in the work of teachers and schools. However, the extent of learning and its mechanisms varies. Learning in the second loop i.e. that with abilities to modify the goal, where learning should help to fulfil the goal, is on the whole absent in these schools. Learning for change in schools (the third loop) and the modification of behaviour and goals leading to that change are difficult to find in both cases. Although there are differences between the two schools (extent of staff involvement, willingness to initiate detailed discussion, etc.), it is very difficult to distinguish between them, on the basis of the obvious feature, such as the presence of loops of higher learning – and it is certainly impossible to do this mechanically.

Finally, there is the crucial role of leadership processes in organisational learning. The two case studies show the importance of these leadership processes in terms of the adjustment, maintenance and continuous support of the mechanisms of organisational learning. Nevertheless, this theory needs to be elaborated in further analyses of our case studies, or during subsequent stages of research.

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Learning in organisations: The case for a code of ethics in education

Ethics in educational organisations is often comprehended as a natural thing manifested through the conscience of every person. However, an educational organisation should not be confined only to this. A modern educational organisation has to show an example to others by fostering and developing human values by means of a code of ethics. Many educational organisations manifest their ethical values. Therefore, in this work one of the aspects of the manifestation of ethics, specifically the code of ethics, will be explored more deeply. The code of ethics is used as one of the sampling criteria for this research, while findings from a semi-structured interview with the employees of educational organisations about the code of ethics are presented in the empirical part of the paper.

Introduction

The issue of ethics in organisations is usually analysed as a part of business ethics. The topics of ethics in business and ethics in organisations have received much attention from Vasiljeviene (2000, 2006). The issues in business ethics have been discussed by Pruskus (2003) and Vyšniauskaitė and Kundrotas (1999), and the state of business ethics in Lithuania was analysed by Paulavičiūtė (2004). However, there is an evident lack of studies dedicated to the issues of ethics in educational institutions and in educational management in general. Although the manifestations of ethics in the educational organisation and any other organisation have much in common, they are not the same.

Discussions about ethics and analysis of the situation associated with ethics in the educational organisation and its operations are both necessary and relevant. The dominant environment in the educational organisation is the academic environment where promoting the image of an ethical organisation and serving as an example for other institutions are of utmost importance. It can be assumed that an educational organisation should have more characteristics of high-level ethics than any other organisation, because the aims of the educational organisation as well as the purpose of its establishment are targeted at the intellectual and moral education and development of society. In addition, since it is an exceptional organisation, ethical behaviour should be rooted in all aspects of its activities. Even more than this, education is that area of society where various investments pay off by developing the personalities of citizens and contributing to the overall progress of the state. Ethics in the educational organisation is often considered to be something that is taken for granted, where the manifestation of ethics takes the form of the conscience of every single person. However, and especially due to this particular attitude, the issue of ethics in the educational environment is often overlooked and the infrastructure of ethics is hardly being developed or analysed. This situation demonstrates the evi-

dent theoretical and practical relevance of this topic as well as the need to analyse the issues of ethics.

Analysing this topic at the theoretical level, it can be assumed that many educational organisations express their ethical values through a code of ethics, and this will be analysed more deeply in this work. The ethos and principles of the ethics of an educational institution have to be manifested through all organisational activities and formalised in a code of ethics. According to Vasiljevienė (2000), the code of ethics expresses the ethos and principles of the ethics of an organisation and directs this organisation into the best possible practice. The code of ethics will be considered not just as one of the sampling criteria for this study, but also as an issue for empirical research, which (it is assumed) will provide a better understanding of the analysed topic. The *research object* is the manifestations of ethics in the managerial activities of an educational organisation. The *aim of this research* is to reveal the manifestations of ethics in the managerial activities of an educational organisation.

The code of ethics in the managerial activities of an educational organisation

In order to analyse ethics in any given organisation and its managerial activities, first of all it is necessary to discuss the notion of ethics that will be used in this article. When talking about ethics, clarification of the concepts associated with ethics is one of the most important things. The concept of ethics is often linked with other concepts such as virtue, morality, value, etiquette, etc. These concepts associated with ethics can be interpreted in many different ways, so it is possible to get confused when looking for the most suitable definition. Therefore, it would be appropriate to clear up the differences between these concepts and provide a comprehensible definition of the concept of ethics that will be applied further in this article.

For a better understanding of ethics and its analysis in a specific situation, we have to understand the structure of ethics first. Vasiljevienė (2000) suggests classifying ethics as either descriptive or normative. According to the author, normative ethics includes etiquette, pedagogy of virtue, codes of ethics, and normative moral systems. It has to be mentioned that this part of ethics encourages individuals to be moral and to preserve and cherish the eternal values. Normative ethics is associated with the area of moral compliance (norms, principles, rules, values, etc.). Normative ethics is regulating, managing, and teaching us how the person should conduct him/herself (Vasiljevienė, 2000). When analysing ethics and definitions of this concept, one more important aspect has to be mentioned: Beginning from Aristotle, the father of ethics, and ending with the contemporary philosophers, several ethical universalities can be identified, including good, beauty, truth, freedom, etc. These ethical universalities themselves are non-changing and eternal, as expressed in the following statement, ‘eternal values which never change’. It is true that ethical universalities are eternal; they were pursued in all ages and epochs, but in different ways. The main point here is that although ethical universalities, or ‘eternal values’, do not change, the interpretation of these values is subject to change. As the epochs and cultures are changing, ethical universalities are being interpreted in new ways. Contempo-

rary society tends to think that ethics is transformed during times of global changes, and this fact makes us hope that the achievements of civilization will finally be consistent with the eternal humanistic values (Vasiljeviene, 2006).

An educational organisation is understood in this paper as an organisation that provides general and primary vocational education services as well as higher education. The functions of the educational organisation are not different from any other organisation. According to Želvys (1999), every organisation performs managerial functions such as planning, organizing, administering, controlling, and budgeting. Additionally, every organisation performs the functions associated with the production of goods or provision of services, in other words the functions that are specific to the area of professional activities/interests or even industry. An educational institution is different from other organisations due to its specific product, or more precisely – service. This service is usually defined as teaching, consulting, research, and provision of support for the development of general or professional (specific) competencies. The structure of the educational system is a complex but yet a very important object that has access to extensive financial resources and contributes to the overall progress of the state. Due to this reason, particular attention in this work is dedicated to revealing how the institutionalisation of ethics is maintained and implemented as it influences the productivity and effectiveness of the performance of the educational organisation.

According to Christian ethics, an individual can act and ‘do what he/she wants’ in society and the organisation. “Several centuries ago Machiavelli and even St. Augustine had formulated the meta-frame for human development which is ‘Love the Lord and do what you want’.” This phrase can be comprehended in the following way: ‘Love the Lord’ refers to not being an enemy of everything/everyone created by God, in other words of everything that is natural. “Do what you want” means function, develop, and enhance the artificial, unnatural diversity, but still preserve the boundaries imposed by God (Kvederavičius & Krančiukaitė, 2006). Religious attitudes and beliefs help individuals behave morally in accordance with the major virtue – with love. It has to be noted that although it is hard to harmonise organisational aims and codes of ethics with religious beliefs, it is possible to achieve with additional efforts and with love for others as for yourself. Although this idea is utopian, it is worth believing because the real changes affect each and every individual. In the empirical part of this work, it is revealed that the research participants identify religion as an important factor of morality not only on the individual level, but also for the whole community of the organisation. Without any doubt, it should not be thought that just the each individual’s conscience is enough to maintain ethics in the organisation. As suggested by Vasiljeviene (2006), when ethics in the organisation is perceived as an issue of the conscience of every member of the organisation, chaos might result.

All the issues discussed above lead us to the type of management/leadership called ‘servant leadership’, which is being rapidly popularised and spread all around the world. R. K. Greenleaf was the first to propose the concept of servant leadership. According to the researchers, this type of leadership is the new type for the 21st century, as “the leader to [a] certain

extent should ‘serve’ his/her staff members and ensure that they would achieve their highest effectiveness and productivity” (Kvederavičius & Krančiukaitė, 2006, p. 91). Management/leadership is the aggregate activity of managing the organisation. Currently, management is inseparable from the organisation where a community of individuals seeking common goals is built. Both for-profit and not-for-profit (such as educational organisations) organisations strive to achieve the goals of the organisation as well as to meet the needs of society, and they are “forced by different means to communicate and interact; this determines their performance which is the object of analysis for ethics” (Vyšniauskienė & Kundrotas, 1999, p. 21). According to Pruskus (2003), the manager is often supposed to be that person in the organisation who harmonises the interests of various employees. The scholar emphasises the importance of ethics practiced by the organisation for individuals working for this organisation, also for those who are in business relations with this organisation as well as for those who plan to join or somehow else become associated with this organisation in the future. However, for all these subjects, the individual position of managers and the way managers act when making their decisions are the most important issues.

Organisations, and providers of education services in particular, are concerned not only with technical and practical aspects of organisational performance; for them “performing their duties ethically and correctly” is of utmost importance (Palidauskaitė, 2010, p. 83). Harmonization of these two aspects assures the quality and builds the trust of society in a specific profession and in its representatives (Palidauskaitė, 2010). In the contemporary reality, ethical universalities, which must serve as the foundation for an organisation, depend on the specificity of the organisation as well as on its goals. According to Vasiljevienė (2006), the following elements of institutionalisation are used to develop the infrastructure of ethics: codes of ethics, committees of ethics, consultants, specialists, and managers providing information on the issues of ethics; ‘hot lines’ (in the organisation) dedicated to analysing and solving the issues of ethics; business centres of applied ethics, which are the structures of scientific research and promotion of professional ethics unifying the efforts of researchers and business practitioners in analysing business ethics and putting it into practice; lecturing about ethics; round-table meetings and discussion groups; ethics audit; the resolutions of the government and laws correlating with the codes of ethics; the committees created by the government to handle ethics-related complaints; ethics maps (a collection of ethical rules and recommendations that specifies the organisation’s code of ethics for every staff member); ethics expertise, etc.

The code of ethics in managerial activities of the educational organisation can help with norming the relations, defining the directions for development, describing and announcing the behavioural models that will not be tolerated when implementing the mission of the organisation such as performing daily job tasks (ethics management oriented towards compliance). These functions of the code of ethics should get sufficient attention as they simplify the daily routine. The second – values-based – orientation is also very important, but it gains even more importance when formulating the vision of the organisation (creating an ideal picture of the organisation for the future). Therefore, the code of ethics can perform both direct (normative – accept-

able conduct/performance) and indirect (provision of challenges for even better conduct/performance) functions. Later in this paper, the code of ethics as the situation of manifestation of ethics and subjective evaluation in the educational organisation is analysed. Empirical study will be oriented towards the search for the meanings assigned by the participants, but only some of the aspects will be presented in the paper.

Research methodology

Critical analysis of sources was applied for the literature review. Empirical data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The topic of manifestation of ethics in the educational organisation and its managerial activities was discussed with 16 research participants from four different educational organisations (mainly-Catholic educational institutions; for full information on the profile of respondents, see Table 1). The survey was conducted in the period from Autumn 2010 to Spring 2011. The order of questions was flexible and depended on the course of the interview. Empirical data was processed by applying qualitative content analysis. The information provided by the participants was divided into major categories, and then into sub-categories if required. Finally, the data was interpreted, summarised, compared with the results of the theoretical analysis, and formulated into conclusions.

Research organisation and process

In order to deeply analyse the chosen topic and achieve the set goal, this research study consisted of several stages. First, the scientific literature on the topic of the manifestation of ethics in the educational organisation was analysed, and appropriate and required material selected. Second, the most important concepts and definitions were selected, named and defined. Third, based on the theoretical analysis, the instrument was designed for empirical data collection. Before providing the questions (instrument) to the employees of the educational organisations, a pilot interview with experts was conducted in order to assure validity and reliability of the research. The next stage involved sampling of the educational organisations in accordance with pre-determined criteria. When suitable educational organisations were selected, their employees (16 participants; information about them provided in Table 1) were asked to participate in the research as informants for semi-structured interviews.

Table 1

Characteristics of the informants (employees of the educational organisations)

Informant	The element of the educational system	Gender	Work Experience	Position / Title
Informant Nr. 1	Secondary School X	Female	Degree-holder; has 25 years of experience of school teaching.	Lithuanian (native) language teacher
Informant Nr. 2		Female	Worked for 13 years in school Y and 4 years in school X.	Religious studies teacher
Informant Nr. 3		Male	Has more than 20 years of teaching experience and has been working in school X for 18 years.	History teacher
Informant Nr. 4		Female	Taught in several schools for 48 years; has been working in school X for more than 20 years.	Ethics teacher
Informant Nr. 5	Vocational school X	Male	Has been working as a vocational teacher for 1 year.	Vocational teacher (cosmetics department)
Informant Nr. 6		Female	Has some work experience in other fields. Has been working in vocational school X for 5 years.	Teacher-methodologist
Informant Nr. 7		Female	Has been working in vocational school X for 7 years. Has other work experience, for instance summer work in the US as part of the exchange program, promotions in the supermarket, etc.	Marketing coordinator and vocational teacher (management, marketing)
Informant Nr. 8		Female	Has 7 years of work experience. Has been working in vocational school X for 2 years. Prior to this, worked in the service industry.	Administrator of the educational process
Informant Nr. 9	College X	Male	Has 10 years of vocational and university teaching experience (taught various subjects from the automobile structure to electronics of the auto transportation system).	The head of the Education Centre
ParticipantNr. 10		Female	Has 29 years of experience as a manager and university teacher. Has been working in college X for the last 7 years.	University teacher
Participant Nr. 11		Male	Has 9 years of work experience. Has been working in college X for 0.5 years, and the remaining 8.5 years were spent in another college.	University teacher
Participant Nr. 12		Male	Has 13 years of experience. Teaches electro-technology.	Docent

Informant	The element of the educational system	Gender	Work Experience	Position / Title
Participant Nr. 13		Male	Has 2 years of experience as a lab assistant.	Staff member of the Technical Support Department
Participant Nr. 14	University X	Female	Has 17 years of experience of pedagogical work. Has been teaching in university X for 11 years. Worked as a junior researcher, then as university teacher's assistant, then as a lecturer. Currently is a docent.	University teacher (Docent)
Participant Nr. 15		Female	Has been working in university X for 20 years. Had different positions in this organisation from lecturer to professor, also worked in the administration as an academic adviser and the Chair of the university Senate.	Department Chair
Participant Nr. 16		Male	After defending his dissertation in university Y, worked there as a university teacher and a researcher, then worked for 3 years at the Department of Environmental Protection, and now has been working in university X for 16 years.	Department Chair

Empirical research results: The functions of the code of ethics from the standpoint of participants

The interview was initially targeted at identifying which of the participants are aware that there is a code of ethics in their organisations. Out of 16 interviewed professionals, 10 participants stated that they are aware of the existence of a code of ethics, and the remaining 6 individuals either stated that there is no code of ethics in their organisation or that they are not aware of this code. At this point it is important to take a pause and emphasise several important aspects.

All the educational organisations that participated in this study had codes of ethics (conduct) in one form or another. However, the results revealed that not all employees are aware of the presence of this code. It was quite difficult to find secondary and vocational schools that officially disclose their codes of ethics or conduct. But after analysing web pages of the educational institutions, several schools that had officially disclosed their codes of ethics (truth be told, their codes were different from those used in the university or college) were found. There is a National Association of the Catholic Schools in Lithuania, which unifies the Christian schools and their activities. These schools (primary, secondary, and vocational schools, gymnasiums, etc.) are also unified by applying the same code of ethics for teachers of Catholic schools. Therefore, the secondary and vocational schools that participated in the research apply

the same code of ethics. However, this research revealed that not all employees are aware of the fact that there is a code of ethics in the Christian educational organisation they work for. Another important aspect is that Christian educational organisations clearly indicate their religious (in this case – Christian) views, which are applied in the organisation and to all its activities. There were many cases when participants from a Christian educational institution, being unaware of the existing code of ethics, mentioned that the basis of their activities and the managerial activities of the institution is formed by the Ten Commandments and the Scriptures. For instance, one of the participants (Nr. 8) stated the following:

No, I don't know. There is no such document as the institution's code of ethics in our organisation. But since our organisation is a Catholic one, all its activities are based on the Catholic values such as 10 Commandments and the Scriptures. The principles of our work and our work ethics are based on these Catholic values ...

The responses of participants affected the further course of the interviews. Those respondents who responded positively to the question about the presence of a code of ethics in their educational organisation were further asked about the emergence of the code of ethics, its purpose and whether this document influences conduct and performance in the educational organisation.

Asked about the emergence of the code of ethics, participants provided different responses. Some of the participants knew the exact story because they themselves took part in that process. A teacher from the secondary school told us the following:

I began working at this school in 1985. The code of ethics of the Catholic school emerged in this school after the coup when the school turned to be a Catholic school. This code of ethics was directly linked with all the acts and documents that we prepared for the process of becoming this particular type of school. (Participant Nr. 1)

Other participants from the same educational institutions told similar stories. But those who were relatively new to the organisation did not know how exactly the code of ethics emerged and suggested the following:

Since I am relatively new to this school, I assume that this code emerged when the school became a Catholic school and the unified code of ethics for the teachers of Christian Catholic schools was created. I think that's how it emerged. (Participant Nr. 2)

When asked about whether they had been familiarised with the code of ethics when they joined the educational institution, the majority of respondents (6 out of 8) stated that they were not familiarised, and the rest of the participants said that they do not remember. This situation demonstrates the managerial weaknesses in the educational institution, or it might be possible that the past Soviet regime influenced the fact that the infrastructure of ethics was not developed; however, this hypothesis should further be tested. The code of ethics indicates the preferred management of ethics in the organisation, and thus it is very important that employees

who were not involved in the creation process would be at least familiarised with the code as well as encouraged to apply it to their performance in the organisation.

Employees of the educational organisations were asked about whether their personal values match organisational values. The responses of the participants can be classified into two categories based of the context and content. These categories are the code of ethics that reflects and has to reflect personal values, and the code of ethics that does not need to match personal values. The code of ethics in this case was perceived by the participants as organisational values (Table 2).

Table 2

Organisational and personal values in the code of ethics from the standpoint of participants

Category	Number of responses	Extract from the interview protocol
The code of ethics reflects personal values.	12	<p><i>Yes, for sure, I wouldn't be able to work if my values would be different from the values of organisation where I work. (Participant Nr. 1)</i></p> <p><i>My personal values and the values declared in the code of ethics are consistent and reflect each other. I think and see enough manifestation of the norms of ethics and I would sign up under all of them. ... I think that if personal and organisational values do not match each other, it is necessary to substantiate the point that these values are improper and have to be changed; for sure, it cannot be done by a single individual and it is necessary to get other colleagues involved. Or you can search for another organisation. So in this case I would say that if I would be the only one in disagreement with the organisational values, I would not be able to work in this place as I would feel discomfort and would not feel like working. (Participant Nr. 3)</i></p> <p><i>It is not worth for an individual to work for an organisation where organisational values do not match his/her personal values. He/she will simply not like working in this organisation. (Participant Nr. 6)</i></p>
The code of ethics could be inconsistent with personal values.	3	<p><i>I think that it depends on the individual. When joining an organisation, an individual knows what is happening there; so it is the decision made by this person about whether he/she wants to be there. He/she could join it anyway. He/she is learning in order to acquire a profession (for instance, in case of a student) and wants to become a hairdresser, animal carer or orthopaedist. For sure, if this person has different attitudes, he/she would have to be flexible and adapt to the organisation because the organisation cannot adapt to a single individual... (Participant Nr. 7)</i></p> <p><i>I think that if the organisation is open and is not constrained by this code of ethics, then I think that it is possible to work there. Specifically in our organisation, there is no compulsion. (Participant Nr. 8)</i></p> <p><i>It is not necessary. I preserve my own values and behave the way I was brought up. (Participant Nr. 11)</i></p>

Analysis of the participants' responses about whether they are influenced by the code of ethics revealed differences in opinions (Table 3).

Table 3

The influence of the code of ethics on the conduct/performance from the standpoint of participants

Category	Subcategory	Number of responses	Extract from the interview protocol
Influences	In organisational performance	3	<i>The code of ethics obliges to promote Catholic values in ethics and teach ethics from this particular position; it also obliges to serve the child, his/her family, and the society" (Participant Nr. 4)</i>
	In communicational performance	5	<i>Looking from the standpoint of the requirements that I provide to the students and community members of that Catholic school, I think that it makes the influence. For instance, during the class mentoring sessions and various events students can be reminded that they should comply with certain norms ... and that we all comply with the same rules of ethics which do not fundamentally change the communication style but still are valuable and helpful. (Participant Nr. 3)</i>
Does not influence		3	<i>I don't know how much the documents can influence something as usually the mutual opinion of individuals and that feeling of community are influential. (Participant Nr. 6)</i> <i>No, as such things come from the inside of a person. (Participant Nr. 15)</i>

The responses of the participants about whether the code of ethics is needed for an organisation revealed different opinions demonstrating a troublesome situation. At the beginning, some of the participants stated that the code of ethics is not necessary for an educational institution, but later during the discussion they changed their opinions saying that probably it is necessary and provided supporting arguments. Therefore, the summary of collected responses (Table 4) represents the number of responses, not the number of participants.

Table 4

The need for the code of ethics from the standpoint of participants. (Why is the code of ethics needed/not needed in the organisation?)

Category	Subcategory	Number of responses	Extract from the interview protocol
Needed	It describes the boundaries for conduct.	8	<i>...when the emphases of ethics is clearly set, it clarifies the issues and sets certain boundaries because ethics is the issue where you can get very unspecific. The written code of ethics provides more concrete boundaries which allow to keeps things within these boundaries making them clearer and more concrete. (Participant Nr. 3)</i>
	It promotes the sense of community.	3	<i>The mutual agreement, mutual values, mutual attitude and probably world-view as well as the team are required. The code of ethics can serve as that one single thing which unifies and brings people together. (Participant Nr. 2)</i>
	It helps to solve arising conflicts.	4	<i>...when there are other people around you and when you work in a real organisation, there are certain people with whom you interact. And sometimes various conflict situations may arise and so on. When the code of ethics, which really sets certain boundaries, is available, all arising situations can be solved and emotions won't lead in finding the solution. (Participant Nr. 1)</i>
Not needed	Ethics is the part of the inner morality (part of the morally strong personality).	4	<i>I think that those laws of ethics/morality already exist inside every individual. ... I think that the formal document might not be needed at all. If an individual sees that he/she is treated properly, with respect and is valued as a person, I think that this individual will respond in the same way. (Participant Nr. 5)</i>
	It is rather a formal document.	3	<i>I think that the situation with that code of ethics is similar to the Hippocratic Oath in medicine. Modern doctors do not even use it anymore; the new formula was developed, some of the words were taken out, something else was changed, and everything became formal. Abortion is a norm because the laws permit it, and when performing an abortion procedure the doctor kills the foetus, but it is not a murder but a cleaning procedure and help for the woman. (Participant Nr. 5)</i>

In total 15 participants stated that in one way or another the code of ethics is required for the organisation, but 7 participants had doubts, according to them, not everything depends on the formal document of the code of ethics and it is very important to consider what the inner morality of an individual and his/her inner culture are and whether his/her values are strong enough.

Conclusion and discussion

The study revealed that learning in the organisation (the case for a code of ethics in the organisation) is quite important because it defines certain moral norms and rules within the organisation, and every member of the organisation should follow these norms and rules in order for different attitudes and beliefs not to interfere with pursuing the set goal. The code of ethics might promote ethical management/leadership and act as prevention in potential conflict situations. The code of ethics determines both the positive microclimate of the whole organisation and the progress factors of every member of the organisation.

The empirical research has supported the statement that the code of ethics (conduct) performs both direct (making the optimal decision; it helps to depersonalise in the process of decision-making) and indirect (encouraging exemplary behaviour; it promotes responsible interaction and communication) functions. The codes of ethics also reveal the managerial/leadership approach as they are oriented towards compliance. Based on the data collected during the interviews, it can be concluded that employees of the educational organisation quite rarely have to deal with the code of ethics (conduct). It happens like this because the infrastructure of ethics in the educational organisation is not well-developed yet, and ethics itself is comprehended quite subjectively and in many different ways.

The majority of participants stated that they are aware of the presence of a code of ethics in their educational organisations and mentioned that the code of ethics in the educational organisation is needed in order to provide the guidelines for proper conduct/performance and to encourage the sense of community or help in solving arising conflicts. Also, some of the participants suggested that the code of ethics in the educational organisation exists and works not only based on the individual's experiences but also from the mutual experience of the members of the educational organisation. The experience of participants related to the code of ethics is usually manifested in two areas of the education specialists' activities, which are communicational and organisational activities. According to the employees of the educational organisations, an ethical organisation is an organisation where tolerance, a sense of community in the activities, respect, and personal inner culture prevail.

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Section II

Work-based learning: Asian and European patterns and analyses

Workplace learning in China¹

Lifelong learning has become popular both in daily life and in the research field in recent years in China. It is widely accepted that lifelong learning is beneficial to the comprehensive development of human beings and the building of a learning society as well as the sustainable development of business organisations. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research about workplace learning in China. The present study is intended to investigate the current situation of workplace learning and its effects on employees in Chinese organisations. A questionnaire survey was conducted and 1,000 questionnaires were distributed in two types of industries – banking and manufacturing – covering different geographic and organisation-characteristics. From each organisation 10 to 40 employees were sampled randomly. In total 620 responses were collected with a response rate of 62%; 546 questionnaires were used in the analyses. The results demonstrate that Chinese employees have a relatively strong desire to improve their knowledge and skills and that they have a strong sense of participation in workplace learning and can get some support from employers. At the same time, most employers provide training or courses about job-related knowledge and skills. Workplace learning consists of compulsory and voluntary learning, of which induction courses for new employees and regular training courses provided by employers at the workplace are the main contents. The need to update knowledge and skills to prepare for another job is the primary reason for employees' workplace learning. Most of the employees believe that they have benefitted from workplace learning in some ways. Nevertheless, significant differences exist between/amongst employees according to gender, marital status, educational level, job types and levels. The learning activities provided by enterprises with different forms of ownership are significantly different. Possible explanations and practical implications are discussed.

Introduction

With the development of the knowledge economy, the construct of lifelong learning has been recognised and is respected by more and more people in China. Education and training are no longer just the responsibility of schools and other educational institutions. Instead, they are becoming a popular phenomenon in the workplace. Lifelong learning is defined as all learning activities undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective (European Commission, 2001). Its key characteristic is the centrality of the learner within formal, non-formal and informal learning experiences (European Commission, 2001).

¹ The data reported here are based on a large research project directed by the author of this paper. Yu-Kun Liu, Cai-Hui Lin, Rui Wen and Zhe-Quan Zhang participated in the data collection, data analyses and the preparation of this manuscript.

Researchers have elaborated lifelong learning policies and strategies in the European Union, US, Japan, Australia, and other developed nations and regions (Department of Education, Mission of the People's Republic of China to European Union, 2009; Wu & Zhao, 2002; Wu, 2000; Zhu, 2008), which have influenced some of the developing countries such as China where lifelong learning has become popular both in daily life and in the research field in recent years. It is widely accepted that lifelong learning is beneficial to the comprehensive development of human beings and the building of a learning society (Gu, 2008; Wang, 2010), as well as the sustainable development of business organisations. In recent years, researchers have begun to investigate the situation of lifelong learning of citizens in different areas of China (Deng & Wu, 2007; H. Zhang, 2010). Some of the surveys (H. Zhang, 2010) demonstrate that women in rural areas of Shandong province (middle-east of China) have a certain knowledge of lifelong learning and are mostly motivated to engage in lifelong learning to improve the education of their children. Many of them, however, cannot actually take part in lifelong learning due to the lack of organisers, learning materials, teachers, enough spare time, and so forth. Another research study found that as many as 86% of respondents in a survey conducted in Shanghai intend to be lifelong learners, but they were not satisfied with the policies of lifelong learning and learning society (Deng & Wu, 2007). Surprisingly, few research studies have focused on the situations of lifelong learning of employees in business organisations in China, except for a survey about the current situation of lifelong learning of employees in Macao (Li, Tang & Mao, 2009).

As for workplace learning, it is becoming an important component of lifelong learning. There are broad definitions of workplace learning. Mansfield (1991) defined it from the perspective of skills, pointing out that workplace learning was the learning style to develop abilities by learners at the workplace. Billett (1993) thought that workplace learning was a way to acquire knowledge and skills through the process of participating in real tasks and getting guidance from skilled members. Cunningham (1998) viewed workplace learning as a series of informal interactions when one person tried to help another.

However, there is a lack of comprehensive research about workplace learning in China. We searched the data set of Chinese publications using the keyword 'workplace learning' and only found 14 published articles on workplace learning in mainland China. Most of the papers introduced the construct and gave some detailed explanations of workplace learning as both a new concept and phenomenon, with one paper mentioning that there are some different features in the learning environment and learning process in Chinese organisations (J. Zhang, 2010). From the perspective of the learning environment, there are increasing demands from the workplace on learning because of the increasingly intensive interactions among the expanding work content, division of labour, transition of management style and enhancement of communication convenience. Chinese organisations tend to guide employees' workplace learning by linking enterprise efficiency with employee benefits, which as a result enhances the effectiveness of workplace learning outcomes. From the perspective of the learning process, intensive work competition makes people aware of the importance of workplace learning, and

triggers self-directed learning. However, the primary concern for workplace learning by employees is whether it would help them to achieve their intended personal purpose in the future, which makes learning motivation and interests more pragmatic and utilitarian. Unfortunately, there have been no empirical studies to date about the motivation of employees and employers for workplace learning, nor a systematic description about the effects of workplace learning. To understand these issues, more empirical studies need to be conducted.

The present study is intended to investigate the current situation of workplace learning and its effects on employees in Chinese organisations. After a brief introduction to the method and samples, this paper reports the analysis of the general attitudes of employees towards workplace learning, the current status of workplace learning, and what effects workplace learning could produce on employees' work and lives.

Method

A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data for this study. The questionnaire consisted of six parts. The first part asked the respondents basic information about their work situation such as form of ownership of the employer, type of employment, whether their education matches their job, and so forth. The second part was concerned with what they think about workplace learning. For example, one of the questions was 'Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements – Learning is always necessary, but it might not always be what you might choose to do yourself'. The third part included questions about how workplace learning is provided and used in the respondents' organisation. The fourth part was regarding the respondents' personal background such as educational level, yearly income, and so on. The fifth part investigated the effects of workplace learning and the final part was about the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Most of the questions were single or multiple-choice questions. Questions about the respondents' opinions towards workplace learning, a 5-point Likert scale was adopted with responses from '1 = agree' to '5 = disagree'. One open-ended question was included in the questionnaire in order to provide opportunities for the respondents to express freely their own opinions, ideas, and any other comments about workplace learning and the survey.

Sample

In total, 1,000 questionnaires were distributed by the director of this project with the assistance of human resource managers of organisations in two types of industries: banking and manufacturing. In total 18 companies were sampled from the south, north, east and middle of China, which represents the geographic characteristics of the organisations. State-owned enterprises (SOE), private businesses and joint-ventures were all covered in the sample, with 10 to 40 employees sampled randomly from each organisation. The survey was conducted from April to July 2010.

In total, 620 respondents were surveyed, with a response rate of 62%. A total of 546 questionnaires were used for the analyses (after excluding questionnaire data where respondents left too many unanswered questions) of which 280 were from the banking industry and the remaining 266 were from the manufacturing industry.

Of the 533 respondents who reported the type of their employment, 505 are full-time employees (88.9%), 9 are part-time employees (1.6%), 4 are self-employed (0.7%) and 15 respondents' jobs are on an intermittent, on-call contract basis (2.6%). Except for 40 who did not indicate their gender, 353 respondents (70%) were female and 153 (30%) were male. The respondents' mean age was 26.73 with a standard deviation of 5.52. Of the 526 respondents who reported their marital status, 275 (52.3%) were single, 249 (47.3%) married or in a stable partnership and 2 (0.4%) were widowed or divorced. Nearly 30% of respondents have completed their college education, 42.5% of respondents have completed their junior college education, and over 20% of respondents finished high school or technical secondary school education.

Out of 532 respondents, 187 (35.2%) stated that their current job matches well with their education and qualification; 110 (20.7%) respondents reported that education and qualifications do not matter in their job; 89 (16.7%) respondents reported that their current job demands a better education and qualifications than they currently have; 68 (12.8%) respondents were educated and qualified for a different occupation; 46 (8.6%) respondents believed that they are better educated and qualified than most people in the kind of job they are currently doing; while 32 (6.0%) respondents had no idea whether their education and qualifications match their current jobs.

Results

Attitudes of employees towards workplace learning

Description of employees' attitudes towards workplace learning. Question 10 (consisting of eight items) and question 13 (consisting of ten items) aimed at investigating the general attitudes of employees towards workplace learning.

In question 10 the statement 'If employers would support more general education (and not just for their jobs) for their employees, more people would want to improve their knowledge and skills' (item 10-6) was the most agreed-to question (mean = 1.47, SD = .72), which shows that employees have a relatively strong desire to acquire new knowledge and skills, either for their jobs or not related with their jobs. The second most agreed-to statement was 'When employees can actively participate in making decisions and solving problems, they want to improve their capacity to do a good job' (item 10-2) (mean = 1.59, SD = .73), which indicates that participating in decision-making and problem-solving encourages employees to improve their capacity to work well. Regarding the form of workplace learning, 444 out of 530 (83.8%) respondents agreed or moderately agreed that 'People learn best while they are just doing their jobs – they don't have to take courses to learn more and do their jobs well' (item 10-8). Only 52 (9.2%)

respondents disagreed or moderately disagreed with this statement. 'It's no good waiting for people to decide for themselves – you have to make people learn, whether they want to or not' (item 10-5) was the statement agreed to by the least people among the eight questions. However, still more than half (268 out of 525, 51%) of the respondents agreed or moderately agreed with it, which implies that employees believe that learning is a 'must' rather than an option. This is consistent with the result of item 10-1: 72.4% (386 out of 533) respondents agreed or moderately agreed that 'Learning is always necessary, but not always what you might choose to do yourself'. Yet more people (441 out of 527, 83.6%) admitted that the trouble with work-based learning lies in that 'It's not really something people want to do, but something they think they ought to do'.

Having recognised this problem, employees wish to make their own decisions about learning. Most people (480 out of 529, 90.7%) believed that 'When people can decide for themselves about learning, they learn more and get better results' (item 13-7) (mean = 1.58, SD = .76).

Employees' attitudes towards workplace learning are quite positive but for different reasons. Respondents mainly agreed with the following statements: 'Learning inevitably contributes to the productivity and output of employees' (item 13-1) (mean = 1.91, SD = 1.05), 'Everyone has to keep on learning because otherwise they risk becoming unemployed' (item 13-2) (mean = 1.92, SD = 1.09) and 'Everyone has to keep on learning because society expects it' (item 13-9) (mean = 1.95, SD = 1.05). This discloses why employees regard learning as a 'must' rather than an option: learning is believed to be beneficial to the productivity and output and, consequently, is expected by society or the employer. Therefore, those who do not keep on learning may risk expulsion by the organisation. In line with this kind of attitude of employees, it is no surprise that the statement 'There is no need to carry on learning once you have finished your initial education and training' (item 13-10) was the one statement least agreed to, among others (94 out of 523, 18%).

Regarding the situations that offer the best opportunities to learn new things at work, 'Coming in contact with people who have different skills or backgrounds or experiences' was the most selected one, making up 16.83% of all the selected items. 'When something unexpected is happening and you try to manage by trying things out' was the second most selected one (15.9% of all the selected items). Doing things that one is 'not familiar with' was also regarded as a good opportunity to learn new things (15.77% of all the selected items). However, the opportunities offered by 'Leading other people and telling/teaching them what to do' and 'Just looking at how people do things and imitating them' seemed not so preferable to the employees, with a percentage of 3.47% and 2.83% among all the selected items, respectively. A limited number of (4 out of 533) respondents reported that they do not really know how they learn at work, while 4 respondents indicated that there are other opportunities for them to learn new things.

In respect of why and when employees feel encouraged to learn at work, investigated by question 12, the survey results show that concrete benefits are the first driver for employees to learn

at work. 'Because I know it will bring me concrete benefits (e.g. promotion, higher salary, recognition)' was the most selected reason (28.15%). The second most selected reason (23.14%) was 'Because this is the best place to improve job-related knowledge and skills'. When the courses that the employer provides are really useful for their work, employees also feel encouraged to learn at work (11.53%). The second least reported reason was 'Because it is easy to learn at the same time as working' (4.86%). Even fewer respondents reported the reason that the teachers/trainers on the course are good (4.02%). However, another 11 employees admitted that they do not feel encouraged to learn at work and 7 reported that they have other reasons.

Difference in forms of ownership. The survey found that employees in organisations with different types of ownership have significantly different degrees of freedom to choose what they want to learn ($F = 4.94$, $p < 0.05$). Employees in private sector companies disagreed more with the statement 'Learning is always necessary, but it might not always be what you might choose to do yourself' (item 10-1) than those who work at other organisations (169 respondents in the sample, mainly from SOEs). Therefore it is not difficult to infer that there are more compulsory learning activities in SOEs that could not be chosen by employees themselves. These learning activities are usually organised and executed by the human resources department of the organisation in accordance with the requirements of the government.

Employees in different organisations perceive the expectation of society for workplace learning (item 13-9) differently. Employees in private sector companies and joint ventures agreed significantly more with the statement 'Everyone has to keep on learning because society expects it' than those in the 'other' (mainly SOEs) organisations ($F = 3.70$, $p < 0.05$). The possible explanation might be that in China private sector companies and joint venture enterprises are more performance-oriented and are competing in a more free market, therefore the employees perceive more pressure as well as more demands from the market and society to keep on learning.

Difference in education and job match. One of the points that draws the attention of practitioners and researchers is whether the education and qualifications of the employee corresponds to their job. It is assumed that if employees perceive that their job requires a higher level of education and qualifications than they currently have, they have two options. One is to quit the job to avoid the pressure the work brings to them, while the other is to pursue work-related learning opportunities to meet the requirements of the job.

The survey results show that whether the job requirement corresponds to the education and qualifications of the employee is significantly related to employees' attitudes towards workplace activities.

Statistics show that if the job does not require specific education and qualifications, employees who are doing this job agreed significantly less with the statement 'When employees can actively participate in making decisions and solving problems, they want to improve their capac-

ity to do a good job' than those who are educated for a different occupation and those who are under- or over-qualified for the job (item 10-2) ($F = 3.44, p < 0.05$). When employees do not know whether their job corresponds to their education and qualifications, they also agreed significantly less with the above statement than those whose education and qualifications match well with their job, those who are educated for a different occupation and those who are under- or over-qualified for their job. It therefore seems that participation in decision-making and problem-solving is not an effective means to encourage an improvement in work-related abilities for those employees whose education and qualification do not matter in their job and who have no idea whether their job corresponds to their education and qualifications.

Statistics also show that if employees are educated and qualified for a different occupation, they disagreed significantly more with the statement 'People learn best while they are just doing their jobs – they don't have to take courses to learn more and do their jobs well' (item 10-8) ($F = 3.21, p < 0.05$). This implies that courses are still necessary for those whose educational knowledge is for another occupation. In other words, for those employees learning in everyday work is not sufficient.

Furthermore, the survey results show that employees whose job does not require specific education and qualifications disagreed more with the statement 'In my organisation everyone expects you to take courses sometimes' than the group whose education and qualifications match well with their job and the group of those who are under-qualified. There is a significant difference among these three groups (item 13-6) ($F = 2.64, p < 0.05$).

Those whose job matches well with their education and qualifications agreed significantly more with the statement 'Everyone has to keep on learning because society expects it' than those whose job does not have specific requirements for education and qualifications and those who have no idea whether their qualifications match their job requirements. Those whose job has higher demands than their qualifications also agreed with this statement significantly more than the above latter two groups and those who are educated and qualified for a different occupation (item 13-9) ($F = 3.79, p < 0.05$).

Difference of personal background. A number of demographic characteristics, educational level and background of the respondents were also considered in order to understand better the effects of individual characteristics impacting on the attitudes towards and behaviour of workplace learning. Gender, education level, and place of growth are considered specifically.

Gender. For a number of attitudes towards workplace learning, there exist significant differences between female and male employees.

Female employees agreed significantly less than male employees with the statement 'Learning is always necessary, but it might not always be what you might choose to do yourself' (item 10-1) ($F = 6.19, p < 0.05$) and the statement 'People who do not keep up their learning should be punished by their employer (e.g. no merit payments or bonus, no promotion, be fired)' (item 13-4) ($F = 4.91, p < 0.05$).

For the statement 'If employers would support more general education (and not just for their jobs) for their employees, more people would want to improve their knowledge and skills' (item 10-6), there were also significant gender differences. Female employees' mean score was 1.43 while that of male employees was 1.57 ($F = 3.95$, $p < 0.05$). It seems that the female employees have a greater interest in general education than their male counterparts. Furthermore, female employees perceive significantly more expectations from society to keep on learning (item 13-9) than male employees ($F = 1.53$, $p < 0.05$).

Education. There are significant differences among employees with different levels of education in their attitudes towards several statements about workplace learning.

Employees with middle school or lower education agreed significantly more than those with high school/technical secondary school education, junior college or college education with sanctions imposed by the employers on those who do not keep up learning (item 13-4) ($F = 5.76$, $p < 0.05$). On the contrary, employees with high school or technical secondary school education disagreed significantly more with punishment than those with other levels of education.

Statistics show that employees having completed college education perceive more expectation to learn from both within the organisation (item 13-6) and society (item 13-9) than employees with high school/technical secondary school and junior college education ($F = 3.56$, $p < 0.05$, and $F = 3.49$, $p < 0.05$, respectively).

What is interesting is that employees with middle school or even lower education agreed significantly more that there is no need to carry on learning once one has finished initial education and training than those with high school/technical secondary school, junior college and college education (item 13-10) ($F = 2.83$, $p < 0.05$). The mean score of employees on this item with middle school or lower education, high school or technical secondary school, junior college, college, master and above education was 2.82, 4.07, 4.10, 4.10 and 3.80 respectively. Except for those with master's and doctoral degrees, the higher the education the employees have, the more they believe it is necessary to carry on learning.

Place of growth. There is a significant difference among employees who have grown up in different places in the attitudes towards the statement 'If employers would support more general education (and not just for their jobs) for their employees, more people would want to improve their knowledge and skills' (item 10-6). Generally, those who grew up in an isolated place or a village or small town in the country agreed significantly more with this statement than those who grew up in a regional town or a large city ($F = 4.74$, $p < 0.05$). It could be concluded that the employees who have grown up in an isolated place or a village/small town have a greater desire for general education.

The current status of workplace learning

Workplace learning opportunities offered by employers. Most of the training opportunities offered by employers are ‘courses that are held in special places on the company premises to improve job-related knowledge and skills (57%), ‘courses to make sure that all employees have basic skills (literacy and numeracy)’ (32%) and ‘spontaneous meetings with your colleagues to resolve new and special issues and problems’ (25.1%).

Many respondents participate in ‘manuals and materials that you can use to learn about new equipment, software and procedures’ (20.1%), ‘short workshops/seminars now and again that last for one day or less’ (23.1%), ‘courses offered by trade unions or staff associations to improve knowledge about employees’ rights (e.g. wage bargaining, health and safety, employee participation)’ (22%) and ‘e-learning courses that employees can follow at their desk’ (12.5%). In addition, 18.9% of the surveyed employees said that employers in the workplace do not provide any training.

Time for workplace learning. Most employers provide employees with work-related education and training, which focus on job-related knowledge and skills. Accordingly, do these training and courses take place in the employees’ own time? Some 36.8% of respondents reported that courses are usually offered outside working hours, while 13.7% of those surveyed thought that courses offered by the employer are always during working hours. Some 35.5% of respondents take part in work-related courses more often than not in working hours and only 7.6% said that their courses are always outside working hours.

Motivation and content of workplace learning. In the past 12 months, 34.2% of respondents chose courses for purely personal reasons, 31.9% chose to attend courses and got some sort of support from employers, but 22.5% of the surveyed employees ‘chose to follow [courses] in their own time and which were not supported by employers’. The ratios of employers requiring and advising employees to attend courses were 25.5% and 21.8% respectively. Above all, the results show that employees have a strong sense of participation in workplace learning and are able to get some support from their employers.

As for course content, respondents reported courses ‘directly or closely related to my current job’ (44.7%), ‘related to a job I would like to have in the future’ (34.6%) and ‘related to my job as well as to my personal development’ (29.5%). However, some employees thought that courses are ‘useful for my work, but not really essential’ (22.5%) and some considered that courses are ‘related to more general employment and work condition issues affecting all people in paid work’ (11.9%). Conversely, a small proportion of surveyed employees indicated that courses are not related to their work, and they thought courses are ‘not really work-related, more for my general education’ (17.6%) or ‘just for personal pleasure’ (7.1%).

Comparison between compulsory and voluntary learning. The survey considered two different workplace learning situations – that is, compulsory learning required by employ-

ers and voluntary learning undertaken by employees – which show some similarities and some differences in terms of content and reasons for learning.

Regarding workplace learning required by employers, the surveyed employees have attended ‘induction courses for new employees’ (48.2%), regular training courses provided by employers at the workplace’ (32.6%), ‘training related to technological or organisational change’ (30.4%), ‘preparation course for a promotion or a new post in the organisation’ (23.6%), ‘general courses to improve basic skills’ (7.5%), ‘short workshops/seminars lasting one day or less in the department’ (6.6%), ‘courses leading to a formal qualification provided by colleges, polytechnics, universities or private training companies’ (5.3%), and ‘e-learning modules that employees can follow at their desk or at home’ (4.4%). Some 19% of respondents reported ‘I have never taken part in any work-related courses since I have been working here’ and 12.6% reported ‘I have not been required to take any work-related courses’ since being with their current employer.

In respect of voluntary learning, the surveyed employees have attended ‘induction courses for new employees’ (37.9%), ‘general courses to improve basic skills’ (35.3%), ‘regular training courses provided by employers at the workplace’ (30.4%), ‘preparation course for a promotion or a new post in the organisation’ (20%), ‘short workshops/seminars lasting one day or less in the department’ (17.9%), ‘courses leading to a formal qualification provided by colleges, polytechnics, universities or private training companies’ (16.7%) and ‘e-learning modules that employees can follow at their desk or at home’ (8.1%). In addition, 9.5% of respondents said ‘I have never taken part in any work-related courses’.

Regarding the reasons for workplace learning, the main reasons for compulsory learning are ‘It isn’t really compulsory, but I know that I need to keep my knowledge and skills up to date, in case I decide to or have to look for a job with another employer’ (34.2%) and ‘It wasn’t my employer who required me to do so – it was myself, because I really wanted to learn, so I made myself do it’ (28.4%). However, the main reasons for voluntary learning are ‘It is my responsibility to make sure I can do my job well’ (40.5%) and ‘I know that I need to keep my knowledge and skills up to date, in case I decide to or have to look for a job with another employer’ (34.8%).

Therefore, no matter what the type of learning may be, either compulsory or voluntary learning, ‘induction courses for new employees’ and ‘regular training courses provided by employers at the workplace’ are the main elements of workplace learning. The need to update knowledge and skills to prepare themselves for another job is the primary reason for employees’ workplace learning.

The effects of workplace learning

The benefits of workplace learning. Most of the respondents thought that they have benefitted from learning at the workplace in some way or other. Some 39.6% of the respon-

dents reported that they can do their job better as a result of workplace learning. Also, employees thought that they have benefited from workplace learning in terms of personal growth and self-identity (39.4%), sense of autonomy and judgement (38.5%), confidence and self-respect (36.8%), job security (24.0%), salary rise (22.0%), appreciation and recognition from colleagues (13.9%), sense of belonging to the organisation (6.9%), promotion (3.2%), etc.

Chi-square tests were administered to analyse the differences between/among respondent groups. Significant difference was only found in the evaluation of the benefits of workplace learning between married and unmarried employees. More unmarried employees than married employees reported that they gained more confidence and self-respect from workplace learning ($\chi^2 = 7.168$, $p < .01$). Unmarried employees are commonly younger than married employees, which mean they are less proficient in skills. Through workplace learning, unmarried employees may improve their skill, which in turn raises their confidence and self-respect.

Positive effects of workplace learning on employees' knowledge and skills.

Through organised courses or in everyday work, workplace learning has positive effects on the improvement of employees' knowledge and skills. Most of the respondents thought that workplace learning through organised courses has a positive effect on their knowledge and skills in areas such as: getting on well with colleagues (80.8%), working in a team (75.6%), solving problems (73.7%), expressing oneself well (72.9%), communication skills (71.3%), health and safety issues at work (68.7%), appreciating other cultures and values (68.5%), confidence in public situations (67.5%), preparing reports, documents, etc. (66.1%), using IT (software, computer, the World Wide Web) (62.4%) and making decisions (61.0%). Meanwhile, a large percentage of respondents reported that workplace learning in everyday work has a positive effect on their knowledge and skills in getting on well with colleagues (76.4% of the respondents), working in a team (70.5%), solving problems (74.8%), expressing oneself well (74.5%), communication skills (75.9%), and so forth.

Chi-square tests were conducted to analyse the differences between/among respondent groups. The results demonstrate that there is significant difference in the evaluation of positive effects of workplace learning on employees' knowledge and skills between male and female employees. More female than male employees reported that through organised courses they improved their abilities and skills in making decisions and interpersonal communication ($\chi^2 = 6.391$, $p < .05$; $\chi^2 = 4.547$, $p < .05$, respectively). Also, more female than male employees thought that workplace learning in everyday work has positive effects on their ability to use foreign languages ($\chi^2 = 5.166$, $p < .05$).

Significant difference was also found in the evaluation of the positive effects of workplace learning on employees' knowledge and skills between married and unmarried employees. More married than unmarried employees believed that they can get on well with colleagues through workplace learning in everyday work ($\chi^2 = 7.089$, $p < .01$); while more unmarried than married employees reported that they can learn health and safety issues in everyday work ($\chi^2 = 4.176$, $p < .05$). Married and unmarried employees tend to pay attention to different issues in everyday

work, in such a way that married employees focus on work issues and unmarried employees focus on life issues.

Positive effects of workplace learning on the quality of employees' lives. Through organised courses or in everyday work, workplace learning has positive effects on the quality of employees' lives. Most respondents reported that workplace learning through organised courses has a positive effect on the quality of their lives in the working environment (77.0%), living in a multicultural society (68.3%), work-life balance (68.1%), health and lifestyle (e.g. diet, sports) (61.4%), family and personal life (60.7%), and so on. Meanwhile, a large percentage of the respondents thought that workplace learning in everyday life also has a positive effect on the quality of their lives in these areas (the percentages are 73.3%, 69.1%, 72.1%, 76.9% and 75.1% respectively).

Chi-square tests were conducted to analyse the differences between/among respondent groups. The results demonstrated that there is a significant difference in the evaluation of the positive effects of workplace learning on the quality of employees' lives between male and female employees. More female than male employees believed that workplace learning in everyday work can improve their connections with the natural environment and their community life and voluntary activities ($\chi^2 = 3.860$, $p < .05$; $\chi^2 = 4.319$, $p < .05$, respectively).

Conclusion

In general, driven by the pressure from outside (e.g. unemployment risk, expectation from the organisation and society) and concrete benefits, Chinese employees have a relatively strong desire to improve their knowledge and skills despite the type of organisation, employment relations, and job levels. However, the problem of workplace learning lies precisely in this passive attitude – learning is not something that employees want to do, but something they think they ought to do. Employees believe that if they could make their own decision about learning, they could learn more and get better results.

Employees have a strong sense of participation in workplace learning and are able to get some support from employers. On the other side, most employers provide training or courses about job-related knowledge and skills, which are usually outside working hours. Workplace learning consists of compulsory learning and voluntary learning, of which induction courses for new employees and regular training courses provided by employers at the workplace are the main content. The need to update knowledge and skills to prepare for another job is the primary reason for employees' workplace learning.

As for the effects of workplace learning, the majority of employees believed that they have benefited from workplace learning in some ways, such as doing their job better, personal growth and self-identification, sense of autonomy and judgement, and so forth. Also, employees reported that workplace learning, either through organised courses or in everyday work, has positive effects on both their knowledge and skills and the quality of life.

Nevertheless, significant differences between/among different demographic and institutional groups should draw much attention.

There exist significant differences in employees' attitudes towards workplace learning between female and male employees. Female employees are more interested in general education and perceive more expectation from society to keep on learning than do male employees. For those who do not keep on learning, female employees show more tolerance and agree significantly less with punishment directed towards them by the employers. Besides, more female employees reported that through organised courses they improved their abilities and skills in making decisions and interpersonal communication. Also, more female employees believed that workplace learning in everyday work has positive effects on their ability to use foreign languages, and their connections with the natural environment and their community life and voluntary activities.

As a result of workplace learning, more unmarried employees reported that they have improved confidence and self-respect and that they can learn about health and safety issues at work in everyday work. Moreover, married employees believed that they can get on well with colleagues through workplace learning in everyday work.

A number of personal factors exhibit differences in employees' attitudes towards workplace learning. With regard to educational level, except for those with master's or doctoral degrees, the higher employees' educational level the more need they perceive to carry on learning. Besides, place of growth is also found to be related to employees' attitudes towards workplace learning. Employees who have grown up in an isolated place or a village or small town in the country have a greater desire to acquire general education than those who have grown up in a regional town or a large city.

The survey also found that there are differences in employees' attitudes towards workplace learning depending on the extent of correspondence between employees' education/qualifications and their jobs. Employees whose education and qualifications match well with their jobs and whose jobs require better education and qualifications than they currently have agreed significantly more that one should keep on learning after finishing initial education.

The learning activities provided by enterprises with different types of ownership are significantly different. Generally, there is more compulsory learning in SOEs than in private sector companies. Employees in enterprises with different types of ownership perceive the expectation from society differently. Employees from private sector companies and joint ventures perceive more expectation from society than those in other enterprises (mainly SOEs).

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Workplace learning, motivation and benefits in the automotive parts and hotel industries in Thailand¹

Thailand is a middle-income economy in the process of repositioning itself towards a higher level of playing field in order to secure its competitive edge in the world arena. During the past three decades, Thailand has transformed into one of the most dynamic and diversified economies in Southeast Asia. Along with the demographic background of the respondents in the automotive parts and hotel industries in Thailand, this study investigates their work status and workplace, and their perception regarding workplace learning, their experience and the effects of workplace learning incurred by them. In both the automotive parts and hotel industries, workplace learning is considered part of the strategy of employers to upgrade their competitiveness and the employees have recognised the contribution of workplace learning activities, particularly in terms of productivity and the quality of their outputs or performances. The study finds that respondents in the automotive parts industry have a more positive attitude to their current situation at work than those in the hotel industry. Employees expect the cultivation of an organisational learning culture, where employees' motivation and their participation in the design of workplace learning activities are encouraged as a driving force. The study indicates the need for public-private partnerships to further encourage workplace learning for all, according to a lifelong learning approach.

Introduction

Economies across the globe, including those taking part in the ASEM Network, are recognising the need to reposition themselves towards a higher plane on a continuous basis in the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century. Against such a background, Chisholm, Fennes, & Spannring (2007) maintain that there is a different level of commitment towards lifelong learning via workplace learning.

In a middle-income economy such as Thailand, workplace learning for example, is an emerging, but not yet pervasive, trend (Wongboonsin & Rojvithee, 2007). This is despite the recognition of the contribution that workplace learning contributes to improvements in the performance and productivity, in quantity and quality terms, of both companies and their employees, as well as to the competitiveness of a national economy as whole (Ashton & Sung, 2002; Forrester, 2001; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2005). The

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author of this paper maintains that such a contribution is considered relevant to the Thai context where three challenges are currently prevailing:

- demographic changes in terms of a declining proportion of the young generation workforce while more and more of the baby boomers' generation are ageing and retiring from the labour market;
- knowledge-based and creative economy; and
- global and regional competition.

While there is still a lack of empirical studies that might lead to confidence at the policy-making level in order to encourage workplace learning on a lifelong learning basis at both unilateral and multilateral levels in the ASEM context, research in the area of workplace learning in Thailand is also still at an early stage (Chisholm et al., 2007; Wongboonsin & Rojvithee, 2007).

Given the above notion, the following summarises what one may learn from previous studies in the case of Thailand (Jongpid, 2000; Kongsanchai, 2001; Lawler, Siengthai & Atmiyananda, 1997; Phuteska, 2001; Puapongsakorn, Tangkitvanij & Chernsiri 1992; Siengthai & Bechter, 2005; Wongboonsin, 2006; Wongboonsin & Rojvithee, 2007; Wongboonsin et al., 2006):

- Among those businesses with workplace learning programmes, workplace learning is considered part of the business strategy to meet the challenges of globalisation and its recognition of the rise in the knowledge-based economy as well as the growing trend of dependence on international standards, either in manufacturing or service industries. Accordingly, the requirement for professionalism in the workforce is the trend in businesses.
- Workplace learning is expected to increase the competency of the workers in their work, and to result in an increase in productivity, a reduction in operational cost, profit maximisation gained by the company, and a higher level competitiveness for the company.
- The vision, leadership and commitment at the top-management level within the firm have played an important role in workplace learning in Thailand. Effective learning cultures that are sustained over time are more driven by business needs and leadership commitment than by policy initiatives.
- Workplace learning in Thailand tends to follow two approaches: formal training courses; and on-the-job mentoring activities.
- Training is mostly divided into two types of skills: basic and specific skills. The incidence of training arrangements is higher in large than in small plants.
- Emotional quotient development for happiness and success in work is a new trend for training in business organisations.

- In the manufacturing sector, certain types of employee are offered more opportunities for training than others: well-educated employees with a relatively long period of employment; those in the position of the chief of staff; and those working in a big company with a good human resources development system.
- A training programme can be considered beneficial to both employees and the business in terms of the quality of working life and work performance.
- The recognition of the benefit of workplace learning depends on the acceptance of the top management and the administrative level or the role of the human resources manager of each establishment to manage the workplace to be the learning centre for the workers in that establishment.

From the perspective of an ageing society facing the challenge of global and regional competition, further investigation through the lens of a learning organisation is imperative in terms of approaches to learning in Thailand and organisational provision as well as individual engagement in workplace learning. Among other things, the current situation of workplace learning in Thailand, as well as motivation and benefits perceived by the individual employee, still needs to be investigated in detail, in both manufacturing and service sectors. This is based on the notion that the economic wellbeing and performance or competitiveness of a firm is, among other factors, a function of employees' competences and motivation. The author maintains that competences are upgradeable through workplace learning, while motivation of the workforce can lead to improvement in competencies and firms' competitiveness. As Passer and Smith (2004, p. 327) assert, motivation is a process influencing "the direction, persistence and vigor of goal-directed behavior". Yet, such positive contribution of motivation might be expected when there are evident links to benefits of workplace learning as perceived by the workforce. This implies the notion that employees would not bring motivation to organisational productivity unless they are aware of benefits they would obtain (Hennessey, Perrew & Hochwarter, 1992).

The need to investigate the approaches to learning in Thailand and organisational provision as well as individual engagement in workplace learning, from the perspective of motivation and benefits, is particularly relevant for these two niche industries, in which workplace learning is still an issue of marginal research: the automotive parts industry in the manufacturing sector and the hotel industry in the service sector.

As part of manufacturing production, which expanded by 22.8% in the first quarter of 2010, the automobile industry, which was employing more than 300,000 people, recorded a growth rate of 86.6% (National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), 2010). Starting with one automotive assembly plant in 1961, the automotive industry has turned into one of the biggest manufacturing sectors in the country with the largest vehicle assembling capacity and the highest quality parts manufacturing capability in the ASEAN region. Thailand was in the

process of consolidating its status as the ‘Detroit of Asia’, according to Thailand’s Board of Investment (2005, 2010).

Meanwhile, the hotel industry is part of the tourism industry in the trade in services sector. To increase Thailand’s competitive potential on the international stage, Hotel Act B.E. 2547 (2004) introduced a hotel grading system in order to establish a consistent standard for hotels and resorts in Thailand. A tourism master plan was also launched, with a target of revenue growth of not less than 10% per year from foreign and domestic tourists, while the Board of Investment offered tax and other investment incentives to both domestic and foreign investors in certain types of accommodation, such as retirement homes. The Thai hotel industry also considered it important to raise overall standards by adopting internationally recognised practices to compete with world-class hotel properties on an equal footing. Yet, the industry was weathering storms. The vulnerability of the hotel industry was cited to have been due to ecological and socioeconomic factors, financial fluctuations and political unrest rather than due to human resource development issues: for example a severe-acute-respiratory-syndrome threat in 2003, ongoing unrest in three southernmost provinces of the country, the impact of the tsunami in 2004, and disturbing political developments (Watson, 2006; Bank of Thailand and World Bank, 2007; World Trade Organisation, 2007, p. 132–133) and recently – after the study was completed – the impact of the floods.

Our field survey of workplace learning was carried out in the automotive parts and hotel industries in Thailand, using a multi-stage randomised approach, in March and April 2010. The study relied upon a structured questionnaire jointly discussed and designed during the previous year by the author and researchers from ASEM member economies participating in Research Network II ‘Competence Development as Workplace Learning’ within the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub. A total of 1,000 sets of questionnaires were distributed to companies in the Thai economy. The survey missed the target of 300 returned questionnaires and yielded 144 returned questionnaires – on an anonymous basis – of which 66 questionnaires were from the automotive parts industry and 78 from the hotel industry. The completed responses were processed, stored and analysed on a confidential basis. The survey has yielded important insights into the practice of workplace learning from the perspective of the workforce in both industries.

While the automotive parts industry was male dominated, it was the opposite in the hotel industry, as shown in Figure 1. Yet, in both cases, a gender imbalance prevailed in administrative positions, given that there were more males than females. The mean age of the respondents in the automotive parts industry was slightly higher than that of the hotel industry.

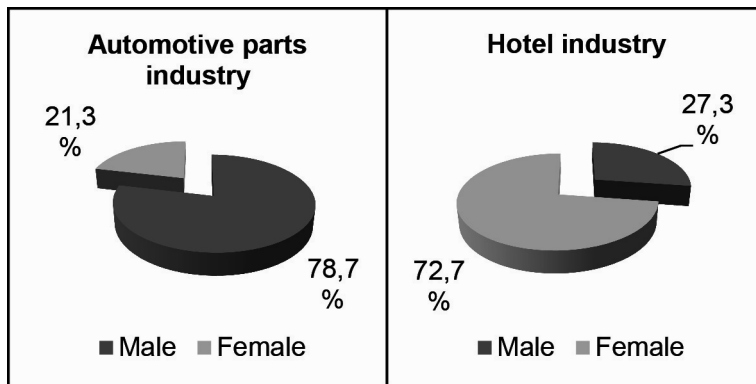


Figure 1: Respondents by gender and industry

Despite the majority of respondents in the automotive parts industry living in a large city and those in the hotel industry coming mainly from a village or small town in the countryside, most of the respondents in both industries had completed their education at least to Bachelor degree level, higher than that of their parents, and served as a full-time worker at the workplace. The respondents in the automotive parts industry earned more than those in the hotel industry. This is based on the notion that the former generally earned above TB63,000 per month while the latter mostly earned less than TB28,000 per month.

The workplaces in both the automotive parts and hotel industries participating in this survey mainly belonged to private-sector organisations. The organisations themselves vary in size, ranging from large to small. While big firms constitute the majority in the automotive parts industry, most of the employees in the hotel industry participating in this survey are from a medium-sized firm. In both industries, the particular workplaces of the respondents varied in size, ranging from 1–5 employees to 21 and over.

The present analysis aims to explore the following issues: the demographic and socioeconomic background of the workforce in the automotive parts and hotel industries in Thailand; their work status and workplace; their perception regarding workplace learning, as well as their experience and the effects of workplace learning incurred by them. This is through the lens of motivation and benefits of workplace learning as perceived by the workforce.

Workplace learning, motivation and benefits

The study finds that the respondents in both industries mainly considered their education and qualification to match well with their current job (see Figure 2). This is confirmed by their high mean value of agreement with the statement ‘I feel appreciation for the work I’m doing,’ (q9.5 equally at 4.12). Yet, such a positive perception is more evident among the administrative

workforce than the non-administrative/technical employees in both industries. Despite the workforces in both industries sharing the perception of more intrinsic (q9.2 and q9.5 personal satisfaction) than extrinsic motivation (q9.3 financial satisfaction), it is not clear if they would contribute to organisational productivity on a sustained basis. This is based on the notion of their agreement to a considerable extent with the statement ‘I work only for the reason that my work provides the means to survive’ (q9.1), with a higher mean value in the hotel industry (4.21) than that of the automotive parts industry (3.94), and among non-administrative/technical employees in both industries (4.22 and 4.02, respectively).

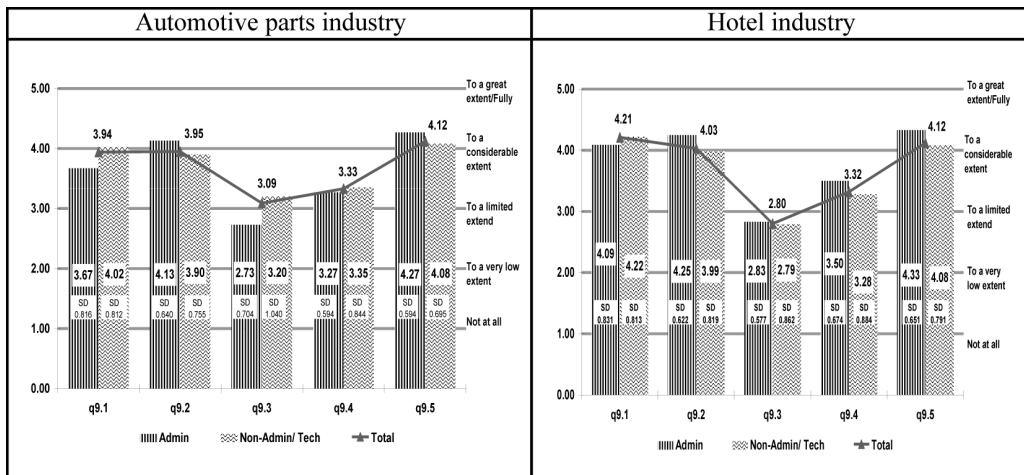


Figure 2: Perception of current situation at work (mean)

Note: q9.1 = I work only for the reason that my work provides the means to survive
q9.2 = The work I'm doing makes me feel good
q9.3 = I have more financial satisfaction than personal satisfaction from my work
q9.4 = I have more personal satisfaction than financial satisfaction from my work
q9.5 = I feel appreciation for the work I'm doing
SD = Standard Deviation

The study finds that the workforce respondents, either administrative or non-administrative, in both industries share a positive perception of workplace learning. This is particularly in terms of its intrinsic contribution to their competencies in decision making or problem solving (q10.2), as shown in Figure 3. It is acceptable if workplace learning is top-down oriented (q10.3). Moreover, a structured approach of training packages (q10.3) seems preferable to a non-structured approach while they are undertaking their work (q10.8). This is particularly the case in the automotive parts industry.

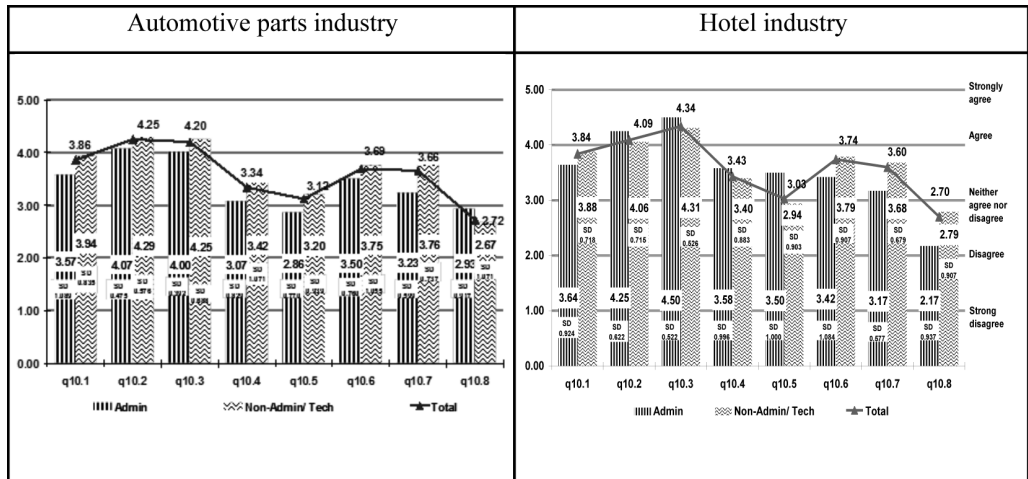


Figure 3: Perception of learning at work (mean)

- Note:
- q10.1 = Learning is always necessary, but it might not always be what you might choose to do yourself
 - q10.2 = When employees can actively participate in making decisions and solving problems, they want to improve their capacity to do a good job
 - q10.3 = Employers have the right to insist that employees follow certain courses and obtain certain qualifications
 - q10.4 = People have to be able to choose freely what, how and when they want to learn, otherwise they will not want to participate in work-related education and training
 - q10.5 = It's no good waiting for people to decide for themselves – you have to make people learn, whether they want to or not
 - q10.6 = If employers would support more general education (and not just for their jobs) for their employees, more people would want to improve their knowledge and skills
 - q10.7 = The trouble with work-based learning is that it's not really something people want to do, but something they think they ought to do
 - q10.8 = People learn best while they are just doing their jobs – they don't have to take courses to learn more and do their jobs well
- SD = Standard Deviation

The above-mentioned employees' preference for a top-down approach to workplace learning is consistent with the dominating norm in both industries, where employers consider workplace learning as important and accordingly commonly invest in workforce development to upgrade the competences of the workforce in packages of training, as reflected in Figure 4 (q14.2, q14.4). Besides workplace learning opportunities offered by employers, the study also finds that trade unions in the hotel industry are much more active in workplace learning promotion than in the automotive parts industry. Yet, it is directed more towards improvement of knowledge about employees' rights (q14.3).

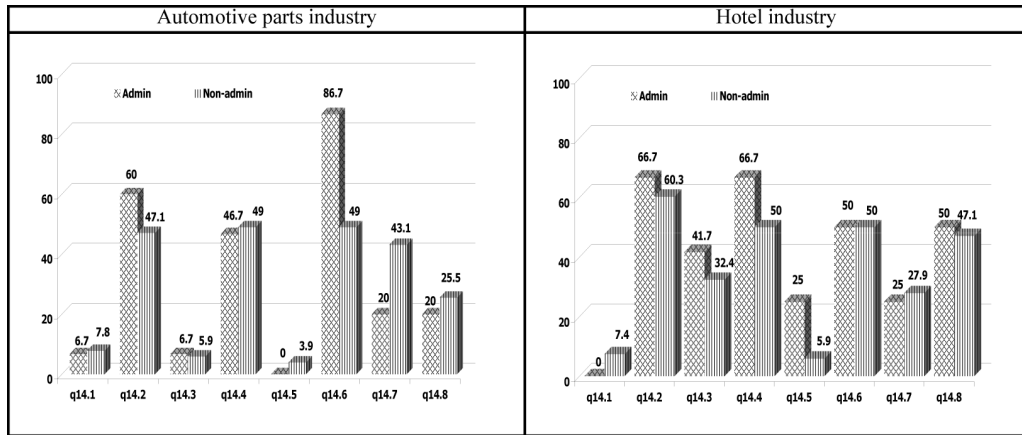


Figure 4: Workplace learning opportunities offered by respondents' employer

- Note:
- q14.1 = No opportunities at all for learning at the workplace
 - q14.2 = Courses that are held in special places on the company premises to improve job-related knowledge and skills
 - q14.3 = Courses offered by trade unions or staff associations to improve knowledge about employees' rights
 - q14.4 = Courses to make sure that all employees have basic skills
 - q14.5 = E-learning courses that employees can follow at their desk
 - q14.6 = Short workshops/seminars now and again that last for one day or less
 - q14.7 = Spontaneous meetings with your colleagues to resolve new and special issues and problems
 - q14.8 = Manuals and materials that you can use to learn about new equipment, software and procedures

Figure 5 reflects more positive attitudes amongst administrative employees in the hotel industry towards the top-down role of employers in workplace learning (q16.1, q16.3) as well as their recognition of employees who improve their knowledge and skills (q16.6).

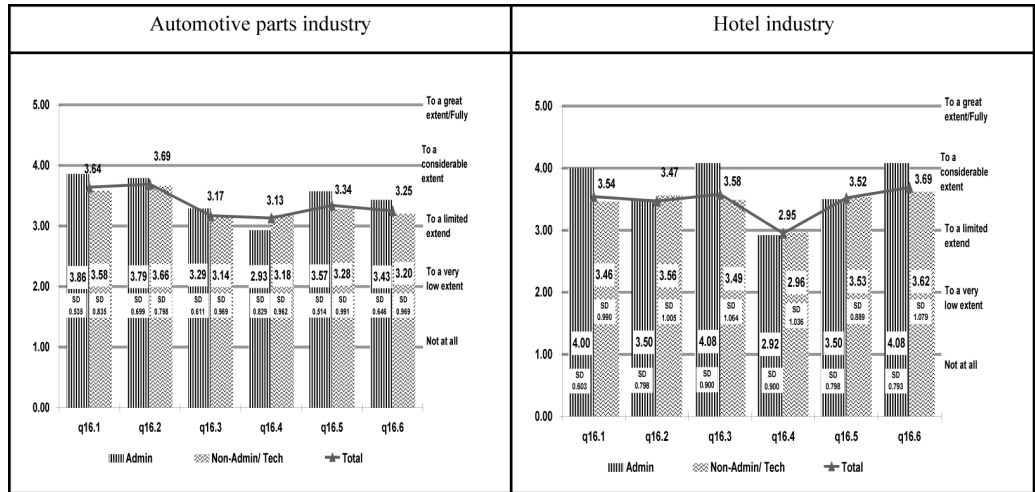


Figure 5: Role of respondent's employers (mean)

Note:

- q16.1 = Offers a lot of learning opportunities compared with other similar employers in my kind of work
- q16.2 = Offers me more learning opportunities compared with employees at lower levels of the organisation/company
- q16.3 = Makes it clear to me that I should follow certain courses
- q16.4 = Leaves it up to me to decide what courses I will follow
- q16.5 = Tries to make sure that there's enough time and space for employees to learn in working time
- q16.6 = Gives recognition to employees who improve their knowledge and skills

Figure 6 confirms the above-mentioned findings that employers' investment or support in workforce development is aimed at upgrading the job-related competencies of the employees so as to strengthen the competitiveness of the organisation (q17.2, q17.2, q17.4, q17.5). This is the case in both industries.

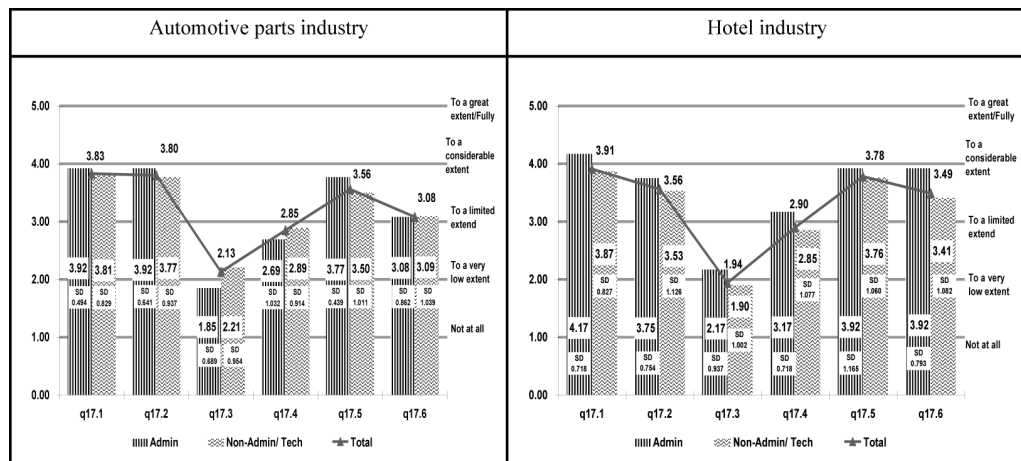


Figure 6: Employers' role in voluntary-based WPL (mean)

Note: q17.1 = If voluntary-based workplace learning takes place in working hours, my employer wants to see its relevance for my job
q17.2 = If voluntary-based workplace learning costs a lot, my employer expects me to show why it is important for my job
q17.3 = My employer never agrees to my participation in work-related courses
q17.4 = My employer only lets me participate when the course is required by the organisation
q17.5 = My employer is open to all sorts of proposals for work-related learning
q17.6 = My employer is willing to support work-related learning, but only when it leads to a recognised qualification

In both industries, respondents are required to participate in a variety of training packages, especially those employees in administrative positions. This is particularly for regular training courses provided by employers at the workplace (q20.6). Meanwhile, the non-administrative/technical workforce in the hotel industry is mainly required to participate in induction courses for new employees (q20.3)

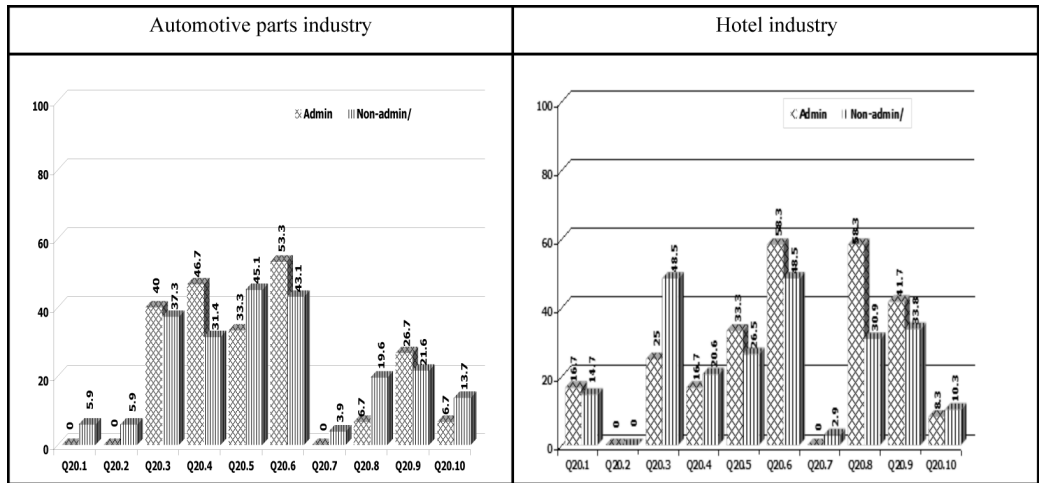


Figure 7: Respondents' participation in workplace learning as required by employer

- Note:
- q20.1 = I have never taken part in any work-related courses since I have been working here
 - q20.2 = I have not been required to take any work-related courses
 - q20.3 = Induction course for new employees
 - q20.4 = Preparation course for a promotion or a new post in the organisation
 - q20.5 = Training related to technological or organisational change
 - q20.6 = Regular training courses provided by my employer at the workplace
 - q20.7 = E-learning modules that employees can follow at their desk or at home
 - q20.8 = Short workshops/seminars lasting one day or less in my department/section
 - q20.9 = General courses to improve my basic skills
 - q20.10 = Courses leading to a formal qualification provided by colleges, polytechnics, universities or private training companies
 - q20.11 = Other activities

Regarding the notion that sometimes people decide for themselves to take work-related courses, in the automotive parts industry only non-administrative/technical respondents gave answers to this part of the questionnaire; to which four possible answers were provided. Those are: induction course for new employees; regular training courses provided by employer at the workplace; short workshops/seminars lasting one day or less in department/section; and courses leading to a formal qualification provided by colleges, polytechnics or universities. However, no answers were provided by the respondents in the hotel industry.

In general, Figure 8 reflects a certain degree of similarity in the perception of the respondents on the nature of workplace learning activities in both industries. In terms of the activities being carried out, they are mostly strategic in nature (q24.2), top-down and imposed on everyone by the management (q24.8, q24.4.), rather than by the employees (q24.3). In terms of the focus of

workplace learning, it is intended to upgrade the employees' competences (q24.5, q24.6) rather than their behavioral attributes.

In terms of the contribution of the workplace learning activities, Figure 8 also shows that the respondents in both industries share the notion that the activities enable employees to come up with good ideas to improve their work (q24.7) and to do their jobs better (q24.10). They recognised the importance of knowledge and experience sharing, for which the workplace learning activities had provided an opportunity (q24.10), and that workplace learning activities are something emotionally important for the participants (q24.11). Such benefits are more evident among the administrative respondents than those in non-administrative/technical positions.

However, the activities are surprisingly not very likely to receive strong support and engagement from employees (q24.7). This is the case for both the administrative and non-administrative respondents in the automotive parts industry, and even more so among the non-administrative/technical respondents in the hotel industry.

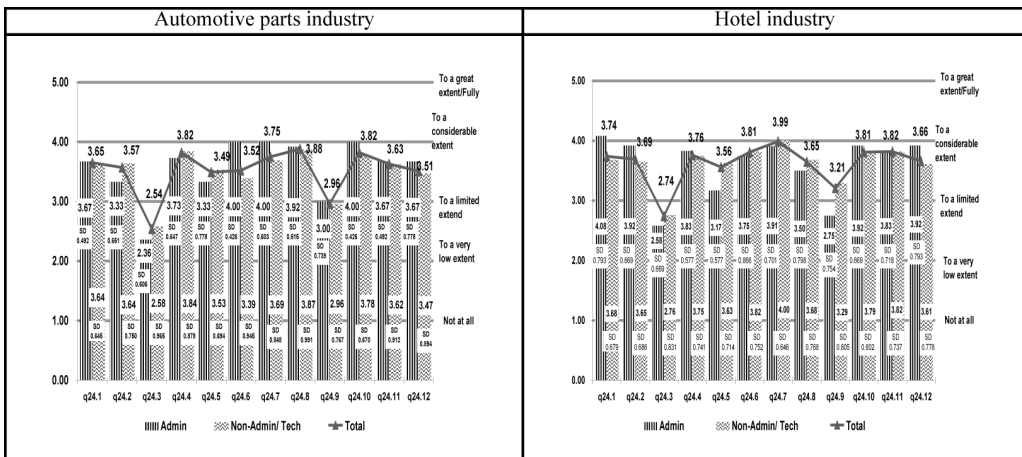


Figure 8: Nature of workplace learning activities as perceived by respondents (mean)

Note:

- q24.1 = Are mostly enjoyed by participants
- q24.2 = Are mostly strategic in nature
- q24.3 = Are mainly set up by the employees themselves
- q24.4 = Are imposed on everyone by the management
- q24.5 = Focus on knowledge and skills, not on how employees behave
- q24.6 = Focus on the qualities of individual participants
- q24.7 = Enable employees to come up with good ideas to improve their work
- q24.8 = Are set up in a top-down way
- q24.9 = Receive strong support and engagement from employees
- q24.10 = Help employees to do their jobs better
- q24.11 = Reflect the fact that individual exchange of knowledge and experience is important
- q24.12 = Are something emotionally important for the participants

Discussion and concluding comments

Based on a multiple regression analysis, the study confirms that it is appropriate to analyse each industry by job category of the respondents, i.e. administrative and non-administrative/technical category. This is despite the notion that the demographic, work status and workplace variables explain variation in the respondents' perception on the issues under investigation. Rather, this study finds that the job category of the respondents serves as the prime factor explaining variation in certain aspects of perception, while it is the second prime factor explaining variation in other aspects.

Table 1 demonstrates that demographic, work status and workplace background variables explain variation in the perception of the respondents regarding the role of employers in providing an opportunity for employees to obtain workplace learning by 7.0%. Among all the independent variables identified in Table 1, job category is the prime factor explaining variation in such perception of the respondents ($\beta = -0.319$), followed by gender ($\beta = 0.161$), educational level ($\beta = 0.136$) and income ($\beta = 0.092$) of the respondents. The following independent variables carry no explanatory power on such variation: length of service in current position; number of employees at workplace (size of workplace); and number of employees in whole organisation (size of firm).

Table 1
Role of employers in providing workplace learning opportunity (q16)

Respondents' background	β	t
1. Gender	0.161	1.029
2. Age	0.003	0.242
3. Educational level	0.136	0.609
4. Job category	-0.319	-1.393
5. Income	0.092	0.498
6. Length of employment	0.013	1.072
7. Length of service in current position	0.000	-0.329
8. Number of employees at workplace (size of workplace)	0.000	-0.823
9. Number of employees in whole organisation (size of firm)	0.000	-0.689
R = 0.281 R ² = 0.079	F = 0.902	

The study also finds demographic, work status and workplace background variables explaining variation in the perception of the respondents regarding the role of employers in voluntary-based workplace learning by 8.1%. Among all the independent variables identified in Table 2, job category is the prime factor explaining variation in such perception of the respondents ($\beta = -0.390$), followed by educational level ($\beta = 0.161$), income ($\beta = -0.082$) and gender ($\beta = -0.044$). The following independent variables lack such explanatory power: length of service in current position; and number of employees in whole organisation (size of firm).

Table 2

Employers' role in voluntary-based workplace learning (q17)

Respondents' background	β	t
1. Gender	-0.044	-0.366
2. Age	0.002	0.270
3. Educational level	-0.129	-0.766
4. Job category	-0.390	-2.299*
5. Income	-0.082	-0.597
6. Length of employment	0.003	0.322
7. Length of service in current position	0.000	-0.533
8. Number of employees at workplace (size of workplace)	0.001	0.131
9. Number of employees in whole organisation (size of firm)	0.000	-0.087
R = 0.284	R ² = 0.081	F = 0.936

Table 3 shows the demographic, work status and workplace background variables explaining variation in the perception of the respondents about their current situation at work by 5.0%. When considering the effect of each independent variable, the study finds the number of employees in the whole organisation or the size of firm to be the prime factor explaining variation in the perception of the respondents ($\beta = -4.453$), followed by the current job category of the respondents (administrative, non-administrative/technical) ($\beta = -0.200$), gender ($\beta = 0.122$) and income ($\beta = 0.122$). The length of service in their current position ($\beta = 0$) and the number of employees at the respondent's workplace (size of workplace) ($\beta = 0.001$) play no role in explaining the variation in the perception of the respondents about their current situation at work.

Table 3

Perception concerning current situation at work (q9)

Respondents' background	β	t
1. Gender	0.122	1.120
2. Age	0.008	0.965
3. Educational level	0.022	0.141
4. Job category	-0.200	-1.310
5. Income	0.122	0.981
6. Length of employment	-0.008	-0.985
7. Length of service in current position	0.000	-0.990
8. Number of employees at workplace (size of workplace)	0.001	0.855
9. Number of employees in whole organisation (size of firm)	-4.453	-0.288
R = 0.224	R ² = 0.050	F = 0.557

In Table 4, the demographic, work status and workplace background variables explain variation in the perception of the respondents regarding the nature of workplace learning activities by 7.8%. Gender is the prime factor explaining variation in such perception ($\beta = 0.193$), followed by job category ($\beta = -0.098$) and educational level ($\beta = -0.083$). The following independent variables do not explain the variation: length of service in current position; number of

employees at workplace (size of workplace); and number of employees in whole organisation (size of firm).

Table 4

Nature of workplace learning activities as perceived by respondents (q24)

Respondents' background	β	t
1. Gender	0.193	1.810
2. Age	-0.003	-0.396
3. Educational level	-0.083	-0.520
4. Job category	-0.098	-0.632
5. Income	-0.018	-0.149
6. Length of employment	-0.013	-1.555
7. Length of service in current position	0.001	1.238
8. Number of employees at workplace (size of workplace)	0.000	0.711
9. Number of employees in whole organisation (size of firm)	0.000	-0.923
R = 0.280 R ² = 0.078	F = 0.842	

The responses provided by the respondents in this survey may not well represent the perception of all employees in Thailand, and even of those in both industries under investigation. This is due to the limited response rates from the respondents, which was affected by the political turmoil taking place at the time the surveys were launched (which was agreed to happen simultaneously with those launched in other ASEM member economies participating in our Research Network on 'Competence Development as Workplace Learning').

Despite such limitations, this study found in both the automotive parts and hotel industries that workplace learning is considered part of the strategy of employers to upgrade the competitiveness of their firms. The respondents' participation in workplace learning is more of an imposed nature of a top-down management approach than of employees' self-motivation. Nonetheless the study finds that employees recognise the benefits of workplace learning activities, although these are not as extrinsic as argued in Taylor's influential motivation theory (1911) but are more in intrinsic terms of professional development and social needs.

The study also reveals, to a certain extent, a cognitive gap between the administrative and non-administrative/technical respondents on the benefits of workplace learning activities in both industries. The former have a more positive perception of workplace learning activities and participate more therein than the non-administrative technical respondents. This leads to a certain degree of doubt as to whether the employees at the technical level, or the non-administrative ones, and the organisational investment in their competence development, would contribute to organisational productivity on a sustained basis. However, such sustainability of the productivity at the firm level is not altogether hopeless. This is an implication of the findings in terms of the employees' expectation for the cultivation of an organisational learning culture, where employees' motivation and their participation in the design of workplace learning activities is more encouraged and considered as a driving force.

To secure its competitive edge in the world arena, it is imperative that Thailand – as a middle-income economy, vulnerable to high uncertainties in its domestic political situation and the global economic financial crisis – makes more commitments and deliberate efforts in human resource development. This is not limited to the employees themselves. Among other things, as suggested by Turner and Lawrence (1965), the employers should commit to encouraging a sense of ownership and a sense of connection to the work to be incurred among their workforce, besides the sense of responsibility and promotion for their accomplished work, which are considered as motivating rather than demotivating factors, according to Herzberg (1987).

The study implies the need for public-private partnerships to further encourage workplace learning for all consistent with a lifelong learning approach, as shown in Figure 9. Last but not least, as may have been noted, this study limits itself to a comparative analysis of (a) only two sectors, and (b) administrative versus non-administrative workforce, while excluding gender, which could be regarded as an interfering variable. This is because the two sectors vary on this dimension, most clearly in non-administrative positions. Accordingly, this study invites further research to explore, implement and evaluate intervention strategies for workplace learning on a lifelong basis.

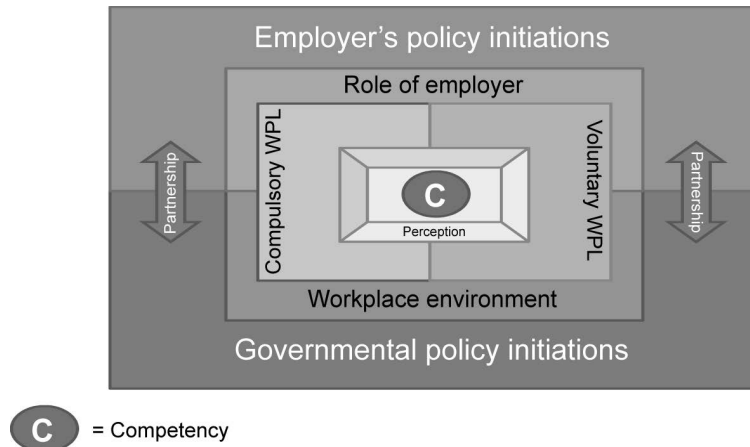


Figure 9: A human resources development approach to be considered

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Learning cultures among employees in the education and tourism sectors: A comparative analysis

Malaysia is moving towards its vision of becoming a high-income economy by improving its competitive edge and enhancing its position in the global market. In order to realise this vision, three conceptual and strategic plans have been put into place, i.e. the 1Malaysia concept, the 10th Malaysia Plan and the Transformation Plans. In view of the undeniable need for an educated and skilled workforce for the fulfillment of the nation's vision, this paper aims to discuss how two sectors/industries (education and tourism) are responding to initiatives of employee empowerment through workplace learning and also how employees perceive their roles in learning for both individual as well as organisational needs. This paper also discusses the motivational drives for learning. The discussion draws on analysis of a survey of employees using a questionnaire developed by RN2 ASEM members. The questionnaires were employed on a total of 381 employees from both sectors (education: n=180, tourism: n =201). The study revealed that respondents have positive attitudes towards workplace learning and lifelong learning in general. The survey also showed the positive support of employers towards workplace learning. However, there are still some issues to be addressed, such as the need for more flexible modes of learning to be provided in particular, and how employers can encourage more voluntary workplace learning rather than the current compulsory learning approach imposed by employer as a vehicle for promotion. This lifelong learning behaviour and motivation require more attention for future research.

Introduction

In 1994, the Malaysian Prime Minister of the day, Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad, introduced the concept of Vision 2020. The main objective of the concept was to ensure that Malaysia was a fully developed country by the year 2020 on all dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally. Though various efforts have been made towards realising this vision, the nation's progression to becoming a high-income nation has undeniably slowed down due to numerous challenges. In light of this situation, the incumbent Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Najib Razak, recently launched the New Economic Model (NEM) to accelerate the achievement of Vision 2020. One of the problems highlighted by the NEM (National Economic Advisory Council, 2010) is that the nation is suffering from a decline in skilled manpower, productivity, innovation and also creativity, all of which are much needed in order to progress successfully.

The NEM was introduced by the government in a bid to revitalise and stimulate national development. The NEM is comprised of four pillars: (i) the 1Malaysia concept: 'People First,

Performance Now', (ii) the Government Transformation Programme (GTP), (iii) the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) and (iv) the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP).

The 1Malaysia concept was introduced by Malaysia's incumbent Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Najib Razak, as a core philosophy that transcends government policies and implementations. Its main objective is to achieve the aspirations of Vision 2020, reinforcing unity among the multi-racial citizens of Malaysia and to enhance government service. 1Malaysia stands on two main foundations, the first being 'unity' while the second encompasses 'values of aspiration'. Both these foundations work hand in hand in ensuring progress towards becoming a fully developed country. The foundation of unity calls for the principles of acceptance, national spirit and social justice in our daily interactions with people of differing backgrounds. The second foundation of values of aspiration calls for cultures of excellence and precision, and values of courage, meritocracy, loyalty and perseverance, which are reflected in the concept of 'People First, Performance Now'. In short, this concept highlights the government's policy of prioritising the people and the enhancement of the civil service in terms of quality of public service and efficiency in its delivery. With these two foundations supporting the nation's development, a definitive transformation can be expected that will strengthen Malaysia's position in the world, as well as strengthen the ties that bind multi-racial Malaysia together (Prime Minister's Office, 2010a).

The GTP is an initiative aimed at addressing key concerns of the people while supporting the country's aspirations towards fulfilling Vision 2020. It is aligned with the NEM and the 10MP, which when viewed together create a cohesive plan towards making Malaysia a fully developed country. The GTP is mainly concerned with the overarching concept of 'People First, Performance Now'. Led by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, and supported by the Chief Secretary and the civil service, the GTP is a tremendous endeavour taken for the betterment of the people. It is centred on two main features: first, on what is most important to the people, and second, on creating fundamental changes on a nationwide basis to deliver immense results fast. Its endgame objective is conceptualised by 'Big Results Fast'. Six National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) have been identified as areas that require definitive transformations in a short period of time. These include (i) reducing crime (led by the Minister of Home Affairs), (ii) fighting corruption (led by the minister in the PM's Department in charge of law), (iii) improving student outcomes (led by the Minister of Education), (iv) raising living standards of low-income households (led by the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development), (v) improving basic rural infrastructure (led by the Minister of Rural and Regional Development) and (vi) improving urban public transport (led by the Minister of Transport). Each of these NKRAs has specific targets on the National Key Performance Index (NKPI) that must be met in order to ensure that the interests of the people are met successfully. The GTP marks a huge paradigm shift in government bureaucracy and mindset, as it compels the public service to become more efficient and effective, besides ensuring more proficient use of government expenditure (Prime Minister's Office, 2010b).

Lifelong learning and the Malaysian Economic Transformation Programme

The third pillar of the NEM, i.e. the ETP, emphasises education, among others, as a means of capital development. Education is an important industry that can help to improve productivity, inspire creativity, fuel innovation and propel the country towards becoming a high-income nation. From an economic perspective, the education sector contributed approximately RM27 billion or 4% of Malaysia's gross national income in 2009 (Economic Planning Unit, 2010).

The Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has recognised this opportunity and has developed various plans to improve the quality of higher education in Malaysia to attract consumers, including the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP)(2007–20), the National Higher Education Action Plan (NHEAP) (2007–10) and the National Higher Education Action Plan Phase 2 (NHEAP2) (2011–15). The NHESP consists of seven strategic thrusts that are aimed at attaining excellence in higher education. The seven thrusts are: (i) widening access and increasing equity, (ii) improving the quality of teaching and learning, (iii) enhancing research and innovation, (iv) strengthening of higher education institutions; (v) intensifying internationalisation, (vi) enculturation of lifelong learning and (vii) reinforcing the delivery system of the MOHE (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007a).

The sixth thrust of the NHESP, enculturation of lifelong learning, emphasises the opportunity for everyone to obtain education in order to acquire skills, competencies and knowledge. With the intention of implementing lifelong learning as a means to transform the nation, the MOHE has devised a Blueprint on the enculturation of lifelong learning (2011–20) that strives to overcome seven main problems: (i) absence of a fully-fledged lifelong learning policy, (ii) lack of monitoring of lifelong learning programmes at national level, (iii) lack of awareness and participation in lifelong learning programmes, (iv) inadequate financial support for lifelong learners, (v) inadequate mechanisms and infrastructures for effective implementation of lifelong learning programmes, (vi) overlap of lifelong learning activities and (vii) recognition (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007b).

The MOHE oversees five types of institutions that cater for lifelong learning, i.e. community colleges, polytechnics, public universities, private university colleges and private colleges. In February 2007, the Malaysian Prime Minister of the day, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, rebranded community colleges as hubs for lifelong learning. Polytechnics, on the other hand, have always been known as institutions catering for lifelong learning as they offer courses tailored for working adults, part-time students and also courses tailored for industries and private sectors. Besides that, all public and private universities and university colleges in Malaysia actively take part in lifelong learning programmes, with University Sains Malaysia being the pioneer.

An educated and skilled workforce is, without doubt, an important element in driving economic growth. Therefore, it is necessary for governments to invest in establishing the needed

facilities and infrastructures as well as developing other motivational elements to encourage lifelong learning among its citizens.

Malaysian Economic Transformation Programme for the tourism sector

Due to its significance to the economic and social development of a country, the tourism industry has been given the title of ‘invisible export’ by economists. Malaysia is one of the world’s top tourist destinations, making its mark as being in the top 10 countries in terms of tourist arrivals and also being in the top 15 in terms of global receipts. Tourism is Malaysia’s fifth largest industry, generating RM37 billion in Gross National Income (GNI) in 2009. The industry is expected to continue growing, with arrivals rising from 24 million in 2009 to 36 million in 2020. The tourism industry is targeted to raise its total GNI contribution by RM67 billion to reach RM104 billion by 2020 (Government of Malaysia, 2010).

Malaysia’s growth in tourism has mostly relied on growth in arrivals rather than yield, as 75% of growth has been from increased arrivals and 25% from increased yield. Going forward, we must focus on increasing yield. In order to attract the higher-yield segment, we will need to both improve and upgrade our offerings and services and enhance connectivity to our key priority markets (Government of Malaysia, 2010). The 10MP is geared towards improving this by aiming to position the nation to be within the top 10 in terms of global receipts and increase the sector’s contribution by 2.1 times or RM115 billion in receipts by 2015 (National Economic Advisory Council, 2010). Key strategies under the 10MP include catering to the various market segments while leveraging on existing tourism products and eco-tourism.

Given its contribution, the Malaysian government identified the tourism industry as one of the 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) at the core of the ETP. An NKEA is defined as a driver of economic activity that has the potential to directly and materially contribute a quantifiable amount of economic growth to the Malaysian economy. The 12 NKEAs that were selected are: oil, gas and energy; palm oil; financial services; tourism; business services; electronics and electrical; wholesale and retail; education; healthcare; communications content and infrastructure; agriculture; and the Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley.

The Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) Lab of the tourism sector has identified 12 high-impact projects or Entry Point Projects (EPPs) that could possibly generate RM28 billion in GNI and provide 200,000 new job opportunities by 2020. The EPPs are based on five themes. The first theme is ‘affordable luxury’ which entails three projects: (i) duty-free privileges for a wider range of goods, (ii) Bukit Bintang-KLCC as a premier shopping district and (iii) three new premium hotels; the second theme is ‘family fun’ which features two major projects: (iv) a new, large integrated resort and (v) the Straits Riviera which aims to increase competitiveness in high-end cruise and urban development of port landing areas; the third theme is ‘events, entertainment, spa and sports’ which is committed to three projects: (vi) targeting more international events, (vii) establishing dedicated entertainment zones and (viii) spa and sports (golf and angling); the fourth theme is ‘business tourism’ under which only one

project is planned: (ix) establishing Malaysia as a leading business tourism centre; and the fifth theme is 'nature adventure' which also features only one project: (x) Malaysia as the pre-eminent global bio-diversity hub. The 11th and 12th projects cut across all themes: (xi) connectivity and (xii) ensuring adequate supply with better mix and rates for hotels (Government of Malaysia, 2010).

According to a recent survey by the Ministry of Tourism, there are currently large gaps in the food and beverage sector, in front-line positions as well as a shortage of housekeeping staff. The hotel industry faces many challenges such as restrictions in hiring foreign workers for front-line positions and also in recruiting local staff who have mastery of foreign languages. Besides that, it is also difficult to obtain qualified and skilled workers. Continuous education, retraining and retooling for all stakeholders involved in the tourism industry are crucial, as the industry requires a large pool of human resource with adequate skills and knowledge to support it.

The tourism sector is a lucrative sector which offers boundless job opportunities and wealth creation tools that will assist the nation in transforming itself into a high-income nation. Therefore, one of the biggest questions that the sector must enquire of itself is how prepared is it in supporting the advancement of worker education. The same question must be asked of the individual workers. What are their opinions about the future of the sector and how will they prepare themselves for lifelong learning towards fulfilling the government's vision of becoming a high-income nation?

Workplace learning

In the wake of the changing context of work and new or modified competency demands, there is widespread consensus about the importance of workplace learning (Jónsdóttir, 2007). It is considered to be a key strategy to meet the challenges both from the perspective of a company's competitiveness and innovativeness and also from the perspective of an individual's employability (Aarkrog, 2005; Bottrup, 2005; Elkjaer, Høyrup & Pederson, 2007). However, workplace learning should not replace school-based learning; the two can, nevertheless, complement each other (Aarkrog, 2005; Andersen, Clematide & Hørup, 2004; Bottrup, 2005; Bottrup & Jorgensen, 2004; Rasmussen, 2006).

There are many reasons why organisations engage in workplace learning besides the obvious improvement in productivity. Lindell and Stenström (2005) explain that both nation-state and company motives for pursuing workplace learning can be economical, educational, social and cultural. A review of the literature reveals an exhaustive list of these reasons and the following have been identified as the basis for organisations to be involved in workplace learning: challenges of globalisation; regionalisation and the knowledge economy; governmental policy initiatives and supporting mechanisms; market pressure affecting prospects for profit making and/or business survival which leads to redefinition of company performance; growing recognition of international training standards and quality accreditation systems; technological,

product and organisational changes in companies; vision, leadership and commitment at top management level; and market success (Wongboonsin & Rojvithee, 2007; Elkjaer, Høyrup & Pederson, 2007). Implementing workplace learning is not only beneficial for the organisation, but it has also been found to be beneficial for employees. Work environments that facilitate and stimulate learning and competence development positively influence the health, wellbeing and personal development of their employees (Elkjaer, Høyrup & Pederson 2007).

Having discussed the benefits of workplace learning, it must be noted that not all organisations have been persuaded to engage in it. Many still show reluctance or show very little interest and have valid reasons for doing so too. Elkjaer et al. (2007) indicate that the crucial reasons for companies not being motivated to giving workplace learning a high priority include their position in the market, their business strategy and their organisational structure.

While organisations may show interest and invest substantial amounts in workplace learning, not all ventures will prove successful. A conducive environment is a precondition for successful workplace learning. Wongboonsin & Rojvithee (2007) suggests that strong leadership commitment is pertinent, while Tikkanen (2002) and Elkjaer et al. (2007) indicate that variation in work tasks improves the quality of workplace learning. Factors that hinder the development of quality workplace learning include intensification of work that is a consequence of rationalisation and downsizing, hence placing pressure on time (Svensson, Ellström & Åberg, 2004 and Elkjaer, Høyrup & Pederson, 2007).

Methodology

A survey was conducted among workers in two sectors, namely the education and tourism sectors. These two sectors were chosen based on the government's focus in its economic development plan (i.e. budget allocation). As mentioned earlier, these two sectors are pivotal elements in Malaysian's economic planning strategies. Respondents from the education sector were teachers and education officers, while respondents for the tourism sector were from two different subsectors, i.e. the hotel industry and the travel agency industry. The study was conducted in the Klang Valley area (capital city) and the states of Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. These three areas are considered to be highly populated areas on the west coast of Malaysia, where both education and tourism industries are categorised as key industries.

The questionnaire was developed based on a literature review and subsequent discussion between the RN2 members of ASEM LLL. The constructs were deduced from the framework of the workplace learning concept, which consists of formal, informal and non-formal learning that takes place during the term of service (employment). It included the best opportunities to learn new things at work, motivational factors to learn at work, types of opportunities offered by the employer and assertive factors. There were a number of independent variables involved in the study, including personal, contextual and physical matters or, in other words, variables that consist of internal and external factors which would contribute to the explanation of the

learning cultures at the workplace. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage.

Respondents' profile

Table 1 shows the distribution of 381 respondents by gender across both the education and tourism sectors. For the education sector, there were more female respondents (65.0%) compared to male respondents (35.0%). The opposite distribution was observed in the tourism sector where there were more male respondents than female respondents for both hotel and travel agency industries. The situation can be explained by the nature of the real population distribution of these two sectors. In Malaysia, the education sector is a female-dominated occupation, especially in large cities such as those in Selangor where the current study was conducted. On the other hand, the tourism sector can be considered as a newly developing sector where fewer females are involved due to cultural perception and religious beliefs towards the nature of the jobs in the industry. The difference between the distributions of gender in these sectors can be explained by the traditional view that becoming a teacher or lecturer is the most appropriate and respected career choice for a female, as opposed to working in a hotel.

Table 1

Distribution of respondents by gender across both education and tourism sectors

Sex	Group			Total
	Education	Hotel	Travel Agency	
Female	117	40	43	200
	65.0%	40.0%	42.6%	52.5%
Male	63	60	58	181
	35.0%	60.0%	57.4%	47.5%
Total	180	100	101	381
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by age. For the education sector, more than half of the sample population (88.0%) were from the 18–28 years old age group, while in the tourism sector, more respondents were from the 29–39 years old age group (hotel: 49.0% and travel agency: 47.5%). The distribution also shows fewer respondents in their early stages of adulthood working in the tourism sector. This is most probably due to the nature of jobs in the tourism sector, which involves numerous interactions thus requiring older, more mature and confident workers.

Table 2

The distribution of respondents by age across both education and tourism sectors

Age	Group			Total
	Education	Hotel	Travel Agency	
18–28	88	23	29	140
	48.9%	23.0%	28.7%	36.7%
23–39	71	49	48	168
	39.4%	49.0%	47.5%	44.1%
39–50	21	28	24	73
	11.7%	28.0%	23.8%	19.2%
Total	180	100	101	381
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In both sectors, more than 50% of respondents are considered experienced workers with more than five years' experience in the service (Table 3).

Table 3

Distribution of respondents by experience across both education and tourism sectors

Experience	Group			Total
	Education	Hotel	Travel Agency	
Newcomer	79	43	44	166
	43.9%	43.0%	43.6%	43.6%
Experienced	101	57	57	215
	56.1%	57.0%	56.4%	56.4%
Total	180	100	101	381
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

More than 60% of respondents in both sectors are married (Table 4).

Table 4

Distribution of respondents by marital status across both education and tourism sectors

Married	Group			Total
	Education	Hotel	Travel Agency	
Single	64	28	32	124
	35.6%	28.0%	31.7%	32.5%
Married	114	65	68	247
	63.3%	65.0%	67.3%	64.8%
Widowed/divorced	2	7	1	10
	1.1%	7.0%	1.0%	2.6%
Total	180	100	101	381
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Due to the fact that the minimum educational requirement for becoming a secondary school teacher has been raised to the possession of a Bachelor's degree, it was observed that more respondents from the education sector were Bachelor's degree and Master's degree holders compared to the tourism sector. A small percentage of high school leavers and diploma holders were also observed in the tourism sector (Table 5). This is due to the entry-level requirement of various jobs in the tourism sectors. The difference in educational level of respondents can be attributed to the nature of both sectors, as the education sector is more academic while jobs in the tourism industry are more skills-based or vocational.

Table 5
Distribution of respondents by educational background

Formal education	Group			Total
	Education	Hotel	Travel Agency	
High school	1	22	14	37
	0.6%	22.0%	13.9%	9.7%
Diploma	1	26	31	58
	0.6%	26.0%	30.7%	15.2%
Bachelor's degree	149	43	47	239
	82.8%	43.0%	46.5%	62.7%
Master's degree	25	8	8	41
	13.9%	8.0%	7.9%	10.8%
PhD	4	1	1	6
	2.2%	1.0%	1.0%	1.6%
Total	180	100	101	381
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The majority of respondents from both sectors are from families of lower educational levels than themselves (Table 6). From this observation, it is possible to infer that higher education is perceived as important for survival in today's competitive job market.

Table 6

Distribution of respondents by father and mother's educational background

Father & mother's education	Group			Total
	Education	Hotel	Travel Agency	
I do not know	10	8	9	27
	5.6%	8.0%	8.9%	7.1%
More education	14	7	9	30
	7.8%	7.0%	8.9%	7.9%
Less education	142	67	73	282
	78.9%	67.0%	72.3%	74.0%
The same level	14	18	10	42
	7.8%	18.0%	9.9%	11.0%
Total	180	100	101	381
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7 shows that more than 50% of respondents in both sectors originate from a village or small town. This is a sign of social mobility due to economic demand.

Table 7

Distribution of respondents by origin (place grown up)

Place grown up...	Group			Total
	Education	Hotel	Travel Agency	
An isolated area	6	3	2	11
	3.3%	3.0%	2.0%	2.9%
A village or small town	104	41	54	199
	57.8%	41.0%	53.5%	52.2%
A regional town	52	34	34	120
	28.9%	34.0%	33.7%	31.5%
A large city	18	22	11	51
	10.0%	22.0%	10.9%	13.4%
Total	180	100	101	381
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Results and discussion

The results and discussion in this section are divided according to three themes: (i) employee perception on education and workplace learning, (ii) employee reasons and motivations for workplace learning and (iii) employee perception on employers' support of workplace learning. All these aspects can be defined as contributing factors to the culture of workplace learning.

Employee perception on education and workplace learning

In the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose an answer on how their educational background matches their current employment. Figure 1 shows that the majority of the respondents in the education sector report that their educational background matches well with their current jobs (>70%). Less than 50% of respondents from the tourism sector report that their educational background does not match their current job positions, reporting that they are more qualified for occupations different from what they do now. Only a few of the respondents from this sector possess qualifications higher than is required for positions in the field.



Figure 1: Percentage of respondents' answers on their educational background and current job

Figure 2 illustrates the opportunities for learning new things at work. More than 50% of respondents in both sectors believe that the best opportunity for such learning usually occurs spontaneously; for example learning to solve an unexpected situation or problem at work through self-exploration. Respondents also report that they are able to learn from others, but only from people who have different skills or experiences (backgrounds) from themselves (education: 43.9%, travel agency: 45.5%, hotel: 41.0%). Opportunities for learning do not need to be actively sought, as shown by the 10.8% of respondents who say they learn by 'just looking at how people do things and imitating them'. Though this response may be seen as negative, it still presents a chance for employees to learn a new skill, as imitation or mimicking is one way to learn new habits. Besides that, a natural way of learning presents itself in the form of the common idiom 'learning from one's mistakes'. As the employees in both sectors are considered as adult learners, it is assumed that they possess a minimal degree of concern and motivation towards executing their job responsibilities correctly. If a mistake is committed, they must face the consequences which are, more often than not, negative. Thus, it is in their interest to learn how not to make the same mistake in the future. This form of opportunity was considered as one of the best ways to learn new things at work by respondents in this study. It was rated highest by travel agency employees (45.5%) compared to hotel employees (38.0%) and education employees (30.0%). From these results, it can be concluded that most opportunities for learning at work are in the form of informal education, i.e. through incidental learning or learning through mistakes, instead of formal or directive approaches. However, it was observed that respondents from the education sector do not find informal situations to be the best opportunities for learning. This may be due to the fact that jobs in the education sector are more routinised, while jobs in the tourism sector are less habitual as they deal with a more diverse clientele. Besides that, the educational background of respondents from the different sectors may influence the way they choose opportunities for learning.

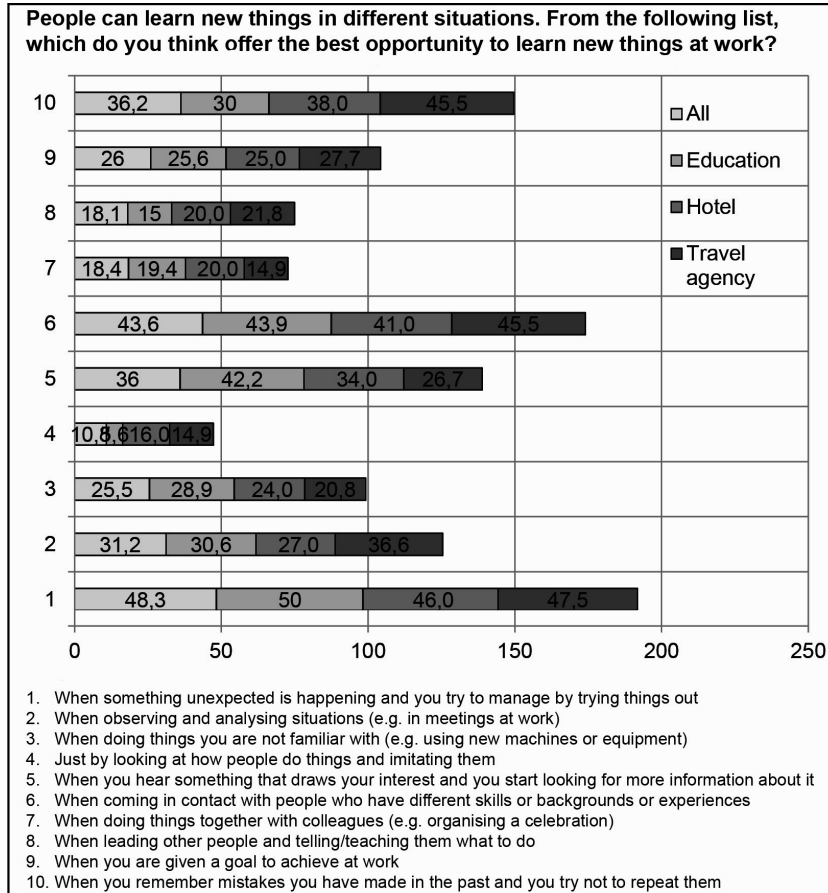


Figure 2: Percentage of respondents' answers on opportunities for learning new things at work

According to the list of course(s) that respondents have taken in the past 12 months, as depicted in Figure 3, the majority have participated in courses that are directly related to their current jobs (>50.0%). Respondents from the education sector affirm that they have attended courses that they think will strengthen their work progress and career prospects. On the other hand, 50% of respondents from the hotel industry attended more courses on general employment and work condition issues that deal less directly with professional movement. It can be concluded that respondents take courses that they think will benefit their current career position or aid in their personal development through professional (career) development. This conclusion is further strengthened by data in Figure 3, which shows a smaller percentage of respondents participating in courses just for personal pleasure or leisure.

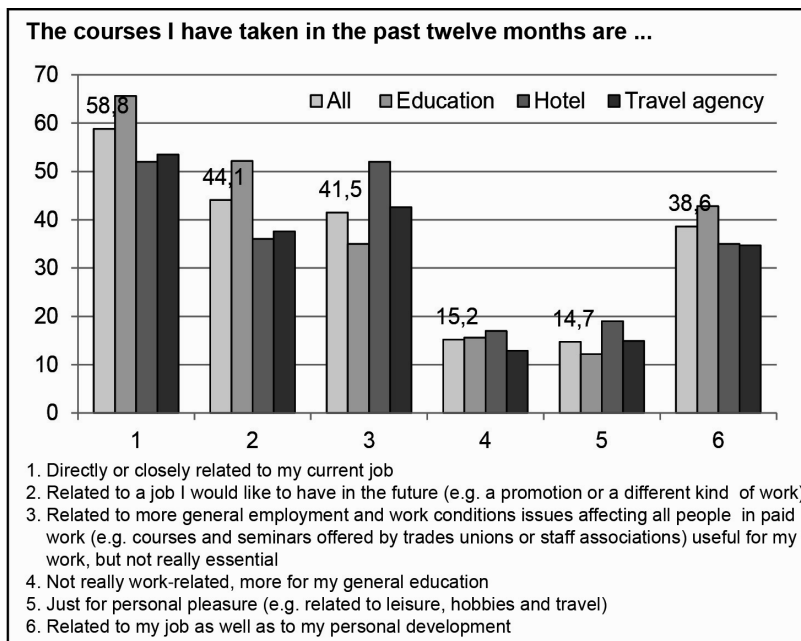


Figure 3: Percentage of course(s) respondents have taken in the past 12 months

Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of respondents' views on the positive effects of workplace learning on their overall quality of life. The highest rated response was for the reason that workplace learning leads to a positive working environment, while the second highest rated answer is that it enables respondents to live in a multicultural society. Hence, it can be inferred that respondents most desire secure, healthy and good working conditions. Besides that, quite a significant number of respondents also believe that workplace learning has a positive effect on the quality of their family and personal life. This was the third highest rated response and it further illustrates employee positive acceptance of the benefits that come from workplace learning.

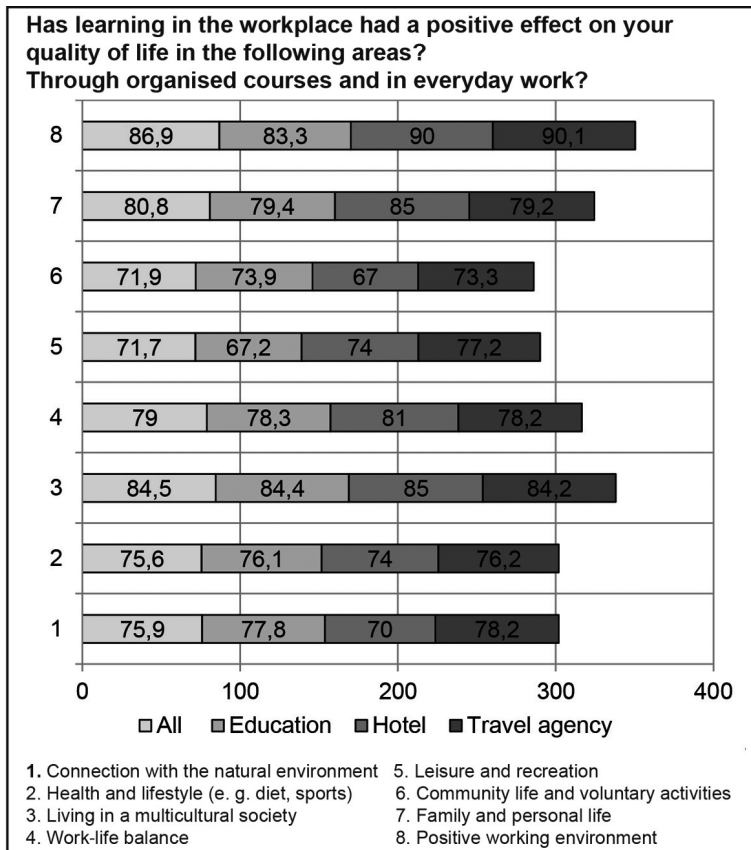


Figure 4: Percentage of respondents' views on the positive effects of workplace learning on their overall quality of life

Employee reasons and motivation for workplace learning

Figure 5 illustrates the reasons that motivate employees in both the education and tourism sectors to learn at work. Looking at the overall result, 59.8% of the total respondents report that learning in the workplace would bring them concrete benefits, such as promotion and recognition. However, it must be noted that this response was rated highest by employees in the travel agency industry, followed by employees in the hotel industry. Employees in the education sector, on the other hand, report that they are more encouraged to learn at work simply because they enjoy it. Thus, it can be said that there is more intrinsic motivation towards learning among education sector employees, as opposed to more extrinsic motivation for employees of the tourism sector. This situation may be explained by the different educational backgrounds and pay levels received by employees in both sectors. Besides that, 50.9% of respondents from

both sectors strongly believe that the workplace is the best place to improve job-related knowledge and skills, thus positively motivating them to learn at work.

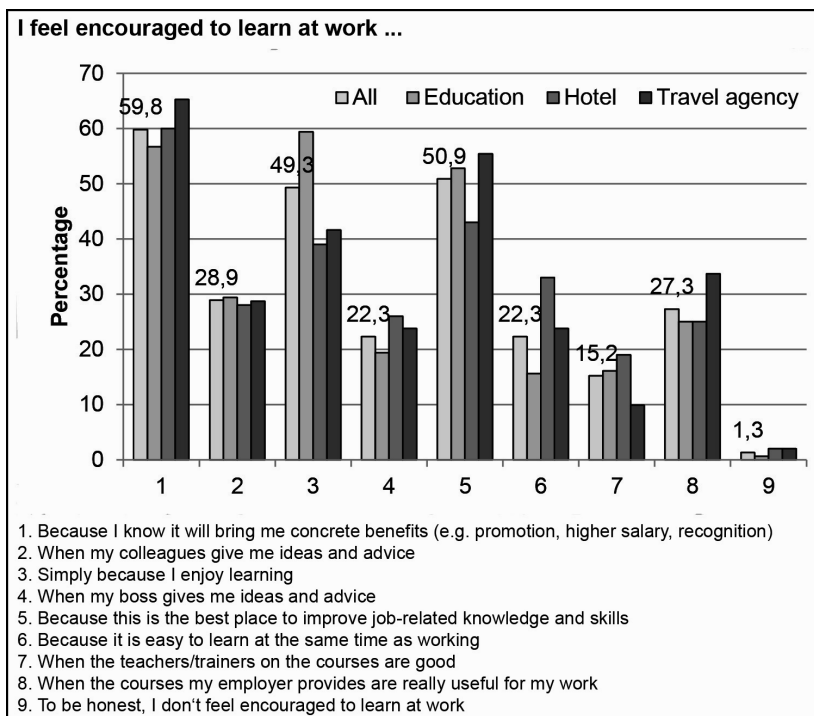


Figure 5: Percentage of reasons that motivate employees in both education and tourism sectors to learn at work

As can be seen in Figure 6, the top two benefits of learning at the workplace as rated by respondents in the questionnaire are the benefit of being able to do their job better and also the benefit towards work and career motivation, respectively. Besides that, respondents also value the benefit of gaining confidence and self-respect through workplace learning. However, it was surprising to find that respondents rated the benefit of financial rewards through salary rise and promotion as their lowest response. This may be explained by the Eastern (Asian) context of the sample population. Asians are generally of the belief that the fulfillment of responsibility towards society precedes the personal desire for material gains. Their performance in their job is driven by intrinsic motivation for excellence, and that if they perform as well as they should, they will be rewarded with financial or positional gains. This observation reflects positively on Malaysian employees' acceptance and commitment to the Malaysia concept of 'People First, Performance Now'.

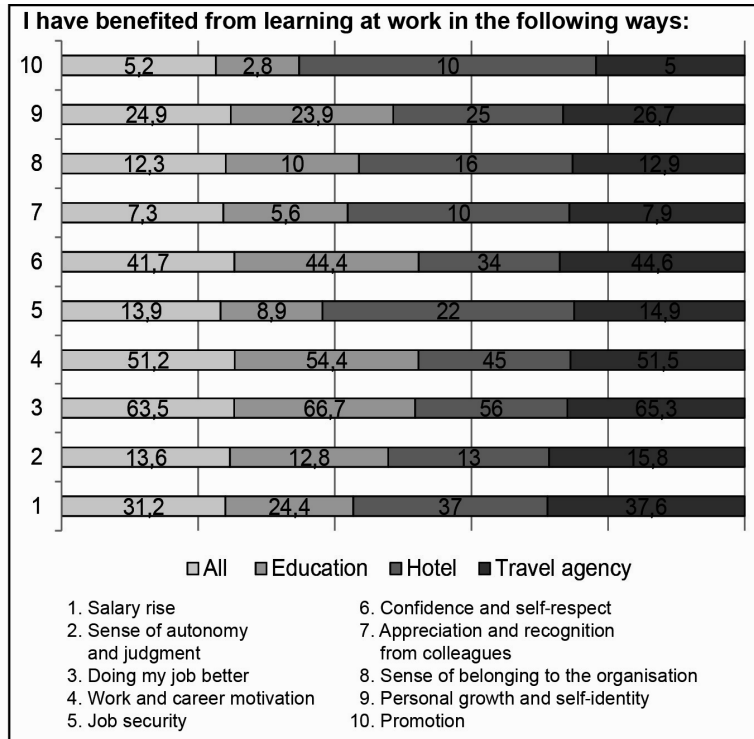


Figure 6: Percentage of benefits of learning at the workplace

The survey also reveals that workplace learning gives more positive effects on employees' generic skills. Generic skills or employability skills are skills required by employers besides those that are specifically job related. As can be seen in Figure 7, respondents chose knowledge and skills in communication, positive relationships with colleagues and confidence in public as the top positive effects that they glean from workplace learning. Furthermore, employees also felt that they were able to acquire positive knowledge and skills in terms of improved problem-solving skills and teamwork skills.

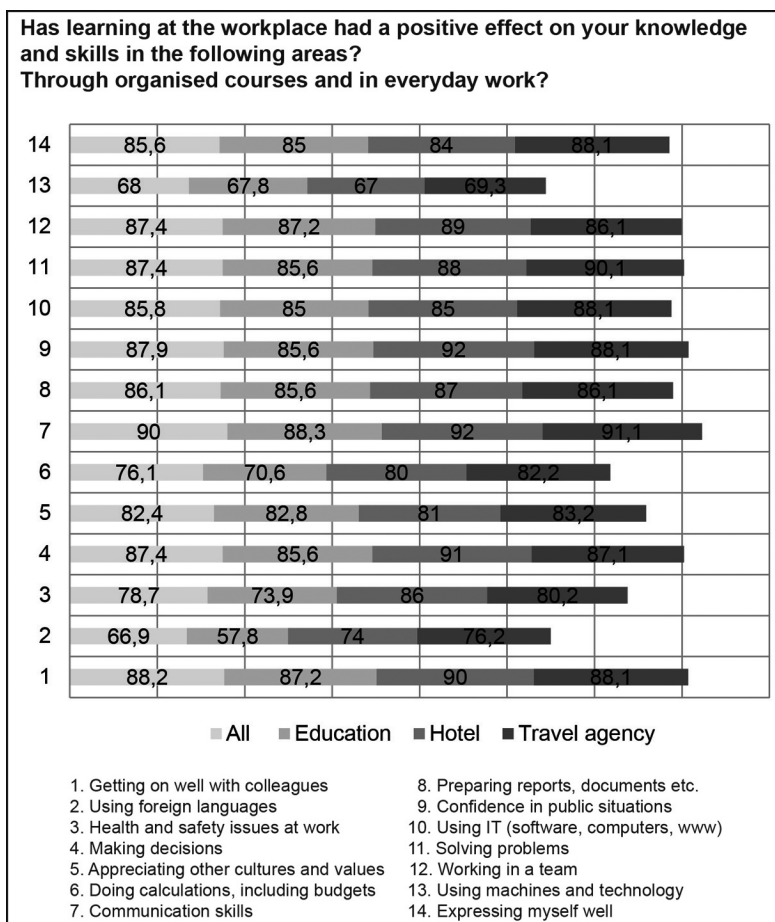


Figure 7: Percentage of knowledge and skills gained through workplace learning

Employee perception of employer support of workplace learning

Results shown in Figure 8 confirm that employers in both the education and tourism sectors do support workplace learning by offering opportunities for learning at the workplace. However, the types of opportunities offered may differ between sectors and individual employees. Employer support is shown in the form of providing opportunities for employees to join job-related courses and also providing space for training. The courses that employers offer to employees ensure that their employees learn the basic skills of the trade. An interesting observation that can be made from this survey is regarding the mode of learning (item 5); few employ-

ers support provision through the internet (e-learning), a mode of learning that enables employees to access or take part without leaving their workplace, as well as encouraging independent learning.

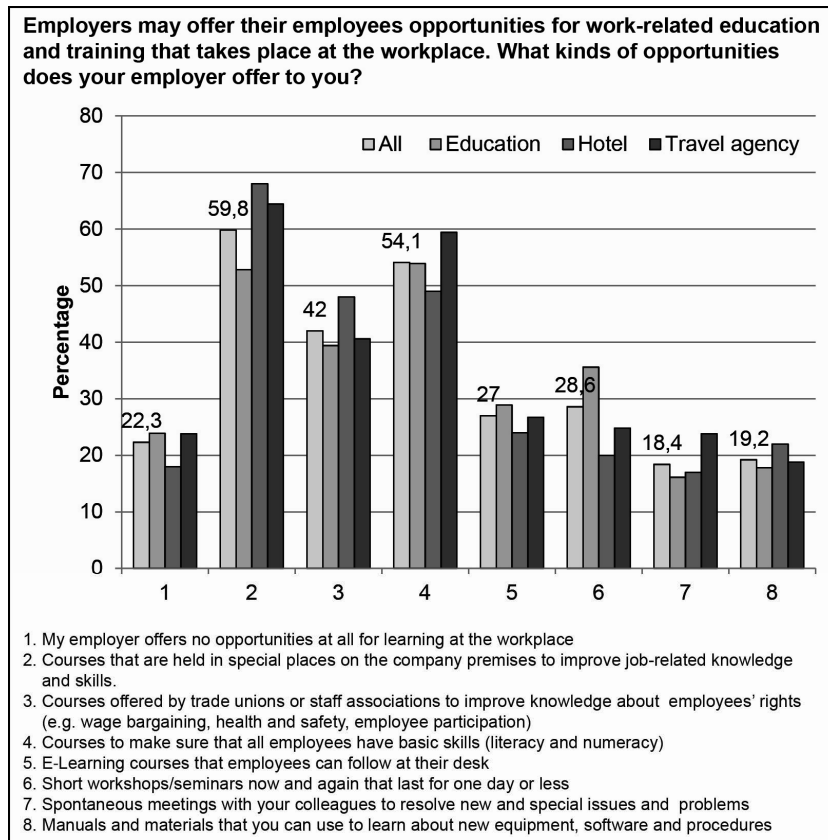


Figure 8: Percentage of employers' support of workplace learning

From the list of courses taken by respondents during the past 12 months, as can be seen in Figure 9, the employers in the education sector were more supportive than employers in the tourism sector in terms of allowing employees to personally choose courses that they would like to attend. In the tourism sector, employees attended courses that employers required of them. On the other hand, more employees in the education sector attended courses for personal reasons without being supported by their employers, as compared to employees in the tourism sector. It can be concluded from the data obtained that the education sector is more supportive of workplace learning for their employees in comparison to the tourism sector.

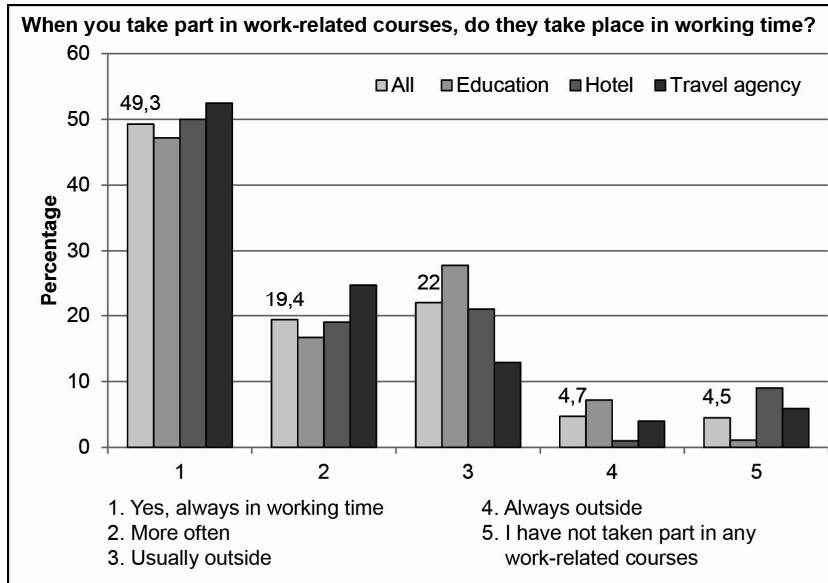


Figure 9: Percentage of location and time of the workplace learning

Conclusion

This paper sought to establish how employees from the education and tourism sectors of Malaysia are responding to initiatives of employee empowerment initiatives through workplace learning, their perception of their roles in lifelong learning for personal as well as organisational betterment, and also their motivational drives. From the discussion and analysis of the survey results, it can be concluded that employees from both the education and tourism sectors perceive workplace learning as positive. However some employees consider that their educational backgrounds do not match their current job positions, and that they are able to enrich their professional knowledge through workplace learning. The opportunities for workplace learning can be found both formally and informally; employees can learn formally by attending courses and they are also able to learn informally on a day-to-day basis through self-experience, peer interaction, imitation and reflective learning. It was found that respondents consensually agreed that workplace learning not only enhances the quality of their work and workplace, but also their family and personal lives.

The motivational drive for workplace learning differs slightly between respondents from the education and tourism sectors. This was illustrated by respondents from the education sector choosing more intrinsic reasons for learning compared to those from the tourism sector. Personal satisfaction was considered the major reason to learn by employees in the education sector while those from the tourism sector report that they learn to gain concrete benefits such

as promotions or financial rewards. Though the reasons for workplace learning vary, employees appear to realise the importance of personal and professional development towards ensuring a better quality of life. This realisation motivates them to actively attend courses that bring them benefits such as being able to perform better, enhancement of career motivation and also the general improvement of generic skills.

From the discussion above of employee perception towards workplace learning and their motivational drive, it can be deduced that there is large support of such initiatives from the side of the employees. However, employees who are positive and highly motivated towards workplace learning still require employers that play their roles in ensuring the success of such programmes. Though most employers already support the cause by providing opportunities for employees to join courses and granting space for training, much is still required in terms of encouragement for e-learning and also democracy in terms of the choice of courses that employees can attend. Thus, even though the general perception of employers towards workplace learning seems to be positive, employers need to understand workplace learning in a more democratic light.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the overall perception of both employees and employers towards workplace learning is positive. This is a gesture to the government's vision of becoming a high-income economy as planned in the NEM. The government's budget allocation for the education sector in the 10MP and also the transformation plan of boosting vocational education and lifelong learning seems timely. The mainstreaming of vocational education has increased its accessibility, opening up more opportunities for the people of Malaysia, especially employees of the tourism sector. One of the ways that higher education has been made more accessible is by providing vocational students a chance to further their education through the recognition of their prior skills instead of merely focusing on academic qualifications.

As a result of this research, several other questions must be raised. If workplace learning initiatives were to be put in place, how would the selection process of persons eligible for formal training be done? And how will informal learning be evaluated in order that it can be recognised as a legitimate part of workplace learning initiatives? In order to paint a more comprehensive picture of workplace learning culture, these practical questions must be answered. The benefits of such a culture will surely assist in creating a more efficient workforce that will power the nation's achievement of Vision 2020 vis-à-vis the overarching concept of 1Malaysia, 'People First, Performance Now'.

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Workplaces as key transformative learning spaces for facing socioeconomic crisis in post-Soviet contexts: The case of Latvia

In this paper we present the main results of the National Survey of Latvia, conducted within the framework of the joint study Workplace Learning in Europe and Asia. This joint study was initiated by the Research Network 2 of the Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM LLL). The objectives of this comparative study were to find out what people understand to be voluntary and compulsory with respect to workplace learning, what companies and organisations offer in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning, which of these are voluntary and which compulsory, and how objective opportunities and subjective perceptions influence employees' motivation to learn at work and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken. We describe the theoretical and legal framework, the methodology used, main findings on the issues raised and our conclusions. We also include some recommendations to improve workplace learning in the context of Latvian society.

Introduction

This study addresses the new workplace learning strategies used to face socioeconomic crisis in the Latvian post-Soviet context. After decades of strong centralisation – when employers and employees were not expected to take any initiative regarding their professional work, especially in the public sector – in the last 20 years, with the regaining of the independence of their country, they have been forced to do so in order to adapt to the changing and challenging economic situation.

In Latvia, workplaces exist not simply in companies and public services, but equally across a wide range of organisational and social contexts, including in the third sector (non-profit-making non-governmental organisations, voluntary work, etc.) and in diverse forms of self-employment, which sometimes is carried out under irregular and precarious conditions. These contexts offer very different kinds of learning opportunities.

Therefore, the 'learning continuum' between formal, non-formal and informal learning is a key framework for understanding how opportunities for professional and personal development at work are distributed, structured, experienced and used nowadays in Latvia.

In order to decode workplaces as lifelong learning spaces in Latvia, the understanding of workplace learning was investigated, and the results of this study were published in the joint study *Workplace Learning in Europe and Asia: National Survey Report of Latvia* (University of Latvia, 2011). The following sections of this paper contain a synthesis of the main findings of our investigation. We begin by describing the theoretical and legal frameworks of the study,

based on a literature review according to the research questions. Then we present the methodology used, the results of the analysis of collected data that was carried out to define the evidence-based practice, and a discussion of these results. Finally, we present some conclusions and put forward some recommendations to improve workplace learning in the current Latvian context.

Theoretical and legal framework

The conceptual and legal framework of workplace learning is quite diverse; that is why different approaches and views were taken into consideration during the research.

The general concept of workplace learning can be described, on the one hand, as learning through engagement in different kinds of workplace activities and receiving guidance from colleagues (Billett, 2001) and being informal and incidental by nature (Marsick & Watkins, 1990), where no written curriculum and teachers are present. On the other hand, it may become more formalised by structuring learning in a certain order and setting. Apprenticeship provides one of the examples that include education in line with social relations and economics (Coy, 1989). This however, may be rather formalised by having written agreements on duration and content of training, obligations and responsibilities of the master and the apprentice.

Elkjaer, Høyrup and Pedersen (2007) address workplace learning and organisational learning as the same object with two different scholarly traditions. Both traditions share the opinion that *the workplace/organisation is the learning environment and constitutes the learning community*. This means that workplace or organisational learning is a benefit of being at work. Accordingly, *workplace learning is defined by its site: the workplace as a social organisation and as a physical (material) entity*. This conceptualises that learning takes place through participation in social relations of practice and occurs while working on tasks and taking part in everyday organisational life.

The concepts of formal, non-formal and informal learning in this research are understood as defined in the Glossary of the European Commission's lifelong learning communication (European Commission, 2001). Formal learning is learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is, from the learner's perspective, intentional.

Non-formal learning is learning that is provided by an education or training institution, but typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning activities, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is, from the learner's perspective, intentional.

Informal learning is learning resulting from everyday activities related to work, family or leisure. It is unstructured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and

typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or ‘incidental’/random) (European Commission, 2001).

Legislation in Latvia does not have a clear definition of workplace learning. However, it is commonly understood as traineeship as part of a formal vocational education programme, as described in the Vocational Education Law (1999). This law also stipulates employers’ responsibility to provide the necessary work conditions for students at the traineeship placement, in order to allow students to have the opportunity to practise in actual work conditions. Workplace learning has also been stipulated by the Law on Support for Unemployed and Job Seekers (2002), by providing public incentives to provide an opportunity for these groups to compete in a job market by means of active labour measures, *inter alia* learning in workplace settings.

The regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers on state vocational education and apprenticeship programmes standard (2000) defines workplace learning as compulsory for vocational education and training (VET) students. It also stipulates that there should be a 50/50 proportion between theory and traineeship in VET programmes and a 35/65 proportion in apprenticeships. It should be noted that up to 20% of traineeships may take place in an artificial working environment, where no actual business is taking place. College-level professional higher education, as stated in the Cabinet of Ministers’ regulation on the first-level professional higher education state standard (2001), obliges students to achieve at least 30% of 80–120 credits in traineeship. Moreover, 16 credits should be achieved in a real workplace environment. A professional Bachelor’s degree can be obtained if the regulation on the second-level professional higher education state standard (2001) is put into practice, namely, if a student has achieved at least 26 out of 160 credits in a workplace environment. There are also different compulsory workplace learning requirements in short-term higher education programmes and programmes that lead to a vocational master’s degree. In cases that are different from the abovementioned, workplace learning is not compulsory. Voluntary workplace learning usually occurs in non-formal or even informal ways of learning, where either employers or employees have their own goals to achieve through workplace learning.

The National Strategies for Lifelong Learning in Latvia (2007–13) define lifelong learning as the education process that takes place lifelong; is based on people’s changing needs to acquire knowledge, skills and experience in order to improve or change their qualifications according to the requirements of the labour market and their own interests and needs; and develops the individual’s natural abilities alongside the promotion of new competences.

Based on the literature review, the theoretical background analysis demonstrates three approaches to the understanding of workplace learning:

- The first is transferred from German best practice to vocational education in workplaces in Latvia. It is based on understanding the workplace as a learning place (Schellenberg, 2006).

- The second is based on understanding workplace learning as learning for working and life and as an individual's competence development (in Latvian, *dzīvesdarbībai*) (Tīlla, 2004).
- The third is based on organisational management theories, where workplace learning is understood as organisational learning in the workplace, and as competence development in the working process at the workplace and outside of it (Akopova, 2007).

Thus three different frameworks can be applied to the studies and described.

Methodology

In this study an integrated mix-method was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The design used in this study was a sequential mix-design: the conclusions of the quantitative study, based on the analysis of the questionnaires with SPSS, were confronted with the answers to the open ended questions, searching for similarities within diversity. AQUAD software was used in the qualitative analysis.

For data collection a standardised questionnaire was used, which was jointly developed by ASEM LLL Research Network 2 members. The aim of this questionnaire was to obtain a better idea of people's perceptions of workplace learning and the opportunities and restrictions one might experience when integrating learning in everyday working life. The information contained in the questionnaire referred to the following aspects:

- employee profile: gender, age, education, background, income;
- basic information about working situation, including type of workplace, period of employment, number of employees, correspondence between education/qualification and employment, and an estimation of current work situation;
- information about workplace learning, including employee's opinion on workplace learning, opportunities to learn new things at work, encouragement for the employee to learn at work;
- provision and take-up, including opportunities offered by the employer, employee's participation in education and training courses, work-related course required by the employer and chosen by the employee, relevant factors for their decision; and
- effects on people: own benefits, knowledge and skills, and quality of life.

Two different professions from the public sector were chosen: educators, and employees of information technology services. The first group was selected with consideration to the population of educators in different areas and using the official statistics taken from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia (2008/09). A total of 365 participants acted as a representative sample of the higher education sector. The second sample was taken from the population related to information technology services using the statistics provided by the Cen-

tral Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Latvia (2008/09). The number of participants in this group was 122. The total number of participants in this sample was 487.

Results

In this section we present the main results of the examination of the sample. The presentation is divided into two parts. The first is devoted to summarising some of the main characteristics of the sample. The second will expose the evidence found in the sample data thus allowing us to respond to the research questions.

Description of sample

Employee profile Only 10.7% of the respondents indicated their gender. Two-thirds of these respondents were female and one-third male. 21.1% of respondents did not indicate their age. The majority of the respondents that indicated their age were under 50 years old (81.5%), which is typical of the current Latvian working age. 14.8% of all participants in the survey did not indicate their marital status. The majority of the respondents that indicated it were married/in a stable partnership (54.8 %), 19.9% indicated their marital status as single and 10.5% as widowed or divorced. 86.9% of the respondents indicated their level of education; most of which had university BA or MA degrees (40.2%) or a university PhD (49.2%); the percentage of the other levels of education was significantly lower: upper secondary school/technical school (6.6%), upper vocational school (2.3%), lower secondary school (0.3%), primary school (0.2) and pre-primary education (1.2%). 13.1% of the respondents did not indicate their level of education.

The employees' background information highlighted that the majority of the respondents came from a large city or a regional town (32.4% and 27.9% respectively). A smaller number of respondents came from a small town or an isolated place (21.0% and 18.8% respectively).

The average employee income was reported as high: 42.3% earned over €400 a week; 13.6% of all respondents earned up to €250 per week in full-time employment; and 28.5% of all respondents earned €250–400 per week working full-time.

Working situation. The largest group of respondents belonged to the public sector (70.94%). Slightly more than one-quarter of the respondents were employed in the private sector (25.39%). Less than 1% of the respondents were involved in non-profit employment (0.26%). The answers did not reveal the existence of respondents employed in joint venture enterprises (which was an option provided by the survey).

Slightly more than half of the respondents (51.1%) had been working for their current employer for up to three years, while some of the respondents had been working for their current employer for twenty years or more. However, this group of respondents constituted only 5.2% of the total number of all respondents.

Most of the surveyed employees worked on a full-time basis (80.6%); 8.32% of the respondents had a part-time job; 7.25% of the employees worked on an intermittent, on-call basis, or were self-employed; and only 3.84% of the respondents worked less than 20 hours per week.

The respondents represented a wide variety of employee positions at work. On the whole, more than 80 different positions were mentioned in answer to this particular question. Most of the respondents in the study were school teachers – forming 28.3% of the total number of respondents. The second largest group comprised heads of department (7.2%), followed by lecturers (6.0%). These figures show that the majority of the respondents represented the education sector.

Regarding the period of employment in the particular job, most of the respondents had been working at the particular workplace for less than five years. This group of respondents formed 60% of the total percentage of all respondents.

The average number of employees in a particular workplace (the department or section of the organisation in which respondents worked) was 24 employees. Most of the respondents had fewer than 10 employees in their particular workplace (39.8%). The second largest group was made up of respondents with 10 and 25 employees (27.3%) in their particular workplace. And a third group consisted of respondents with between 25 and 50 employees (23.7%). Only 9.2% of respondents said that there were more than 50 employees at their workplace.

In this study, ‘organisation’ is understood as the site where the respondents worked. Some companies such as supermarket chains or multinationals had several sites. The average number of employees in organisations that were represented by the respondents of the study was 352 employees per whole organisation. Most of the respondents worked in organisations where there were between 100 and 1,000 employees (27.5% of the total amount of respondents). Other important groups were formed by organisations that had between 25 and 50 employees (23.9% of all respondents) or between 50 and 100 employees (20.3% of all respondents). The smaller groups included organisations with fewer than 10 employees (10.6%), between 10 and 25 (9.5%) and more than 1,000 employees (8.3%).

The analysis of the question about the correspondence between the respondents’ education/qualification and their job revealed that the majority of the employees had an appropriate level of education for their job. Furthermore, it is important to mention that about 10.94% of the respondents believed that the level of their education would be more appropriate for some other job position, while 10.5% of the respondents stated that their level of education was higher than the level of other employees who worked in the same field.

Research questions

The ASEM LLL Research Network on Workplace Learning directs itself to the task of decoding workplaces as lifelong learning spaces across Asia and Europe. In 2009/10, this network conducted a comparative study addressing the following research questions: *What do people*

interpret to be 'voluntary' and 'compulsory' with respect to workplace learning? What does their company/organisation offer in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning? Which of these are 'voluntary' and which 'compulsory'? How do objective opportunities and subjective perceptions influence employees' motivation to learn at work and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken?

In this section we present the results according to the outline proposed in the research questions. We examined evidence in the data that allowed us to respond to the issues raised in those research questions.

Question 1: *What do people understand to be 'voluntary' and 'compulsory' with respect to workplace learning?*

To answer this question, we stressed the differences between voluntary and compulsory workplace learning (WPL) by analysing the following aspects: (1) the employees' motivations for engaging in these two kinds of workplace learning, (2) the content and the organisation of voluntary and compulsory workplace learning, and (3) the main concerns of employers and employees when thinking about workplace learning.

(1) Regarding the motivations for engaging in workplace learning:

- Most frequently the employees chose workplace learning courses on a voluntary basis, whether or not it were required by the organisation (60.8 %).
- Those employees who had participated in education and training courses in the past 12 months emphasised their own decision in choosing them and stressed that their choice was made based mostly on personal reasons (total 64.2%).
- Regarding compulsory workplace learning, there was a positive perception from employees if it was related to avoiding losing work or leading to promotion. The qualitative analysis of all the respondents answers to the open-ended questions confirmed that there was a positive perception among employees of compulsory workplace learning.

(2) Regarding the content and the organisation of workplace learning:

- With regard to the content of the compulsory courses, there were some specific kinds of work-related courses that had been required by the employer: they aimed to improve the employees' basic skills (32.0%), as well as to prepare them for work with new technological or organisational innovations (26.1%).
- 71 respondents (employees) independently decided to take work-related courses. Most respondents usually chose work-related courses that helped them to improve their basic skills (N=17, 23.9%) and formal qualification (N=13, 18.3%) and that usually lasted one day or were less time-consuming (N=14, 19.7%).
- The organisation of WPL activities were mainly organised in a top-down manner (65.3%).

- Courses related to the job as well as to personal development were followed during working hours (37.56%), while other courses with the same characteristics were followed voluntarily outside working hours (20.11%).

(3) Regarding the main concerns and perceptions of employers and employees about workplace learning:

- When thinking about voluntary workplace learning, in general, employers supported employees who engaged in voluntary workplace learning (38.6%). There were, however, a small number of employers who did not approve of their employees participating in work-related courses (14.9%). Employers were usually open-minded about all sorts of proposals for work-related learning in which their employees took part (62.7%). Furthermore, for employers it was not so significant whether work-related learning leads to a recognised qualification or not (59.3%).
- However, when an employee decided him/herself voluntarily to pursue work-related learning, the employer was especially concerned about its relevance to the particular job if the course took place during working hours (54.5%). The same was true if the course incurred high costs – the employer was also interested in its importance for the current job (58.8%).
- There were a number of employees who generated good ideas to improve their work (52.4%). These respondents thought that when they proposed new ideas, they were not supported enough by other employees (61.3%), and that WPL was not as emotionally fulfilling as it could be (52.4%). However, WPL helped them to participate in the individual exchange of knowledge and experience (67.3%) and to undertake their jobs better (62.9%).

Question 2: *What does the company/organisation offer in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning?*

Regarding the opportunities for learning offered by the employer, the results show the following:

- Offered opportunities were mainly formal, consisting of short workshops/seminars that did not last longer than one day (48.3%), and were oriented towards job-related knowledge and skills (46.2%).
- Organisations also offered non-formal WPL opportunities, facilitating activities that focused on work-related knowledge and skills (73.9%); it was difficult to conclude whether individual characteristics were taken into consideration or not.

The qualitative analysis of all respondents' answers to the open-ended questions confirmed that the offered learning opportunities concentrated on job-related knowledge and skills. These answers also gave some deeper insight into the situation:

- The respondents felt that they have few WPL opportunities offered by their employers.

- Employees desired to receive more WPL offers related to organisational innovation, courses related to European Structural Funds programmes, *especially about application procedures and project administration* (respondent number 318) and courses in foreign languages.

Question 3: *What is 'voluntary' and 'compulsory' in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning offered by company/organisation?*

The results show the following:

- There was a relationship between the time when employees took these courses and their voluntary/compulsory character: courses taken outside working hours were mostly voluntary, but courses taken during working hours could be either voluntary or compulsory. Regarding work-related courses (formal or non-formal), they were usually taken during working hours (62%); however, there were also plenty of voluntary work-related courses taken outside working hours (18.5%).
- Non-formal spontaneous (voluntary) meetings and independent usage of manuals and materials were also supported to a certain extent by employers (28.5%).
- The respondents were also more motivated to use e-learning because it can be accessed at their desk at work or at home (2.7%). However, the total number of answers to this question was low and the results are open to question.

Question 4: *How do objective opportunities and subjective perceptions influence employees' motivation to learn at work and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken?*

The results show the following:

- Employees' motivation for workplace learning based on subjective reasons (keeping updated, doing the job correctly, and the need to learn) was higher than motivation based on objective opportunities (possibility of promotion, risk of losing the job, and encouragement by colleagues). The percentages were 80.5% and 13.9% respectively when they answered the question about the employer's reasons for pursuing work-related learning. The proportions changed to 69.5% and 30.2% respectively when they decided to follow work-related learning by themselves.
- Most of the respondents stated that WPL activities were mostly enjoyable and strategic (51.3% and 47.3%). These activities were not set up by the employees themselves (66.8%). However, neither were they imposed on everyone by the management (75%).

The qualitative analysis of all respondents answers to the open-ended questions revealed the following:

- Employees were interested in learning in a multicultural environment and they felt the necessity to have more opportunities in foreign countries: “We need more seminars with partner companies ALL AROUND THE WORLD [emphasis in original]” (respondent number 359). One of the respondents explained that “travelling and getting to know the culture and society of other countries is the only real value for me” (respondent number 173).
- Non-formal learning opportunities were closely linked to ‘learning with others’: there were 67 expressions about formal WPL and 10 about non-formal WPL. The analysis of linkages shows that 30% of expressions linked non-formal learning to learning with others, while just 1.5% of expressions linked formal learning to learning with others. The following statement illustrates this point well: “I prefer courses where we can work together, in order to improve individual skills [by] sharing others’ experiences” (respondent number 50).
- There was high motivation for workplace learning if it was about personal and professional development; as one respondent put it: ‘I would choose to go to courses that would help me to improve my personal qualities, and that help me also as [a] professional’ (respondent number 386). Finally, 16 respondents mentioned financial problems related to being involved in WPL. The following statement by one of the respondents summarises the general opinion: “If the financial cost was covered by the organisation, it would be possible to get involved more often in WPL, but in this country... forget it!” (respondent number 176).

Discussion

In the first part of this section, we will summarise the main results of the previous section – using two tables and two figures – in order to clarify the main point of discussion that is proposed in the second part. Based on the above information, we summarise in Table 1 what ‘voluntary’ and ‘compulsory’ mean in the context of workplace learning.

Table 1

Understanding of 'voluntary' and 'compulsory' in workplace learning

Aspects of WPL understanding	Voluntary WPL is related to ...	Compulsory WPL is connected with ...
Motivations for WPL	<i>Involvement for personal development</i>	<i>Avoiding losing work or leading to promotion</i>
Content of WPL	<i>Learning based on mutual support and exchanges of ideas with colleagues, for example during spontaneous meetings</i>	<i>The acquisition of new/difficult skills (technological or organisational)</i>
Organisation of WPL	<i>Self-organised learning (for example, independent usage of manuals during or after working hours)</i>	<i>Attending workshops or seminars (preferably short: one or two days)</i>
The view of employees on WPL ...	<i>Supporting their employees in WPL Concern about relevance for the organisation if expensive or during working hours</i>	<i>Seeking improvement in organisational efficiency</i>
The view of employees on WPL ...	<i>Preference for self-decided workplace learning</i>	<i>Positive perception</i>

As can be seen, self-decided and self-organised WPL as well as personal development and collaborative contexts are central issues in the understanding of voluntary workplace learning in Latvia. These aspects will be discussed in the second part of this section.

With respect to the perception of the terms 'formal' and 'non-formal' and their relationship with the characteristics 'voluntary' or 'compulsory', we summarise the results in Table 2.

Table 2

Relationship of 'formal' and 'non-formal' with 'voluntary' or 'compulsory' workplace learning

		VOLUNTARY	COMPULSORY
FORMAL	<i>Specially organised Unimportant whether the participants receive diplomas, certificates, qualifications, or not</i>	<i>General education courses related to the job and/or personal growth Free choice of time and place</i>	<i>Strictly related to the job During working hours</i>
NON-FORMAL	<i>Not specially organised Takes place at work-place Interchange of work experiences and practice</i>	<i>Outside working hours Spontaneous meetings Independent usage of manuals and materials (e-learning)</i>	<i>Improving job-related knowledge and basic skills Short workshops or seminars Not lasting longer than one day</i>

As can be seen, employees desire compulsory formal WPL to be brief and job-related, while voluntary non-formal WPL is related to personal growth and free choice of time and place, even outside working hours.

With respect to how objective opportunities and subjective perceptions influence employees' motivation to learn at work and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken, the main ideas are summarised in Figures 1 and 2.

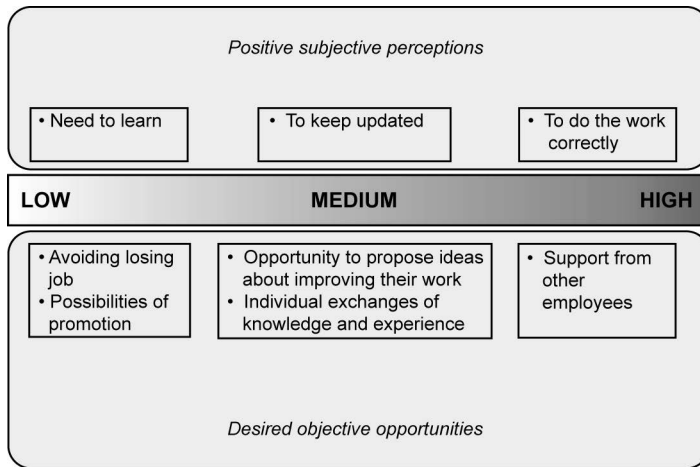


Figure 1: Impact of opportunities and perceptions on employees' motivation

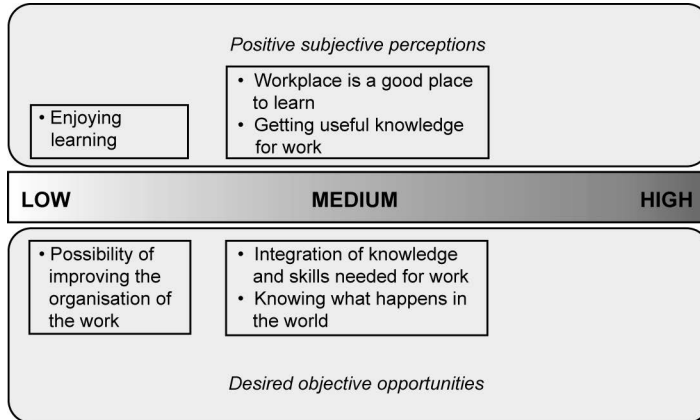


Figure 2: Impact of opportunities and perceptions on employees' satisfaction

As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, the perception of feeling competent and doing one's own work better is one of the most motivating aspects for involvement in WPL and also gives great work satisfaction. The possibility of having social recognition and support from peers is also highly motivating.

The main point of the discussion we propose on the basis of these results is that voluntary WPL motivates people's self-education, which is a prerequisite for a positive learning process. This type of learning provides a much higher level of human interest and a greater motivation for learning, which thus increases both the quality of the acquired knowledge and the sustainability of that knowledge. But, at the same time, the employer and the specific requirements of a particular job demand specialised knowledge and skills. Employees do not always want to acquire such knowledge voluntarily. Consequently, there is a contradiction. The question is: How to provide the necessary training, adapted to the specific requirements of the work, and at the same time to ensure that the employee himself is motivated to acquire this knowledge and skills on a voluntary basis, thus ensuring a higher quality of acquired knowledge?

The contradiction could be solved if employees have the personal desire to improve their own work, and thus consider this effort as a voluntary activity. To this end, it is important to facilitate the employee's appropriation of the goals of the organisation and their personal desire to improve their work. To achieve this, the development of employees' professional identity is a key question. Workplace learning is one of the privileged contexts in which to develop it.

Professional identity development is based on three pillars: making personal choices, getting personally involved at work and recognition processes (Day, C., Stobart, G., Sammons, P., Kington, A. & Gu, Q. 2007). Making personal choices develops the sense of personal agency, the capacity for reflection on the sense of personal work. Involvement in work is the only way of acquiring competences using the right opportunities. Social recognition (from employers and other institutions) and personal recognition (work satisfaction, feeling competent, perception of being in the right place and doing work that is useful) facilitates the appropriation of the goals of the organisation and fosters the personal desire to improve one's work.

As we have pointed out, these three aspects (making personal choices, creating opportunities for getting involved in work, and social and personal recognition) have been neglected in Soviet work environments, where there was almost no place for personal initiative, for responsibility about the outputs of the organisation, or for recognition processes other than the interest of the political party. This study shows that, to a certain extent, these aspects are sometimes neglected in the current Latvian context. But it seems also that there is now a growing desire on the part of employees to take more initiative, to obtain knowledge about their field from the outside world, to create communities of reflective practitioners in workplaces, and to develop personal and social recognition processes.

Conclusions

This study reveals new understandings of workplace learning in the Latvian post-Soviet context in times of socioeconomic crisis, as well as the need for a shift in the responsibility of employers for offering appropriate WPL opportunities to their employees. The main conclusions of the study can be summarised as follows.

We found empirical evidence for a change in employees' attitudes regarding their workplace learning: subjective perceptions are now more important in the motivation of employees:

- Workplace learning is based on the influence of subjective perception. Subjective perceptions (keeping updated, doing the job correctly, and the need to learn) are more important than the objective opportunities (loss of job, promotion, and encouragement by colleagues).
- Among subjective perceptions, the most influential one is the perception of being allowed to be involved in self-organised learning. Employees prefer self-organised, autonomous workplace learning: that is, when it is voluntary, learning is more productive and the results are better.

There is a gap between the objective opportunities offered by employers and the desires of employees regarding workplace learning:

- The following objective opportunities positively influence the motivation to learn at work:
 - employees generating good ideas to improve their work, including new possibilities to work with organisational innovations;
 - support from other employees; and
 - individual exchanges of knowledge and experience.
- Integrated formal and non-formal workplace-oriented learning opportunities are necessary. Workplace learning is one of the conditions for improving quality of life, and it demands the development of individuals' positive attitude regarding the improvement of their own knowledge, skills and abilities for workplace learning.
- Qualitative evidence demonstrates that employees desire to have more opportunities to learn formally and non-formally about what is happening in their field in Europe and in the world.

Employees need strong personal and social recognition to get involved in workplace learning activities:

- Regarding personal recognition, one of the employees' main motivations to get involved in WPL is the subjective perception that WPL helps them to do their jobs better, even though it is not as emotionally fulfilling as it could be. Workplaces are perceived as being the best place for improving work-related knowledge, which is really useful for their work and is enjoyed by employees.
- Non-formal workplace learning is more successful than formal courses organised at the workplace. However, employers often do not give recognition to this WPL strategy, be-

cause they do not think that it is beneficial for employees to learn while they are doing their jobs: in their opinion, they should take courses to learn more. This lack of recognition in the work environment is an obstacle for employees to engage more actively in WPL.

- Workplace learning has to have legal foundations such as evaluation of knowledge, skills and competences learned in a non-formal way.
- There is a subjective perception of financial difficulties related to workplace learning.

Recommendations

Fostering the development of workplaces as transformative learning spaces – based on working with a personally significant content, personal motivation and responsibility, reflecting about one's own learning process, using one's own experiences. Experiencing positive emotions and having the opportunity to work with others is a key issue in the development of personal well-being and economic stability in Latvian society. According to the three conclusions of this study, the recommendations to improve WPL in the actual context of Latvian society were grouped in three main fields:

(1) Recommendations to foster self-organised workplace learning

- Policy should be emphasised in the direction of self-organised workplace learning.
- Employers should provide objective opportunities where the employees decide for themselves to pursue workplace learning.
- Employees should be allowed to make their decisions about learning not only for their job, and be delegated the right to make the choice on their own.

(2) Recommendations to fill the gap between offered and desired WPL opportunities

- Promote the objective opportunities that influence the motivation to learn at work. It is recommended that companies/organisations offer their employees opportunities for formal and non-formal learning related to training for working on technological or organisational changes.
- Precise guidelines for stakeholders and employers are necessary, in order that they would work in the direction of providing integrated formal and non-formal workplace-oriented learning opportunities.
- Employers should offer their employees opportunities to learn formally and non-formally about parts relevant to their field in Europe and in the world, using new pathways of workplace learning – mobile workplace learning.

(3) Recommendations seeking to improve the mechanisms of personal and social recognition of workplace learning

- Employers should provide objective opportunities as recognition of workplace learning, such as promotion and higher salary.
- Policymakers, stakeholders and employers should recognise non-formal peer- and deep-learning in the workplace.
- Recognition mechanisms of non-formal and informal learning outcomes (personal growth) should be validated.
- The implementation of an individual 'learning account' is proposed, in order to help to overcome the perceived financial difficulties related to workplace learning.

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Lynne Chisholm, Katharina Lunardon and Wolfgang Hagleitner

A room of one's own: Intrinsic commitment, educational ownership and work-related learning in Austria

Employee perceptions and practices towards workplace learning are shaped by a complex set of personal, social and organisational factors. This contribution highlights the key findings for Austria from a comparative survey conducted in 2010 by the Asian and European member countries of ASEM LLL Research Network 2. The survey examined specifically whether employees working in selected industrial and occupational sectors perceive CVET as mandatory or voluntary, and how this frames their own participation in CVET. In particular, the findings indicate the high salience of education as entitlement and expression of free will, including work-related studies; they also suggest that both gender and length of employment tenure may exert subtle and complex influences on opportunities and motivation for participation.

Introduction: Situating work-relevant learning

The term workplace learning refers most precisely to informal learning that is integrated into everyday working life, but in practice can refer to a continuum of learning contexts and experiences. It shades into systematic attempts to foster and harvest such learning in the form of (for example) discussion groups, ad hoc workshops and quality circles at the workplace. These activities are examples of work-based non-formal learning, and they ultimately shade into varied kinds of organised courses that are offered not only by employers on their own premises but also by external education and training providers, including higher education institutions. These activities would count as work-related formal learning. It is important to recognise that learning at, through and for work (1) takes place across the full range of the continuum between informal, non-formal and formal learning and (2) these are not wholly discrete categories, neither conceptually nor experientially (see: Chisholm, 2008; on defining workplace learning, see: Unwin & Fuller, 2003; Kersh & Evans, 2010).

Four interrelated conceptual perspectives inform the empirical analysis pursued further below, which seeks to capture – as provisional clues to guide further research – employees' understandings of their commitment and ownership with respect to work-relevant learning. These perspectives admit the significance of 'both/and' constructions (rather than 'either/or' dichotomies) for appreciating the relational and 'in-between' modality of work-relevant learning, which characteristically lies somewhere between the voluntary and compulsory activities in which adults engage.

Governmentality: The disciplined autonomous subject

The concepts of governmentality and technologies of the self (Foucault, 1991; Martin, Gutmann & Hutton, 1988) speak to the analysis of social power relations. Applied to institutionalised and everyday educational processes and in conjunction with the formation of subjectivity in highly individualised western societies, it suggests that citizens (must) learn to become entrepreneurs of the self and to manage its differentiated presentation according to context and moment (cf. *Inter alia* Apple, 1981; Chappell et al., 2003; Crowther, 2004; Field, 2000; Sennett, 1998; Solomon, 2005).

These ideas readily insert themselves into intellectual and political debates in current German language literature about the relevance of *Bildung* – a term that can only be translated into English by the word ‘education’, but which essentially refers to an individual process of open-ended personal development and growth in the sense of becoming a civilised autonomous subject (cf. Prange, 2003). Today’s educational systems (in German, *Bildungssysteme*) reach (almost) the whole population of children, young people and – increasingly – young adults. Participation is compulsory for a specific period of time, defined by an age-range that has expanded at both ends (entry and completion). Structural changes in labour markets have generated strong pressures in the past two decades to pursue higher initial qualification levels. These pressures are now beginning to extend into adult life as a whole, and exert themselves most acutely with respect to participation in CVET.

The identity and role of the ‘learner’ is now taking on the character of a normative expectation for people of all ages and life-stages. In Usher and Edwards’ (2007, p. 76, 85) formulation, this enjoins human subjects to recognise and accept themselves as learners whose learning never ends. The formation of subjectivity in the modern liberal democratic state depends not on externally imposed discipline, but on an internalised discipline of the self that is grounded in the capacity for self-direction.

The concept of education (qua *Bildung*) as an emancipation process may accord autonomous subjectivity pride of place, but in practice, teaching and learning is played out as an asymmetrical relation in which the path to self-direction is paved with direction. Recoding the relation as a constructive process of struggle towards self-empowerment is the sole provisional solution, but this becomes less ‘believable and doable’ when the learners are adults – by definition are supposed and obliged to be autonomous subjects. Where autonomy is cast as an obligation (cf. Forneck, 2009), the teaching and learning relation ensnares itself anew. Adult learners must learn to hold the tension between self-direction and direction, between empowerment and subordination, between resistance and accommodation (cf. Beck, 2000; Zemblyas, 2006). This ‘both/and’ constellation constitutes an irresolvable tension, expressed in ‘coming to terms with’ the co-existence of voluntary and compulsory learning, not infrequently in the self-same activi-

ties. Thus the Austrian employees in the study reported below emphasise the autonomy of the subject, both normatively and in recording their own CVET decisions and preferences.

Individual and collective learning: Relational misrecognition

Current perspectives view individual and collective learning in working contexts as inseparable (cf. Fenwick, 2008), in conformity with the theory of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Complexity and activity theories (cf. Davis & Sumara, 2001; Sawchuk, Duarte & Elhammoumi, 2006) picture learning as a simultaneous process of both collective expansion and individual expansion and innovation, driven by contradictions and tensions that generate new, and provisionally more resilient practices and subjects.

Nevertheless, western cultures conceptualise learning as an individual process par excellence, albeit that formal education and training takes place largely in groups. Learning outcomes are assessed for individuals and ethically, no-one should unfairly profit from the work and achievements of other individuals. Increasingly, value is placed on teamwork, but in practice, teaching and learning methods privilege individualised activities and relations, at least in formal settings. People are more likely to learn about teamwork at and through work, in leisure activities and via social and community participation: informally and non-formally, they learn by doing in group settings. Learning takes place inbetween the subject and the community, but is generally doomed to misrecognition, since no recognised and recognisable modalities exist for learning outcomes that are relational in character.

Jarvis (2009) depicts the individualist West and the communitarian East as each for itself paradoxical, but taken together as complementing each other's strengths and weaknesses (see also Holland & Chaban, 2010). Cultures that lend primacy to the community are integrative and foster a sense of social responsibility, but they can stifle the unfolding of individual potential. Cultures that privilege the individual open infinite horizons for development and change, but they risk anomie, egocentrism and social isolation. Learning is inevitably conceptualised and practised differently in these two 'ideal types'; what is seen as valuable and useful equally differs. For the Austrian employees in this study, group-based contexts for and processes of work-relevant learning are less salient in their response patterns: this reflects the highly individualised learning culture in which they have learned to learn.

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation: A classic mix

Theory and research on adults' motivations for participation in education and training remains scarce (but see Illeris, 2003, 2004a, 2004b). Presaging the findings of the present study, an earlier Austrian survey (Schlögl & Schneeberger, 2003) reports that adults generally regard learning as a personal issue; the interests of their employers or their responsibilities towards the wider society are not the priority. The benefits to be gained may well include the satisfaction of doing a good job, career advancement or reducing unemployment risks, but such motivations

rarely alone suffice: personal development is a significant motivation, including for work-relevant learning.

Intrinsic motivation – interest and engagement for the topic and the sheer joy of development and enrichment prompted by discovery and reflection – is the ultimate motor for successful and continuous learning throughout life. Yet extrinsic motivation plays an important role in generating action and persistence, because it underlines the palpable benefits and rewards that education and training can bring. These may simply comprise recognition by colleagues for the effort invested and the positive impact on quality of work contribution. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are generally mixed, but their relative salience varies according to structural circumstances (and not simply between individuals), as for example, between industrial and occupational sectors, which is evident in a number of the national studies in the joint survey (Patchawalarai's chapter in this collection, which compares the automotive parts and the hotel sectors in Thailand, is a case in point).

High levels of intrinsic motivation prompt strong voluntary engagement with learning, whether or not the learning outcomes lead to palpable benefits and rewards. Lower levels of intrinsic motivation result in weaker engagement and so participation inevitably accretes a more compulsory flavour – something that has to be got through in the hope that at least palpable benefits and rewards will accrue. The present study was not designed to uncover the links between motivational contours and the interpretation of work-relevant learning experiences as voluntary or compulsory, but the patterns in the Austrian survey data lead to the hypothesis that such interpretations might shift over time as motivations change. For example, for those who work in organisations that neither value nor facilitate continuing learning, the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may shift towards the latter.

The learning continuum: Work-relevant learning between modalities

The learning continuum comprises non-discrete and interrelated expressions of formal, non-formal and informal learning (Chisholm, 2008). Broadly, formal learning is purposeful learning in education and training institutions (classically, in schools, colleges and universities); non-formal learning is structured learning in organised courses outside the formal education system (for example as provided by employers on their own premises); and informal learning is unstructured learning activity that arises incidentally, implicitly and routinely in daily and working life.

Workplace learning *sui generis* involves interconnections between active agents with “rules, tools and texts, cultural, and material environments” (Fenwick, *op. cit.*: p. 19) in the everyday environment. These routine yet meaningful interactions generate dynamic mutual constructions and dissonances that form the living bedrock of informal learning opportunities. Johnson and Boud (2010) call this ‘learning work’ and characterise it as an opportunistic and unpredictable process that harbours creative potential. Scheeres et al. (2009) describe workplace learning

contexts that take a step further towards formality: they term these integrated development practices that are explicitly initiated but are distinct from formal training contexts – that is, they shade towards the non-formal sector of the learning continuum. Solomon, Boud and Rooney (2009), however, seek to bridge modalities by depicting hybrid spaces that encompass both working and socialising as simultaneous, intersecting activities and that as such facilitate (in)voluntary learning of a quite different kind, namely tacit and non-intentional learning that takes places regardless of specific wish or purpose.

Broadly – but not monolithically – Asian countries are more open to integration and complementarity, which facilitates recognition of multiple learning modalities and the appreciation of their respective value (cf. Merriam & Kim, 2008). In contrast, modern western societies have become habituated to defining education in purely formal, institutionalised terms. Vocational education and training has always retained a closer relation to experiential and practice-based learning, but here, too, formalised modalities have increasingly come to dominate the field and it is these that carry highest value, because they result in recognised qualifications. National traditions differ: in Austria, formal certificates lend particular prestige and more importantly also serve as a strong regulatory mechanism for the allocation and legitimisation of labour market and occupational placement. It is no surprise, then, that the Austrian respondents to the present study seem to have difficulty in focusing on the more informal expressions of work-relevant learning, which are ‘crowded out’ by the overriding value placed on formal qualifications and credentials.

The Austrian study

This contribution presents findings from the Austrian study within a joint survey carried out in 2009–10 in the framework of the workplace learning research network within the ASEM LLL Education and Research Hub (for further details, see the introductory chapter to this collection).¹ Most standardised and comparative information about adult learning focuses on participation rates and their correlates together with patterns of institutionalised provision of continuing (vocational) education and training (CET and CVET). Few surveys begin from the perspectives and experiences of those who in principle could, or who actually do, take part in work-relevant learning of different kinds (but see: Chisholm, Moussoux & Larson, 2004). The present study cannot capture the breadth of workplace learning across the learning continuum, neither in terms of actual practices nor in terms of employee perspectives. It takes a first step by gathering standardised information about employee perspectives, opportunities and experiences with respect to informal workplace, non-formal work-based and formal work-related learning activities as non-discrete categories.

¹ Background documents and initial national reports can be accessed at the ASEM LLL website, specifically the sections devoted to its Research Network 2: <http://www.dpu.dk/asem/researchnetworks/workplacelearning/>.

Three questions guided the survey design, which was intended to deliver material for furthering comparative studies of workplace learning across and between Asia and Europe:

What do people interpret to be 'voluntary' and 'compulsory' with respect to workplace learning? In other words: what concepts do they have about this?

What does their company/organisation offer in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning? Which of these are 'voluntary' and which 'compulsory'?

How does the perception of work-related learning being 'voluntary' or 'compulsory' (or possibly: something in-between these two, such as 'recommended') affect people's motivation to pursue such learning and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken?

Behind these questions lie two more theoretical issues. Firstly, many researchers working in Europe, not least amongst adult educationalists, criticise lifelong learning on the grounds (inter alia) that it prescribes an obligation to learn. This critique does not appear to exist in Asian discourse in the same way; network members working in Asia were interested to explore the possible contrasts in employee perspectives. Secondly, (western-led) theory and research suggest that people get more out of learning when they are positively motivated and when they do so of their own volition. European network members were interested to elicit employers' staff development policies as perceived by their employees and how these may mesh with intrinsic/extrinsic approaches to work-relevant learning.

Employees registered on part-time degree courses² (in business, financial and commercial services) make up most (85%³) of the Austrian sample. Most are full-time employees and fit in their studies at evenings and weekends; many have taken up their studies with the support of their employers, who may release them for a proportion of their normal working hours, may

² The respondents were registered at Universities of Applied Sciences, which is the English-language term used in Europe for *Fachhochschulen*, which in Austria (and in countries with similar binary higher education systems, such as Germany and Switzerland) are higher education institutions with a mandate to provide occupationally and professionally relevant B.A. and M.A. degree courses (but not, as yet, doctorates). They also specialise in providing 'sandwich-type' degrees for those wishing to combine studies with working; such courses are directed towards those already in employment and are to be understood as continuing vocational higher education, not as initial degrees for those not yet in regular employment. Such degrees can be seen as a specific variety of part-time higher education study, which does not yet formally exist under Austrian university legislation.

³ All in-text percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest full figure. The whole sample comprises 270 respondents; 15% (N = 40) comprise a diverse set of employees in the banking/finance and hospitality/education sectors; differences between these and the 'HE sample' have been taken into account in the analysis where appropriate. Women are slightly overrepresented in the whole sample (55%) and more so in the HE sample (59%; moreover, in 2009/10, 46% of students at universities of applied sciences were female [Statistics Austria, 2010c]). Full sampling and fieldwork details, a full set of data tables and methodological issues arising in the implementation of this survey are available as annexes to the national survey report, accessible at http://www.dpu.dk/fileadmin/www.dpu.dk/ASEM/ASEM-LLL-RN2_AT-Survey_final_lac_20110417.pdf.

cover their tuition fees and ancillary expenses, and may agree to a period of paid study leave (for which there is legal provision in Austria). This is, then, a specific sample – most respondents are currently participating in work-related continuing education that takes them away from the workplace into a formal learning environment and will result in a vocationally relevant higher education qualification. Their motivation to participate in CVET is self-evident, and we can reasonably assume that they expect their investment to bring personal and professional benefits.

The respondents represent well-qualified young adults in the ‘rush hour of life’ – simultaneously busy with work, education and family responsibilities. Most respondents are between 20 and 40 years old⁴, two-thirds are living in a stable partnership (including marriage)⁵ and more than nine in ten hold at least an upper secondary level educational qualification (whereas 26% are already higher education degree-holders; 19% amongst the HE sample). In conformity with relatively recent rising levels of initial education and training participation in Austria, at least two-thirds report that they are better-qualified than their parents (and most particularly their mothers).⁶ Over four-fifths work in the private sector, typically at branches of larger companies, and their (self-reported) salary levels are in large measure average or above average for the Austrian labour force.

Given the age-range of the sample, it is not surprising that just over half have been with their current *employer* for less than two years, although six in ten have practised their current *occupation* for at least two years. Accordingly about half of the sample can be described as ‘newcomers’ to their current working environments; this proportion falls to around four in ten for the HE respondents – as one would expect, since employers are more likely to support taking up such studies for those with a longer employment track record in the organisation. The distinction between ‘newcomers’ and the ‘experienced’ proved to be significant for response patterns, as is shown further below.

⁴ Part-time students at universities of applied sciences are on average older than full-time students at universities, but show that in 2005–06, only 2.5% of students at universities of applied sciences were aged 40+ (Statistics Austria, 2006). At the same time, 46% of 315 degree courses offered by universities of applied sciences in Austria are designed to be followed part-time (FHR, 2010).

⁵ In 2009, 57% of Austrian households were grounded in a stable partnership (including marriage; see Statistics Austria, 2010d).

⁶ Between 1991 and 2008, the proportion of 15–64 year-olds who had completed only compulsory education halved, whilst upper secondary or tertiary qualification holders rose significantly (Statistics Austria, 2009a). Those most likely to have completed higher education in 2008 were 25–34 years old (Statistics Austria, 2009b). Respondents to this study are more likely than the active labour force as a whole to hold post-secondary qualifications (Statistics Austria (2010b) report 15% at ISCED level 3–4 and 20% at ISCED level 5–6 for the second quarter of 2010).

Work-relevant learning: Perspectives and practices

Relatively high levels of intrinsic commitment to their current work are characteristic for the survey respondents, who equally record relatively high levels of personal reward and a sense of being valued. Equally, there is a significant minority pattern: one-third agrees that they get more financial than personal satisfaction from their work, a quarter sense little or no appreciation for the work they do and a quarter report that they more or less only work in order to survive.⁷ For a largely well-qualified respondent group this extent of distance and dissatisfaction arrests attention, and it is experienced employees (those with their present employers for at least two years) amongst the 'learner-workers' (the HE respondents) who are disproportionately likely to display more mixed attitudes and orientations.

To do one's job well, learning by doing on the job does not generally suffice: the respondents are very likely to consider that employees do need to take courses. They are even more emphatic that in order genuinely to learn, people must want to learn – alternatively phrased, one cannot force people to learn, quite the reverse: *free choice* about what, how, when and why to learn is essential for engendering motivation to participate in learning opportunities (see Table 1 next page). Compelled participation produces sub-optimal learning outcomes, and there is little support for sanctions by employers against those employees who choose not to participate. In the respondents' view, motivation is the key to participation, and motivation is generated by the personal and voluntary desire to learn. Interestingly, the respondents also support employees' active participation in decision-making and problem-solving as a means of improving working performance – yet they equally agree that employers have the right to insist that employees do follow courses and acquire qualifications.

⁷ The tabulations from which these and subsequent figures and proportions are taken are all available in annex to the national survey report, accessible at http://www.dpu.dk/fileadmin/www.dpu.dk/ASEM/ASEM-LLL-RN2_AT-Survey_final_lac_20110417.pdf.

Table 1

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements (selected items, N and %)

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements. (N=270)		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N	
							NR	N
Learning inevitably contributes to the productivity and output of employees.	N	95	100	25	6	0	44	226
	%	42,0	44,2	11,1	2,7	0,0	[16,3]	100,0
People who do not keep up their learning should be punished by their employer (e.g. no merit payments or bonus, no promotion, be fired).	N	5	9	46	92	76	42	228
	%	2,2	3,9	20,2	40,4	33,3	[15,6]	100,0
When people can decide for themselves about learning, they learn more and get better results.	N	134	85	5	2	1	43	227
	%	59,0	37,4	2,2	0,9	0,4	[15,9]	100,0
Employers have the right to insist that employees follow certain courses and obtain certain qualifications.	N	39	108	53	36	4	30	240
	%	16,3	45,0	22,1	15,0	1,7	[11,1]	100,0
The more you force people to learn, the less they will want to learn and the worse the results will be.	N	59	101	41	19	6	44	226
	%	26,1	44,7	18,1	8,4	2,7	[16,3]	100,0
People have to be able to choose freely what, how and when they want to learn, otherwise they will not want to participate in work-related education and training.	N	66	85	50	33	6	30	240
	%	27,5	35,4	20,8	13,8	2,5	[11,1]	100,0

In this and all following tables: NR: Non-response

Tension evidently emerges between, on the one hand, a commitment to free will and personal preference combined with active participation and, on the other hand, simultaneous recognition of the need to engage in CVET in order to maintain quality of job performance combined with the employer's right to demand such engagement. These response patterns suggest that in the Austrian context, *intensely idealistic perspectives on education* exert significant influence and they consistently display a high level of affirmation for *active, self-directed forms of behaviour*, with respect not only to engagement with learning but also to the workplace. Learning of any kind is thus seen to demand active and above all cognitive engagement with an issue or a

problem; the source of this engagement comes from within the individual. Interestingly, the Austrian respondents do not notably see other people (colleagues, bosses or teachers) as the key source of encouragement. Rather, *motivation comes essentially from within oneself*, whereas engagement in practice is facilitated by contextual factors and the prospect of concrete rewards.

At the same time, for this sample, the word 'learning' connotes above all organised and distinctly defined modalities of education and training, and much less informal and integrated modalities of learning at and in work. Terms such as 'learning at work' and 'work-based learning' appear to have been transposed to mean formal modalities, and only these are seen as 'real' education. Thus the Austrian respondents think about work-relevant learning as 'courses' that they may follow on company premises or elsewhere, rather than learning in and through working processes and in self-directed ways with fellow employees. This appears paradoxical: respondents consistently emphasise their preference for active self-direction in both education and work, but do not seem to apply this perspective to congruent forms of and contexts for work-relevant learning in practice.

These employees report that their employers overwhelmingly and solely offer (1) courses held on company premises to improve job-related knowledge and skills, and (2) short workshops and seminars, held intermittently and lasting no longer than one day. E-learning solutions are seldom reported, but equally so peer-to-peer learning via spontaneous problem-focused meetings with colleagues. In the respondents' view, work-relevant learning is necessary in order to keep well afloat in the labour market and to stay occupationally up-to-date. Yet there is less certainty that employers really do insist that their employees do stay 'learning active' (particularly so in the view of women respondents), and little consensus that the climate of colleague opinion encourages participation.

The findings suggest that employers polarise into two groups: those offering many learning opportunities, and those providing very little. But it does not follow that employers with active staff development policies are (more) likely to intervene actively in employees' CVET decisions and directions, nor that 'non-intervention' represents a deliberate commitment to foster self-direction and autonomy in learning choices. A laissez-faire approach can mean no more than just that: employers are open to employees' proposals and rarely withhold permission, but do set conditions if participation will require the use of working time or would be expensive – and then they want to see a recognised qualification as the outcome.

More significantly perhaps, the majority of respondents report that their *employers give at best limited palpable recognition* to those employees who improve their knowledge and skills, and they make only limited effort to ensure that there is sufficient time and space for learning during working time. Indeed, across the whole sample and its major sub-groups, *between 30–35% of the respondents report that their employers give no recognition at all*. Given that 85% of the

whole sample is currently studying part-time for a higher education qualification, this is a remarkable testimony to the strength of intrinsic motivation to pursue work-relevant learning. And indeed, most report that it was their own decision to pursue further learning; for almost a quarter, their reasons were purely personal; and very few indicate that their employer had played any active role in their decision. Once more, this pattern underlines the significance of exercising voluntary choice with respect to educational decisions and participation.

With respect to the benefits of work-relevant learning (see Table 2 below), the response pattern confirms the mix of extrinsic factors (salary rise, promotion, job security) and intrinsic factors (especially motivation, personal growth and doing a better job, but also gaining in confidence, self-respect, autonomy and capacity for judgement). Indeed, in this case, intrinsic benefits attract more of the overall response – and in particular, those benefits with a strong individual dimension. Interestingly, few include more social dimensions – here, represented by the options of gaining more appreciation and recognition or strengthening a sense of belonging to their organisation. Finally, it appears that at least this Austrian sample – unlike for at least some of our Asian partners, participating in the joint survey (such as Malaysia and China) – does not readily link learning at the workplace with benefits for the quality of life more generally. Overall response was weak, clustering only towards quality of life in terms of a positive working environment. Benefits associated with connecting with the natural environment, community life and voluntary activities, and leisure and recreation attracted the lowest levels of accord.

Table 2

I have benefited from learning at work in the following ways (N and %)

I have benefited from learning at work in the following ways: (N=270; n=199)	At most three answers were possible		
	N	%	%/N
This question is not relevant for me, because I have not learned at work	22	4,4	11,1
I do not think I have benefited at all	8	1,6	4,0
Salary rise	29	5,8	14,6
Sense of autonomy and judgement	63	12,6	31,7
Doing my job better	74	14,8	37,2
Work and career motivation	87	17,4	43,7
Job security	18	3,6	9,0
Confidence and self-respect	63	12,6	31,7
Appreciation and recognition from colleagues	22	4,4	11,1
Sense of belonging to the organisation	27	5,4	13,6
Personal growth and self-identity	78	15,6	39,2
Promotion	8	1,6	4,0
Total	499	100,0	250,8

Gender and job tenure

At several points, the general data analysis suggested that gender and job tenure (newcomers vs. experienced) intervene to shape patterns of response. Further analysis was conducted with the HE sample to explore these issues.

Firstly, female respondents are notably more likely to report either that they definitely feel appreciated for the work they do (24% compared with 13% of males) or that this is not at all the case (10% compared with 4% of males). This indicates a certain polarisation of experience in the workplace – and interestingly, males are notably more likely to refer to ideas and advice they receive from colleagues as sources of encouragement (10% compared with 2% for females). Overall (as shown in Figure 1 below) females are more likely to feel appreciated at work, less likely to get more financial than personal satisfaction from their work, and less likely to give their employer good marks for professional development via learning opportunities. On a number of dimensions, male respondents demonstrate greater interest in the directly job and career linked aspects and benefits of pursuing work-relevant learning, including salary rises that they have already experienced (see Table 3 next page).

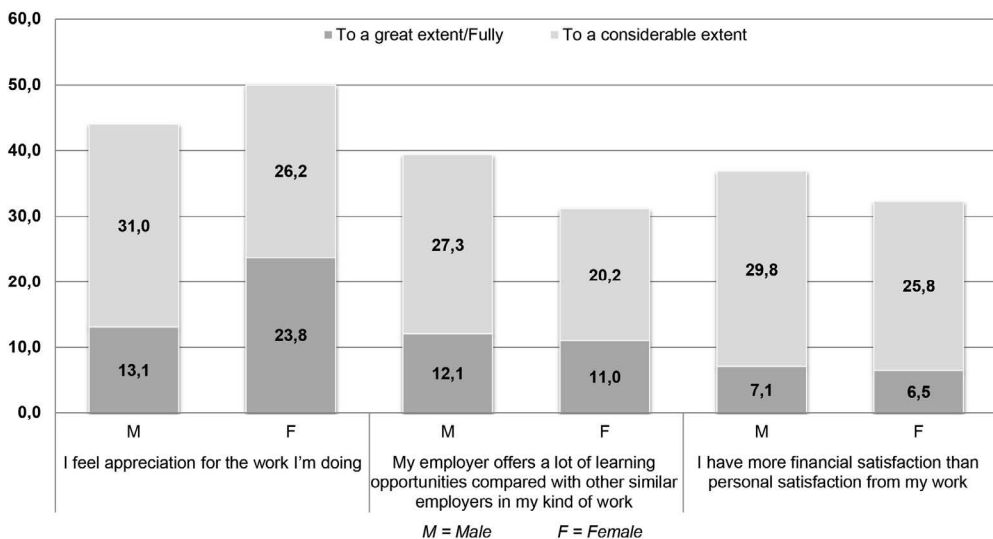


Figure 1: Appreciation, opportunities and satisfaction, by gender, %

Table 3

Benefits from learning at work by gender, N and %

I have benefited from learning at work in the following ways: (N=230; n=162)	At most three answers were possible					
	Male (n=64)			Female (n=98)		
	F	P	%	F	P	%
This question is not relevant for me, because I have not learned at work	5	3,1	7,8	16	6,7	16,3
I do not think I have benefited at all	6	3,8	9,4	2	,8	2,0
Salary rise	15	9,4	23,4	12	5,0	12,2
Sense of autonomy and judgement	19	11,9	29,7	31	13,0	31,6
Doing my job better	26	16,3	40,6	33	13,8	33,7
Work and career motivation	23	14,4	35,9	44	18,4	44,9
Job security	12	7,5	18,8	3	1,3	3,1
Confidence and self-respect	20	12,5	31,3	26	10,9	26,5
Appreciation and recognition from colleagues	6	3,8	9,4	13	5,4	13,3
Sense of belonging to the organisation	3	1,9	4,7	14	5,9	14,3
Personal growth and self-identity	23	14,4	35,9	39	16,3	39,8
Promotion	2	1,3	3,1	6	2,5	6,1
Total	160	100,0	250,0	239	100,0	243,9

When the less marked gender-specific variations in the ‘minor key’ of the response patterns throughout the survey questions are also built into the overall interpretive (rather than the purely technically statistical) picture, the trend and the drift point to an image of the female respondents as more socially attuned learners as distinct from male respondents as more individually focused learners. Concomitantly, they are more attuned to the personal and social benefits of working, too, and are more sensitively aware of these dimensions of working life. This does not seem to be accompanied by the advantages of bridging or bonding social capital in the workplace as a resource for learning, since although females are also more critical of their employers with respect to provision of learning opportunities in general, they are less likely to perceive hierarchies on such opportunities in their organisation. Yet they are also more likely to point to gaining a sense of belonging to the organisation as a benefit of following work-relevant courses. This all suggests that it would be worthwhile to explore more conclusively the nature of gender-specific forms of social integration and inclusion at the workplace, and to do so by focusing on everyday and unremarkable patterns of interaction and behaviour.

However, these suggestive patterns gain interest when set in juxtaposition with the clear differences that emerge in contrasting the newcomers and the experienced employees in the HE sample, as distinguished by the variable of job tenure. For this purpose, the analysis contrasts

those with their current employer for less than one year and those with more than four years tenure.

In assessing their current work situation, it is the newcomers who are much more positive in all respects and who are much more intrinsically oriented towards their work (see Figure 2 next page). They are also notably more likely to report that they feel encouraged when their boss offers ideas and advice (11% compared with 4% of the experienced employees). Newcomers assess the learning opportunities offered by their employers more positively, too, and give broader-based reasons for having followed courses in the past – whereas the experienced employees are more likely to focus on constraints (such as whether employers make sufficient time and space available for learning) and focus more consistently on reasons for pursuing work-relevant learning that are closely linked to job and career (see Table 4 next page). The pattern holds for benefits of having pursued learning in the past: experienced employees are more likely to point to salary rises and job security (see Table 5 after next page). They also judge their employers less favourably with respect to their propensity to give recognition for having improved knowledge and skills.

New recruits to an organisation thus seem to be more intrinsically attached to their work and sensitive to the personal and social benefits that both working and learning bring, not least in interaction with each other. The reverse image suggests that more experienced employees may become somewhat more 'disillusioned' – or perhaps simply more realistic on the basis of their experience – and in parallel their perspectives towards both working and learning become somewhat more extrinsic in contour.

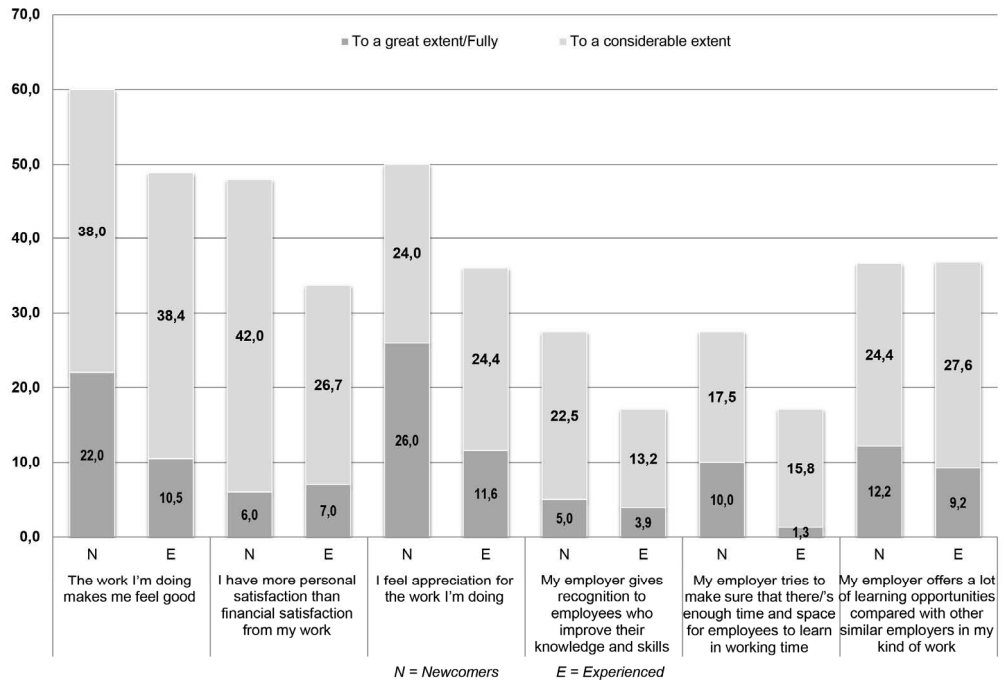


Figure 2: Positive aspects of working environments, by job tenure, %

Table 4

Nature of courses taken in the past 12 months, by job tenure, N and %

The courses I have taken in the past twelve months are ... (N=140; n=99)	At most three answers were possible					
	Newcomers (n=29)			Experienced (n=70)		
	F	P	%	F	P	%
directly or closely related to my current job	14	19,2	48,3	39	23,9	55,7
related to a job I would like to have in the future (e.g. a promotion or a different kind of work)	18	24,7	62,1	49	30,1	70,0
useful for my work, but not really essential	16	21,9	55,2	30	18,4	42,9
related to my job as well as to my personal development	20	27,4	69,0	35	21,5	50,0

Table 5

Benefits from learning at work, by job tenure, N and %

I have benefited from learning at work in the following ways: (N=140; n=105)	At most three answers were possible					
	Newcomers (n=31)			Experienced (n=74)		
	F	P	%	F	P	%
This question is not relevant for me, because I have not learned at work	7	9,7	22,6	6	3,2	8,1
I do not think I have benefited at all	2	2,8	6,5	3	1,6	4,1
Salary rise	3	4,2	9,7	15	7,9	20,3
Sense of autonomy and judgement	8	11,1	25,8	23	12,1	31,1
Doing my job better	11	15,3	35,5	31	16,3	41,9
Work and career motivation	12	16,7	38,7	32	16,8	43,2
Job security	1	1,4	3,2	10	5,3	13,5
Confidence and self-respect	8	11,1	25,8	22	11,6	29,7
Appreciation and recognition from colleagues	5	6,9	16,1	4	2,1	5,4
Sense of belonging to the organisation	4	5,6	12,9	7	3,7	9,5
Personal growth and self-identity	10	13,9	32,3	32	16,8	43,2
Promotion	1	1,4	3,2	5	2,6	6,8
Total	72	100,0	232,3	190	100,0	256,8

Both sub-groups – the newcomers and the experienced – are currently studying for a vocationally relevant higher education qualification alongside their generally full-time employment, but their response patterns clearly differ. To ply a stereotype of youth versus age, we might conclude that *newcomers are still full of energy and idealism, whereas more experienced employees have become more pragmatic and moderated* – and in some cases perhaps disillusioned – in their expectations and actions surrounding the intersections between learning and working. Nevertheless, they continue to make the effort, despite being uncertain about the benefits; and these experienced workers have an average age of around 30 or so, with virtually no-one over 40 years of age. Youth and age in this context does not, then, refer to chronological age, but to ‘organisational age’.

When and why do downward spirals of motivation to continue to learn take hold amongst adults who have secured a reasonable foothold in the labour market? The reasons must be linked with employer policies and practices with respect to assuring facilitation, support, appreciation and rewards. The age-range of this sample of self-evidently active learners suggests the hypothesis that *the downward spiral could begin quite early on in working lives and career biographies – but may not become clearly visible in its negative effects until ten to twenty years later, when employees are between their mid-forties and mid-fifties*.

Furthermore, in several – but not all – respects, newcomers and women share certain features, as do the experienced and men. Women form 59% of the HE sample, but 67% of the newcom-

ers are female. Men comprise 41% of the HE sample, yet are 45% of the experienced employees. Similarly, 54% of the newcomers are under 29, whereas 75% of the experienced are aged at least 29.⁸ This study alone cannot draw reliable conclusions, but the overall thrust of the data patterns pose a series of speculations that future research should explore. Are newly-recruited younger adult females especially committed *both* to their work *and* to learning that improves their formal qualifications? Do they see this as the best way to get ahead in their career and in their employing organisation?⁹ What happens later on, when initial hopes and expectations may not have been met? Are increasingly instrumental perspectives towards work and career linked with growing disillusion about organisational policies and practices with respect to human resource development? Do such processes have a greater impact over time on male than on female employees?

Conclusions

This study captures data from a specific kind of sample, largely made up of ‘active learning citizens’ who are relatively well-placed in educational and employment terms and who bring the motivation, the capacity and the energy to engage in formal work-relevant learning despite – or perhaps precisely because – they find themselves caught up in the rush-hour of modern adult life in Europe.

The *first key issue* that comes out of the overall pattern of response to this survey is the *evident tension between, on the one hand, internalised educational values and norms and on the other hand, the realities and constraints of employment and working life*. This is a specific expression of a tension between free will and determinism that structures understandings and experiences of personal and social life altogether. Reduced to bald essentials, education symbolises free will and work symbolises determinism. Voluntary participation in social, political and educational life constitutes a core value and holds strong normative power for individual expectations and constructions. Yet in practice, degrees of compulsion are *volens nolens* exercised and accepted, including with respect to participation in education and training. Schooling is compulsory, and few would argue that it should be otherwise – the personal and social benefits evidently outweigh the disadvantages. The normative expectation that participation in education and training should continue not only beyond compulsory schooling but increasingly throughout adult life is now beginning to take hold, and there is no doubt that structural changes in economies and labour markets are the driving force. The implications for European

⁸ Austrian labour force statistics (Statistics Austria, 2010a) record average job tenure in 2009 with 10.7 years for men and 8.7 years for women. Gender-specific differences increase with the length of tenure, reaching their widest for those with more than 20 years of tenure.

⁹ Indeed, it could be that such highly motivated younger women were also more likely to participate in this survey, whose topic elicited their interest.

educational traditions and practices are contested and hotly debated, not only in terms of the increasing dominance of instrumental rationalities but also in terms of the ethics of coercion and the resulting quality of learning outcomes.

There is no doubt that the respondents to this survey do not see themselves – and do not want to see themselves – as mere puppets of circumstance and constraint. They have developed highly individualised subjectivities that are supposed to be founded in the capacity to exercise personal and social autonomy. They construct their motivations for continuing education and training within a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic considerations, and within this framework it is they who decide on the balance between the two. In the Austrian context, intrinsic considerations hold high value and attract the greatest normative acceptance. The role that employers might and do play in shaping structures of opportunity and constraint is typically presented by our respondents as a paler sub-text of semi-determinism alongside the main storyline of the rational exercise of free will. In this scenario, employers neither impose real constraints, nor do they specifically insist or guide their employees' choices and decisions. At the same time, respondents are not at all uncritical of their employers' policies and practices: it seems that many insufficiently encourage and reward participation *of one's own volition* in work-related learning. Effectively, respondents recognise the importance, indeed the necessity, of pursuing such learning on a continuing basis, but this is an insight at which they much prefer to arrive of their own free will – not because someone else, whether an employer or a state agent, insists on it.

Unsurprisingly, then, free will and determinism constitute a set of fluid and incremental relations that individual subjects not only negotiate in practice as best they can, but also interpretively accommodate to fit core values and norms as positively as possible. Our respondents see themselves as active learning citizens, and by and large they act accordingly.

The ***second key issue*** that arises from this analysis ***relates to the independent and potentially interlinked issues around gender and job tenure***. This is by no means the first study to pick up gender-specific features of adults' perspectives towards working and learning together with indications that contextual structures of opportunities for CVET across the learning continuum (and perhaps most importantly in informal and non-formal learning settings) differ both objectively and subjectively between women and men as employees and as adult learners. On the contrary, there is no lack of evidence for these specificities, and they are linked with systematic patterns of continuing advantage and disadvantage in the public spheres of employment and education. This study's sample is a particular exemplar, yet because of its very specificity it can hold a number of contextual variables constant, allowing us to focus in on the similarities and differences for a relatively homogeneous group in terms of education, employment and social location.

In contrast, few studies have been in a position to compare the perspectives and experiences of a relatively homogenous group on the basis of differential job tenure. The findings that emerge thereby can only be classified as tentative, but they are also potentially fascinating, because they begin to picture motivation for and participation in work-relevant adult learning as a dynamic process that can move into affirming and equally disaffirming trajectories following entry into mainstream employment. The critical points that generate upward and downward spirals remain non-researched, but they undoubtedly exist and there is every reason to suppose that employer policies and practices play a crucial role in the positioning scenario. If we now juxtapose this with gender-specificities, we could begin to develop better understandings of how active and engaged young women coming into the labour market with qualifications and potential are gradually whittled down into active and engaged adult women who, crashing into organisational glass ceilings that neither they nor their colleagues or their employees can genuinely see, take positive and less positive decisions to focus on the intrinsic virtues of working and learning, leaving the cut and thrust of extrinsic game-plays to their male peers – who do not necessarily thereby secure greater satisfaction or reward. This small study cannot answer any of these questions, but it serves well to pose them.

There is, finally, a **third key issue** that deserves further inquiry in future studies. We wanted to explore experiences and understandings of workplace learning – that is, learning that employees might engage in at or through their work, and that is (directly or indirectly) relevant for their work. We were very careful to specify that we were focusing on learning, and therefore not simply on formal CVET, wherever this takes place along the continuum between workplaces and universities. Our respondents do not make these differentiations and distinctions so clearly. They seem to understand work-relevant learning above all in terms of formalised courses, and much less so in terms of learning that is integrated into everyday working practices. This is not because our respondents do not recognise or value the concept and practice of active participation in decision-making and problem-solving at work – quite the reverse is the case. They also clearly place a high value on self-directed engagement with education and training opportunities. ***The connection that seems difficult to make is between learning activities and working activities*** – and this, too, is no real surprise, for the dichotomous cleavage between thought and action is undoubtedly one of the most deeply-rooted cultural codes in western conceptual systems. The potential transformative power of workplace learning rests on restructuring this fundamental relation, in theory and in practice – but that is a question that this small survey was not designed to address, and could never, in any case, be approached through this method of inquiry.

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This volume considers working environments as potential and actual learning environments. It encompasses a broad range of organisations for a range of industrial and occupational sectors in both Asian and European countries. The challenges of economic, technological and socio-cultural change render the topics of work-related and workplace learning a lively field for theory and research. This field increasingly draws inspiration and benefits from global exchange and debate.

This publication is the third volume produced by the research network on competence development as workplace learning within the Asia-Europe-Meeting Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning (ASEM LLL). The network was established in 2005 and includes members from 14 countries in Asia and Europe. This volume is the outcome of the second network workshop, which was held at the University of Innsbruck in July 2011. Its chapters include both a selection of national studies conducted within the framework of a joint network survey on workplace learning from the perspective of employees themselves, and a set of reports on related themes which draw on other research initiatives.

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