Value-Based Management Education: The Case of Health Care Management Course

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Abstract

The paper presents educational and teaching change by discussing the results of our study of management education in the health care sector in order to foster innovation for the purpose of better learning, teaching and curriculum development. Personal reflection and content analysis were used as a method to identify health care students' values and perceptions of role models, management and decision-making patterns. Decision-making in health care demands risk management, crisis management, precision and good knowledge of personal abilities and values. Many of our health care students will after the completion of our course work with patients in difficult life situations that will bring with them many ethical dilemmas and emotional pressure. In order to support health care staff in professional decision-making and enable them making the right decisions for the majority of stakeholders (patients, relatives, nursing staff, physicians, etc.) we will provide recommendations for policy makers.

Introduction

Nowadays, there is an increasing awareness that doing business can be done in an ethical and profitable manner at the same time and inspirational role models serve as an example that promotes engaging in ethical business activities (Baden, 2014). In their research Kabui et al. (2012) provided insight that the majority of their respondents stated that they had business role models. Similarly, Woodd (1997) argued that when employees are selecting a mentor, for them it might be important that they perceive their mentor as a role model as this can contribute for them to achieve the highest

possible levels of learning. Whereas, Shakeshaft (1987) similarly proposed, that mentoring can also be defined with a slightly different perspective as role modelling.

When discussing the influence of role models on students, Scott et al. (1998) and Harrison et al. (1992) suggested that especially important factors that guide students' ambitions towards specific careers are parental influence and role models. Bosma et al. (2012) added that also in the media the topic of role modelling is gaining in importance as it is described as one of the most influential factors in decision making that determines how young people tend to choose their future occupation and career paths. Similarly, Gibson (2004) argued that role models are important as they guide individual development. Cruess et al. (2008) further argued that also teachers must educate themselves about possible conscious and unconscious components of learning from role modelling, so that the general outcome of such an approach is positive. Sims et al. (2002) suggested that various activities, such as role modelling, teaching and coaching are instruments that leaders can use to introduce values that will ultimately support organizational culture.

Our paper presents educational and teaching transformation by discussing the impact of student-based management education and presenting results of our study of management education in the health care sector in order to foster innovation for the purpose of better learning, teaching and curriculum development. Personal reflection and content analysis were used as a method to identify health care students' values, vision and perceptions of role models and decision-making patterns.

Theoretical overview

McGregor (1960) argued that "*behind every managerial decision or action there are assumptions about human nature and human behaviour.*" Therefore, he argued that such theoretical assumptions are in their very nature implicit and typically lead to a specific management style that results in specific behaviour of individual employees. According to Hommelhof (2017) such implicit assumptions about human nature also guide different managerial strategies and can influence the way managers think about and deal with their users. Chiu et al. (1997) and Levy et al. (1998) argued that implicit theories regarding malleability of personal attributes are used to explain how individual employees deal with predictions, stereotypes and how they understand the behaviours of their colleagues.

Bass et al. (1994) and Burns (1978) added that assumptions about human nature are especially important when discussing the topic of transformational leadership in organizations. According to Bass et al. (2006) transformational leadership is so important as it enables a better fit for leaders to lead work groups and organizations that are nowadays increasingly more demanding and complex. In such organizations, followers expect their leaders to be inspirational and provide them support in an increasingly uncertain environment. Moreover, they expect that leaders will challenge and empower them as this will positively influence potential turnover and will enhance individual performance. Transformational leadership has also proven to be an effective type of leadership in various different sectors around the globe (Bass et al., 2006). Zagoršek et al. (2009) further proved that transformational leadership strongly influences several constructs that are related to organizational learning.

Whereas Ilies et al. (2005) discussed how authentic leadership influences intrinsic motivation. Penger et al. (2014) further argued that employees that are guided by an authentic leader are more likely to engage in initiatives for their personal development as they become aware that they are able to achieve more than they initially expected. In such a process employee are not just conforming to the desires of their managers. Employees become more engaged as a consequence of positive self-

development due to their manager's example. Such development of employees that are following principles of positive thinking, enhancing self-confidence and building hope based on their own actions also significantly influences their levels of work engagement.

Singh (2018) defined valued-based education as an approach to teaching that works hand in hand with values and creates a strong learning environment that endorses academic achievements and develops students' social and relationship skills for the rest of their lives. Reficco et al. (2017) suggested that teaching of value-based contents such as social responsibility, business ethics and environmental sustainability is gaining in importance as it promotes the quality of education and encourages the development of a positive school environment (Iyer, 2013). Klaassen et al. (1996) and Wardekker et al. (1998) already proved the legitimacy of value-based education as it is positive for schools, teachers and students. Singh (2018) argued that value-based education imparts social and moral integrity, character and spirituality and builds on the qualities of humility and honesty. He, furthermore, emphasized that when we are living in a world with numerous negative characteristics, such as a high amount of corruption and violence, schools have an additional responsibility to engage in promoting the importance of value-based education as it ultimately contributes in developing not just educated but also responsible citizens that are concerned with the well-being of the society as a whole. Pathania (2011) added that in order for our society to achieve sustainable human development and social growth, value-based education accompanied with spiritual education, ethical education and need based education is important and necessary. Whereas Iyer (2013) highlighted cooperation, responsibility, happiness, simplicity, unity, peace, respect, love, tolerance, honesty, humility and freedom as values that are most important in value-based education. Furthermore, Iyer (2013) suggested that value-based education is in its essence a holistic approach to education as it provides complete education of both body and mind using innovative teaching approaches and critical thinking.

When discussing value-based education it has also become clear that teachers must be equipped with specific knowledge so that they are able to educate the youth in an appropriate manner (Lunenberg et al., 2007). Similarly, Fogarty (2005) argued that student-driven learning is also necessary for value-based education to be successful. Fahrenwald et al. (2005) stressed out that value-based teaching with its focus on moral and character development is particularly important as the learning values are the cornerstone of individuals that will engage in practice assuming leadership roles later in their career paths. Whereas, Veugelers (2000) suggested that value-based education combines simultaneously the transfer of knowledge, development of skills and development of values. In order to measure if value-based education is successful, Rodriguez et al. (2008) proposed that it could be beneficial to assess such education in terms of the ability of students to apply the aforementioned values in practice.

Ribbins (1985) identified that by role "*we mean the behaviours associated with the designated position, which those in other positions expect the incumbent to do.*" Luna et al. (1990) defined role modelling as "*demonstrating valued behaviour, attitudes and/or skills that aid the junior in achieving competence, confidence, and a clear professional identity.*" Cruess et al. (2008) argued that role modelling is a powerful teaching tool that enables transferring knowledge, skills and value in many different professions to individuals.

Otara (2011) defined perception as the way we interpret our experiences and further argued that the ability of having the right perceptions is an integral skill of any

effective leader. Perception is also an individual's sensory experience of the environment in which he or she lives and is at the same time focused on the recognition of environmental stimuli and typical actions that are a response to such stimuli. Moreover Otara (2011) proposed that managing perceptions in the process of dealing with employees and organizational challenges is typically what distinguishes great from average leaders.

Elsbach (2003) suggested that the topic of organizational perception management has its roots way back in history from the times of ancient Greece. She continued that the same perception management issues that concerned early organizations (i.e. illegitimacy due to changes in social norms, face-saving following scandals or accidents) are still present nowadays. According to Aktepebasi et al. (2018) perception management in organizations can be explained as the understanding and valuation process of the individual about the environment and the authors emphasized the importance of it. Otara (2011) proposed that in organizations, different perceptions of stakeholders such as leaders, managers, and employees have an important role in determining organizational climate and overall effectiveness of the working environment.

Aurum et al. (2002) described the decision-making process in management with the identification of a problem, quest for solutions, evaluation and selection of the appropriate solution and ultimately the commitment to the appropriate solution. The authors furthermore suggested that organizations are exposed to different types of decisions that can be related to different functions of their business such as technology, products and customers. Moreover, some decisions are repetitive on a daily or weekly basis, whereas others rarely occur. Simon (1960) provided further insight into the topic as he recommended that decisions that are repetitive typically involve a clearly identified process and are commonly known as structured decisions. Whereas on the other hand, unstructured decisions are novel and the process that is related to them is ambiguous. Anthony (1965) provided the categorization of three types of decision activities that are different on the basic purpose of management activity, namely strategic planning, management control and operational control.

As we are nowadays living in an increasingly turbulent environment the ability of managers and employees to make better decisions is gaining in recognition (Silva et al., 2016). Kleinmuntz et al. (1987) proposed that the decision-making process can be explained as one where the individual acts, observes the outcomes of his or her actions, and later acts again. Carneiro (2000) acknowledged that managers have to recognize more the value of knowledge when making decisions today. She further emphasized that managers should be aware of their organization's critical knowledge bases, the intellectual skills of their individual employees and the gained accumulated experience that has the potential of positively influencing organizational performance and to foster strategic decision-making. Whereas, Saad et al. (2005) suggested that decision making is so important as it enhances understanding in the organization and has the ability to potentially create new knowledge. Cruz et al. (2009) stressed out that different forms of communication help promote greater transfer and acquisition of knowledge, enhance the ability of organizational learning and contribute towards transforming organizations towards consensus decision making.
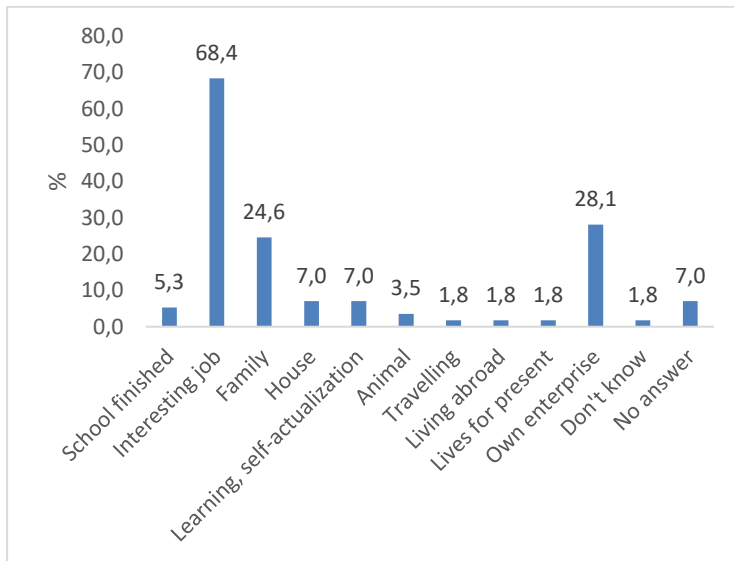
Research design

Our study is based on the sample of 57 students of health care which were enrolled in a study in the study year 2018/19 at the Faculty of health sciences University of Ljubljana. In the sample there are 42 (73,7%) females. The average age of our students was 21,03 years. Questionnaire included open-ended questions.

Qualitative analysis of the gathered data was analysed in NVivo and Excel. The data is presented in the form of graphical data and synthesis, the data is aggregated and anonymized in order to protect the sources of data and provide for the objectivity of subjective perceptions as much as possible. Content analysis was implemented.

Findings

We asked the participants, to write their first thoughts/associations they think of when hearing the word "role model" (slo. *zgled*). Out of 57 students, 39 students named 4 associations, 11 students 3 associations, 4 students named only 2 associations, meanwhile only one student named 1 association. Two students did not give any association.

As presented in the figure 1, the most often named associations were: "good" when asked about their association about "role-model", as data shows that 16 students reported that, 15 students mentioned name "role", 14 students "model", 9 students "leader" and "parents", 8 students "respect" and 7 students "success".

Figure 1
Students' Associations About Role Models

Source: NVivo illustration

As presented in figure 2, in 10 years framework, students most often see themselves as having an interesting job, which will fulfil their dreams and give them financial stability (68,4%), followed by establishing own enterprise (28,1%). In addition, some participants (24,6%) see themselves as having a family, meanwhile other expressed images encompassing also: further learning e.g. doctoral study, or further self-actualization (7,0%), owning a house (7,0%), finished school (5,3%), having an animal (cat or dog) (3,5%), and travelling or living abroad, both 1,8%. One student answered that he/she has no plans as he/she is living for the present, meanwhile one additional said that he/she just don't know. 7% of respondents give no answer to the question.

Figure 2
Students' Vision of Their Life in 10 Years

Source: Authors' illustration

We were also interested in students' values. As presented in figure 3, the results show that the values that students mentioned the most in our study are the following: 28 students reported "family", 19 students "health", 14 students mentioned "love", 10 students "honesty", 9 students "work", 8 students "respect" and 4 students "friends" and "happiness".

Figure 3
Students' Priority Values in Life

Source: NVivo illustration

We also asked students how their values are reflected in their decision-making process. By analysing their concrete examples, the content analysis revealed that students' decision-making processes are guided by diverse factors, namely work—life balance (19,3%), fair play (15,8%), values priority (5,4%), helping others (3,5%) and consideration (3,5%), meanwhile caution, being advised, benefit seeking, free time,

impact, independence, knowledge based, respect, safety, trust and well-being were mentioned only once. In 29,8% students give no answer to the question. It is interesting that 35,1% of respondents mentioned family as first value, followed by health (17,5%).

We also tried to grasp how students understand management. As presented in figure 4, the results show that most often, management is understood by health care students in terms of functions performed, e.g. planning, organizing, leading and controlling (38,6%), followed by working optimization (28,1%). 15,8% of respondents also understand management as organization, and as a process, management is understood in 8,8% of answers given. In 3,5% of answers, management is understood as helping others or as responsibility taken on by people. One student gave no answer.

Figure 4
Students' Perception of Management
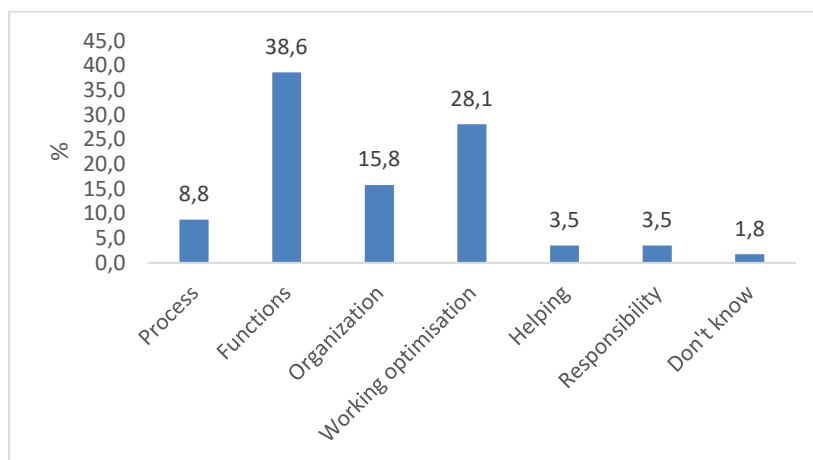
Source: Authors' illustration

Discussion and conclusion

Our findings support that student-driven learning is very vital for successful value-based education (Fogarty, 2005) as it enables joining the efforts of educators and students in order to achieve optimal understanding of explicit and implicit management theories. Value-based teaching with its focus on moral and character development is important as the learning values are the cornerstone of individuals that will engage in practice assuming leadership roles later in their career (Fahrenwald et al., 2005). Value-based education combines simultaneously the transfer of knowledge, development of skills and the development of values (Veugelers, 2000).

We analysed students' perceptions of management in order to explain students' understanding and valuation about the business environment in which they live and (will one day) work (Aktepebasi et al., 2018). The way students see different stakeholders, such as bosses, leaders, managers, and employees have an important role in determining overall effectiveness of the working environment (Otara, 2011). Interesting finding in our analysis is the perception of contemporary students of management; the way they perceive management is mainly functions-based view, which is in line with the mainstream management theory of the 21st century.

One of the findings for "role model" association is that students often perceive embodiment of the term "role model", meaning that they often answered to our inquiry: "Who do you perceive as role model?" the role model in their community.

Students are aware that contemporary business environment is turbulent; therefore, they need to develop the managerial ability to make good decisions (Silva et al., 2016). One-way policy makers and educators can help students in making responsible

decision-making is designing educational framework that exposes students to mature and immature decision making. If individuals see the consequences of bad decision-making, they are much likely not to make the same mistakes in the future as it is costly and painful, therefore learning about the theory of decision-making in class makes sense for them. Even more so if theory is supported with practical cases in seminars and workshops. Our pedagogical experiences show that students respond well to guest lecturers who demonstrate their decision-making process and showing what they learnt from bad decisions in the past. It is key that students and later on managerial decisions are based on knowledge (Carneiro, 2000), past experiences and fair play attitude in line with their values. It is evident that different forms of communication do help in promoting transfer and acquisition of knowledge, enhance the ability of organizational learning and contribute towards consensus decision-making (Cruz et al., 2009).

The implications of our research are in highlighting the importance for educators in higher education institutions to start the educational process with perceptions of students regarding the lectured topic as this very much influences the comprehension and application of the discussed study materials. Unfortunately, due to the vast amount of available theoretical materials educators have to share with their students there is often no time for integrating the students' perceptions into management education. Our study shows that comprehension and students' collaboration at the course is better if we do take the time for questioning their perception before and after the course. One of our management students said at the last Seminar when discussing with the students how their perception of management changed: "*I was not aware that management involves so much dealing with people.*" It is true, we often connect business with money and managing finances, but good management means that we motivate people and equip them with appropriate tools/sources to produce products and services in order to gain profit/added value.

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