

GYROSCOPIC MANAGEMENT AS ADDED VALUE FOR MANAGEMENT

JOOP VINKE

Abstract

In this paper, I will describe a comparative applied PhD research in The Netherlands and Romania on the added value of Gyroscopic Management for management.

In recent publications in International Journals in 2010 and 2011, I described the phenomenon of a new approach to education and training called ‘Gyroscopic Management’ (See list publications).

To give the reader an insight and overview of this, I will introduce and explain this gyroscopic management and, based on literature research and my own experiences, I describe how a currently used approach in education and the training of business and management students at Arnhem Business School (ABS) shows that this can lead to added strategic value for management in organizations. This also represents the start of a so-called, ‘Grounded Action’ research about the influence of training and educating for new future managers in organisations, as described in the second part of this paper. The research took place in Romania and The Netherlands and it shows the discovered five stages of ‘gyroscopic management’: *“Learning, listening, awareness, accepting, adapting, and advancing.”* I explored this explanatory theory further into a so-called ‘Grounded Action’ research approach in which I made an ‘operational theory’ (Simmons & Gregory 2003).

This research is implemented in the form of a final applied research in educational and training practice during trainings, lectures at ABS in the Netherlands and at the West University in Timisoara, Romania (UWT).

Because the last part of this study will be published at the end of 2012, I will describe in this paper only the first part. While this study and research seems in the beginning to focus only on the education and training of managers, I will make clear why this approach is necessary and advisable for training and education of the new generation of managers in future organizations.

Introduction

The idea for this study is a logical continuation of my work experiences in HR positions in different organizations and relates strongly with my current function as senior lecturer

and coordinator of a bachelor study program at Arnhem Business School (ABS), HAN University, in the Netherlands.

Together with colleagues, I developed, and practise a new approach in teaching and training in higher education in the Netherlands, based on ‘Gyroscopic Management’. I consider this approach as necessary to adapt to the needed management style of the future generation of managers.

My aim is to prove this during my PhD research. The vision behind my belief in added value for the field of management lies in the value of Human Resource and Quality Management (HRQM) for organizations. To make this clearer I will explain this part in more detail and the theory and development of the practise behind it.

Changes in HR Management and Quality Management

From the 1970’s onwards, managers and other decision makers in organizations mainly focused on tangible and measurable assets and financial resources, like stocks or profit figures. The role of the employees working in special departments such as Personnel and Quality, are mainly to support this with so-called ‘back-office’ functions. Their activities focus on legislation requirements, payroll, and personnel data maintenance. Over the last few decades, this role has been changing. HRM experts, as Becker, Huselid, and Ulrich (2001) mention this in many of their publications on the balance scorecard and HR scorecard.

Currently many managers talk about the importance of ‘people’ behind the organization’s success and they are beginning to embrace and even ‘engage’ in the view and approach that we now know as the ‘Human Capital approach’. Many of the definitions in the literature for this approach consider the money spent on fostering innovation in the workforce as an ‘investment’. Becker (1994) defines this as *“activities that influence the future monetary and psychic income by increasing the resources in people.”*

From administrating to added value

When I draw in a visual way this transformation from Personnel and Quality management of the last decennia to an integrated HRQM in Business, in a visual way (Figure 1), I can divide this development into three main phases.

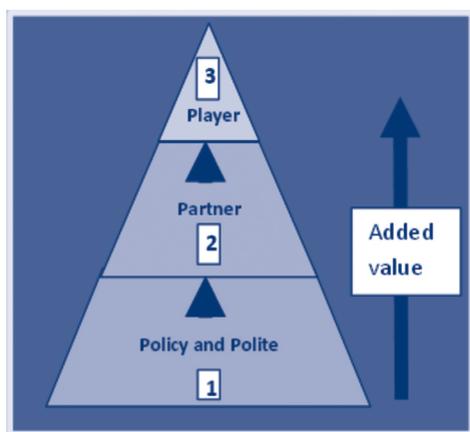


Figure 1: *The three functions in HRM (Vinke, 2007)*

These three phases explain not just the change in focus of the HR and QM departments, but they also show the growing added value of the role that HRQM can have for complete organizational values.

A more in depth description of these three phases I described in my earlier publications (See publications). All these, described in detail developments make clear that there is a high need for change in the role and competencies of HR and QM.

It is not enough to stay in the role of 'controller of policy' and to remain the 'polite' group. It is not even enough anymore to become a 'partner' for management as also explained by Beatty, Huselid, and Schneier (2003). The HRQM role needs to change, focusing more on being a 'player' in business.

Vision on the state of education and training in HRQM

The most important factors that are able to change the role that HRQM can have in organizations are, according to me, the future generation of managers. They can give HRQM that new role of 'player'. In my opinion, this means we have to train and educate this new generation of managers in a way that suits their characteristics and needs.

I make a conscious choice here not to train the current generation of managers. The managers of 'tomorrow' are different, which I will explain further. Therefore, the focus of this study and research is aimed at the generation of business and management students in higher education that will get this role in the future.

The need for new competencies

Nowadays most of the study programmes in HR management and in Quality management, in higher education in Europe still have, in my opinion, a strong focus on the first and sometimes the second phase as mentioned in figure 1. They are educating and training students in being the ‘controller of policies’ and rarely on becoming a ‘partner’ in business for management.

Like any other business manager, HR and Quality managers also have to prove now and in the future that they are of added value for organizations. ‘HRM and ‘Quality’ issues are, as stated by Brewster (2004), “... *no longer the exclusive province of Personnel and Quality managers, controllers, and inspectors that are distant from strategic decision-making and whose contribution to the bottom line often goes unrecognized.*”

The added value of HRQM for organizations lies in its ability to manage the delicate, balance between coordinated systems and the sensitivity to global and local needs, including cultural differences, in a way that “*aligns with both business needs and senior management philosophy*” (Sparrow 2006). The new generation of HR and Quality managers and consultants for the coming years will have to be, ‘partners’ and ‘players’ in organizations, who will help to drive and steer the human resource and quality. They will have to deal with strategies in a focus to align corporate goals with objectives.

The HR and QM functions are realigning themselves as a response to this process of cross-functioning globalization. This means building new alliances with these functions by creating new activity streams, roles, and skills that are required (Sparrow, Brewster & Harris, 2004).

More than ever, managers have to be ‘entrepreneurs’ and ‘players’ that will find new ways to measure, describe and implement performance drivers and, in that way, can influence the success of a strategic focus on the objectives of the organizations. There is a clear need to prepare the new generation of managers in higher education on their new role to be a ‘player’ and entrepreneur in business. Ulrich and Beaty (2001) already mentioned this in an article in the Human Resource Management Journal. After studying this article, I believe that both authors of this article strongly focus on the ‘HR’ (tangible) part of the employee (see figure 2) and their aim is to make this part more visible and measurable. I will explain that, in my opinion, this does not count for the ‘Personnel’ (intangible) part of the employee and therefore I would divide an employee in a visual way into two parts: ‘HR’ and ‘P’, which I will explain later. This can give another and more complete view on the ‘player’ role for managers.

The study programme HRQM

International Business Awareness is defined by the author as: “The ability to be aware by feeling, sensing and listening and to translate that in a way of communicating that is as effectively in international markets as in the own domestic market”

Some of the answers for the needed new approach of changing the role of HRQM are, in my opinion, already practised in the international study programme HRQM at ABS in The Netherlands. Added to the Dutch Bachelor Study programme called Business and Management Studies, this specific, internationally oriented, study programme is given in English and has a strong focus on

two additional and important competencies: International Business Awareness and Intercultural Adaptability.

Both competencies already have proven to be needed extra competencies in the approach to get the new generation of managers on the level of being ‘players’ and entrepreneurs in business. They strongly relate to each other and find their grounding within the study programme in two visions:

Vision 1: “You can’t manage things that you can’t describe” (Norton, 2001).

Management of the contribution of employees in an organization for the quality and profit of the organization, I consider as ‘intangible’ issues.

Looking at the quote of P. Norton above, it

might then even be ‘impossible’ to manage them. In the case that it is not possible to ‘manage things that you can’t describe’, another view, or perspective maybe can give more possibilities for the management of it. I attempt to visualise this in figure 2. In this figure, I divide the employee into a ‘person’ and a ‘human resource’ and separate the ‘person’ (P) from the ‘human resource’ (HR).

On this perspective, I can develop systems and strategies to make both parts in separated ways more ‘visible’ and therefore better measurable and manageable.

Intercultural Adaptability is defined by the author as: “The sensitivity related with the awareness to recognize, understand, and work effectively across cultural differences.”

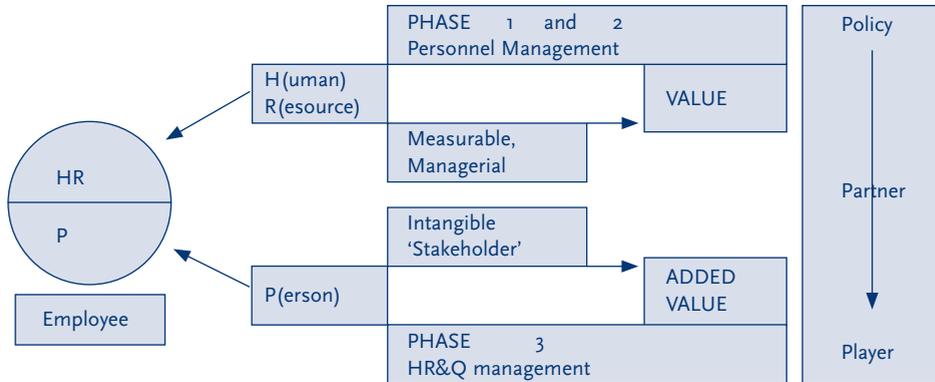


Figure 2: Visualization employee in two aspects, 'human resource' (HR) and 'person' (P) related with the three phases in HRQM role (Vinke, 2009).

This overview I made, based on own research, work experience and a combination of the researched literature of the 'Michigan model' by Fombrun, Tiche and Devanna (also called the 'Hard HRM model'), the 'Harvard HRM model', and the 'British HRM model' as developed by Guest. More than in these mentioned models, I focus on the differences between the P and the HR and the tangible and intangible parts of HRM.

Explanation of the difference between the 'HR' and the 'P'

I believe that in the visualization in figure 2, the 'P(erson)' beside the 'H(uman) R(esource)', is the part of the employee that has all the abilities to deliver the important added value in the 'value chain' (Porter, 1985) of an organization.

I make clear that this aspect, the 'person' behind the 'resource' or 'tool' is therefore an important element that can increase the contribution (the value) to the organization. When it comes to managing this, it is of importance to define the term managing. Many definitions in the literature are given. The most common ones relate to the French term 'management' or "the art of conducting, directing" and from Latin "manu agree," ("to lead by the hand"). In my opinion, the 'managing' of stakeholders or persons is in this definition a strange approach.

There are many theories about the differences between leadership, leading, and management, like given by Henri Mintzberg, Robert Quin, and Robert G Greenleaf (Servant leadership). All of them have very interesting views on management. I strongly

tend to a quote by Henry Mintzberg: *“I would prefer a style of management that can be called ‘engaging’. Such people believe that their purpose is to leave behind stronger organizations, not just higher share prices” (Mintzberg 2004).*

For me this shows the balancing part that the term ‘managing’ cares within this definition. Stakeholders and persons are no ‘resources’ (HR) in my definition. They need a different approach and way of dealing. They have to be ‘taken care of’ or we have to ‘mind about them’.

According to my view and definition, that does not include ‘managing’ them. Human resource management, on the other hand, is more about ‘managing’, when it concerns this other aspect of the employee, the ‘human resource’, the ‘HR’.

The HR aspect

To make sure to the reader that I am not talking about the ‘Person’, I want to express that if it is more efficient or effective to let a function done otherwise by a machine in an organization; this would be a better and more preferable action to do then when a human does it. It would make it much easier and less complicated to deal with. In this way, a ‘resource’ (HR) is just a tool, needed in the whole process to allow the organization to run, and a human can only produce that.

The author defines **Human resource** here as: “The necessary “tool”, needed in the whole process to let the organization run, and that only can be produced by a human”.

Moreover, the HR is in this way a manageable source, used to achieve the goals of the organization. It is possible to manage this within the existing HRM models with the use of the so-called ‘HR instruments’.

The P aspect

The other aspect is the ‘Person’ of an employee that can give the extra and needed value to the ‘HR’. This aspect can stimulate, inspire, and reward. It can be motivated or not. This aspect covers also the needed competencies to let the employee perform the job or function with skills, knowledge, and attitude. These are the performance drivers that can lead towards added value for the ‘HR’ part and therefore for the whole organization. In figure 2, I show also a difference in measuring the output. The value of the HR is measurable in output by calculating and making use of HR instruments like: selection, recruiting, job descriptions, performance indicators etc. However, the output given by ‘P’, like satisfaction, motivation, will, and responsibility, is not clearly measurable.

The overview given in figure 2 also shows a connection with the management of quality in the organization. The same difference between the P and HR part counts concerning quality. Quality is also measurable, when it comes to measuring the quality of a product as objective. It is possible to use the existing models and definitions as given in the Quality Management tools, like ISO, EFQM, Six Sigma, etc. When it comes to the perception of the stakeholders, the standards, and the measurability, again faces the same issued as in the give example for HRM. The 'P' aspect is again involved and not clear measurable!

It could be that readers will state here that indicators like satisfaction are possible to measure by surveys and translated to percentages, with high or low levels of satisfaction. Mintzberg (2004) calls this "*MBA = Management By Analysis*". He also explains: "*Management is not a science and no profession; it is a practise!*" In a practise, also according to Mintzberg, the only way of measuring is by doing and finding out. Another example, regarding the measuring of quality, I can give, is the definition of quality given by the American Society for Quality (ASQ, 2010): "*Quality denotes an excellence in goods and services, especially to the degree they conform to requirements and satisfy customers*". Again, this shows that the 'P' aspect delivers the added value and can make the difference in quality. The person can be satisfied and defines the requirements... not the HR...

The mentioned perspectives are the concept in the whole system of the organization, not based on an approach or management style of an individual manager. It will be the most effective placing it in a way of systems thinking.

A change in didactical approach

Together with some other lecturers, some years ago at Arnhem Business School (ABS) I integrated some separated disciplines like HRM, Quality Management, Communication, and Business Ethics in a common lecture. The reason for this was to start a new didactical approach within a new perspective, in combination with a 'systems-thinking' style.

While integrating these disciplines, I translated an earlier research I did on 'motivation of employees' (Vinke, 2001) into a concept in which every activity of each individual student is also a 'creation of value', as long as it is part of their own total chain of study.

In this focus, students and their motives to study became the most important value in the total system of creating values for their own study. By visualizing the 'performance powers' and making them visible and 'measurable' with progress-indicators, we were able to make it clearer to students and to themselves that each student is the 'creator of value' for their own study.

From self-management to the metaphor of gyroscopic management

This rather complex systems thinking approach, triggered also into translating it into a metaphor to make it more comprehensible and understandable. It became the metaphor of a (turning) gyroscope.

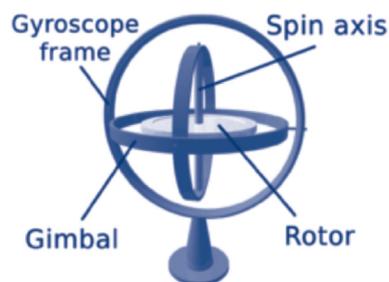


Figure 3: *A Gyroscope (cf. Google)*

By using this metaphor, I can refer to my own constant change of contexts and contacts, in which I have a constant need to find stability after regular collisions with other 'gyroscopes', as my colleagues, students, friends, family, etc... This urge gives me the focus to perform on a high(er) level in this context.

This focus is the so-called 'gyroscopic management' approach, which aims to put participants on the track of (self) management.

In the traditional educational and trainings systems, the concentration is mainly on interdependent areas of expertise, represented by the known disciplines in the educational field of business. They are in most cases still taught or trained separately. In gyroscopic management, these disciplines come together. The disciplines are separable, but this always creates an artificial and, therefore, awkward situation. In my own professional environment as a trainer, coach, or teacher, because the fields are indistinguishable, they are performing as a whole process.

It is as if the different disciplines form the components of a gyroscope. Once it has been given a swing the whole gyroscope starts turning (as I do when I perform), gathering momentum, and by doing that, automatically creates its individual balance by searching and using the imbalance.

We mostly observe a turning gyroscope from a distance and then we can see the movement, but it is difficult to observe the separate aspects. In order to observe or analyse the different parts, I have to stop a gyroscope. When I do this, I destroy the balance. This creates the awkward situation that I referred to before. This is unfortunately also the ‘standard’ situation in traditional education and training. Educators still largely teach in separate disciplines, creating non-life-like situations. Stopping the ‘gyroscope’, with the aim to put back in the separate parts.

The intention of ‘gyroscopic management’ approach is therefore to create situations that are, or are close to the professional field, using real life situations, professional products, and processes. This is not the same as making use of study cases. Although the intentions are good for that, in traditional education, the ‘halo-effect’, in which knowledge or skills of certain disciplines have positive influence on other disciplines, is minimal. In the interacting with other people, the other individual ‘gyroscopes’ collide and each has to find a new balance. This process represents the learning process in gyroscopic management.

The frustration that occurs when I do not understand what is going on, paths my way to understanding. Kolb (1984) already described this process in his book *Experimental learning*, as “*a development from a state of confusion towards full understanding*”. According to the scientists Siegel and Sapru (2010), real learning takes place in short, sometimes even violent, bursts, in which the change can be quite sudden and even aggressive. A participant in a study or training is looking for a reward for own motives. It is in the student’s interest to get prepared for the future professional career in the best way possible. Education and training can only be motivating if it satisfies as a reward for the needs of individual that participants require. The education therefore needs to focus more on an intrinsically rewarding the student’s motives, instead of extrinsically trying to motivate students through supply-oriented education and training.

Gyroscopic management in educational and professional contexts

More attention is necessary for the competencies of all stakeholders, teachers, lecturers, trainers etc. In the education and training of the new upcoming generation of managers, I, as trainer also develop my own competencies, in my own ‘gyroscopic management’ process.

According to Lutz (2003) attitude, skills, and competencies, like for instance “the ability to take initiative”, a certain amount of “guts”, communicative skills, and cultural consciousness, appear to be more crucial than knowing which instruments are available to

realise changes in organizations. For participants in education and training this means that it can only happen when the individual as gyroscope' collides with other gyroscopes to be in the situation in which they feel the force to find a new balance and this process has to keep repeating itself.

Traditional education and training is, based on my experience, not able to create a changing and stable balance in this. In practise, it means that I, as trainer or lecturer, do not pretend to be able to give the answers to any ethical, cultural, communicative or management oriented problems, because this would stop the turning gyroscope. In the gyroscopic management this 'not answering approach', creates the opportunity for the participants to constantly find a new balance themselves. By facilitating these opportunities, I allow them to learn instead of just giving answers.

It is obvious that this does not always take place in a secure environment. If I want to prepare students for their professional career, I create, on purpose, situations and an atmosphere that reflects this professional field. This is not a secure environment, especially from the point of view of participants.

To re-create this business environment I do things the participant does not expect and I get their 'gyroscopes' to start. The change can be a positive process with the constant finding of new balance, in relationship with all the other gyroscopes around them, can be, as mentioned by Johansen (2004) "*an exhilarating experience*".

With this more specific description of the focus in the 'gyroscopic management' approach, I want to make clear that it can lead not only to added value to students for their study, but at the same time for all participants to their future professional field.

Because the core of the approach stays focused on the requirements for the professional business field, I want, as researcher and participant, also to 'Practise what I preach'. In an applied research I therefore have looked at the results that the approach brings to its participants and what it already has brought to alumni, educated and trained with this 'gyroscopic management' approach. I will explain this in the following part.

Motivation and scientific context of the research project.

The motivation for the choice of the special applied research starts with my general interest in the following field: "*Students at business schools that are achieving the change in their role from being a "student" to being a "professional" in business.*"

In this field of interest, I am looking for a way to approach and support business and management students in that role change. I want to find ways to influence their development of self-management, and to support them to balance and unbalance in their attempt from 'being' a student toward 'being' a professional in business.

For lecturers, trainers and coaches, there is, according to me, no clear way to understand what goes on in the students during this change. The challenge is to find useful ways to trigger and influence a lasting change in their roles that is reliable, meaningful, and sustainable, and in addition, leads to added value for the business.

I decided to approach and research this field of interest in an applied and comparative way, using my own experiences, and practice in education in The Netherlands and Romania. The use of the applied research method called 'Grounded Action' (Simmons & Gregory, 2003) showed me a research method, which suits the content and context of 'gyroscopic management' in a perfect way. With this specific qualitative method, I can explore what changes participants, in the gyroscopic management approach, go through and how they experience it. Using this research method I also am able to discover, meaningful intervention strategies, to provide support for participants in their change in roles, both in Romania and the Netherlands and in this way also support them to deliver added value to the business.

Overall view of the use of the research approach

The start of the 'Grounded Action' methodology of Simmons and Gregory lies in the 'Glaserian Grounded Theory' methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Simmons explains this methodology as an *"inductive exploring and discovering process that unfolds and explores further the grounded theory."* Based on Glaser's opinion that *"All is data!"* my research method aims to gather core variables and categories, which explain what the participants are working on during the experience with gyroscopic management approach. The intention of the methodology is, to explore the core variables and categories in an inductive way, while trying not to force or use pre-conceptions. In this way, the methodology fills the theory with categories, properties, and subcategories. After putting them together, this can explain to me the main stages that the participants are working on in their changing roles. The gathered core variables of 'Gyroscopic management' I have presented in a grounded (explanatory) theory that I made and based on preliminary study and sampled data in the last 7 years. This explanatory theory I formulated in the following way:

“The actual change of role from being a ‘student’ toward being a ‘professional’ consists of five stages. These stages are: listening, awareness, accepting, adapting, and advancing”

This explanatory theory is the outcome of data sampling and it is the start for the next step in which I translate this theory into a so-called ‘operational theory’, which is needed, according to Simmons & Gregory (2003), for a ‘Grounded Action’ methodology.

Here I explain and describe in which way the stages, given in the explanatory theory can occur or take place in practice.

The research includes sampling of data in the form of reflections, interviews, evaluations, and field notes. I gathered these, both in Romania and The Netherlands, to reach a more fully developed and enriched perspective on the eventual stages as given in the explanatory theory.

During this sampling, I explore and at the same time, globally structured ‘gyroscopic management’ as a set of provisional core variables, including the (individual) behaviour of participants at the various stages in their process.

‘Grounded Action’ is a research methodology, developed by O. Simmons (2006) and later with T. Gregory. It is based on, and starts with, a Grounded Theory approach, and a specific field of interest or topic. An open questioning, or so-called ‘grand tour’ questioning, allows participants to speak freely without leading or forcing about this field of interest. After several interviews or questionnaires, the core variables will then come inductively generated out of the participant’s main perspectives.

After developing the explanatory theory, based on the Grounded Theory method, I continued with the second step, including the action based research. I compared in this step, the actual change of roles from being a ‘student’ toward being a ‘professional’ to the basic explanatory theory in which I mention five stages. In this way, I explored if the participants follow, or are involved in the five stages of listening, awareness, accepting, adapting, and advancing, to reach that change.

If it shows that this is happening, I can explore further and make suggested changes or actions in the operational theory. This can continue in the third step, with making action plans, in which I can consider and implement actions for the use of gyroscopic management in education and training. For the research and development of the operational theory, I needed places and situations in which I can practice and explore the actions. I do not want the risk of influencing my own logical thinking and explanations that can result in forced or ‘made up’ outcomes. I want to keep the methodology and the

actions ‘grounded’ in data that comes out of the real experiences of the participants and not from my own imagination as researcher.

My motivation for this specific choice is that I can only observe the phenomenon when it is ‘in action’. A specific aspect in this specific applied research method is that I do the research together with the participants of the target group in an exploring and inductive way as ‘colleagues’.

Objectives of the research

The objectives for the research are of importance for the broader field of research in management and more specific for the education and training of the new generation of managers.

The methodology that I use in my research is not a common one, and I am aware that this action-based research has a different approach and an even bigger bias than most other researches in the management field.

The inductive approach means, for me, the use of other and different research methods, like observations, audio and videotaping, writing reflections, memoing, coding and all other methods that are used in this kind of applied research.

In my methodology, I also make use of specific focus groups, consisting of participants and (new) researchers that are researching, exploring, and testing my gathered data and outcomes, on consistency, validity, and reliability. These groups are, separate and together with me, comparing my operational theory with the made explanatory theory, both in an inductive and deductive way. In this way, they are in fact researching my research. I will explain this more in detail further in this paper.

Justification of the methodology of Grounded Action

“A theory is nothing more (or less) than a set of explanatory understandings that help us make sense of some aspect of the world. To the extent that making sense of existence is a natural activity, it is accurate to say that we are all theorists and that we all theorize” (Brookfield, 2005: 3).

Because Grounded Theory is a basic inductive, systematic, and empirical research methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to generate theories direct from data to explain

behaviour, the theory that comes out of analysis of the gathered data can indicate how participants in an action based context deal with their own relevant issues and problems. The Grounded Action methodology covers the methods of Grounded Theory (Simmons & Gregory, 2003) and the most specific part is that it does not start with a research question or hypothesis. It starts with a certain area of interest (phenomenon) with the goal of discovering a theory that can lead to *“what is really going on in that substantive area”* (Glaser, 1978).

My research started with my general interest in a substantive area, in this case the change from the role of being a ‘student’ into the role of being a ‘professional’. As practitioner and researcher, I already started several years ago with the preliminary study and data collection.

Simmons (2005) explains that the most efficient method of initial data collection is an open-ended interview or written evaluation, with open-ended ‘grand tour questioning’. On that base, I gathered data, from (weekly) written logbooks and (final) written evaluations and reflections of more than 700 participants, which participated in courses given with the specific ‘gyroscopic management’ approach at Arnhem Business School in The Netherlands, from the last 7 years (2005 - 2011).

With a strong focus on unenforced and freely given data by the participants, this opened for me the possibilities to discover and explore ‘what’ is going on during the action in, and after the lectures and trainings. I further investigated by careful analysis, including coding, memoing, and constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In that way I looked as researcher for ‘what is’ in the action and not for ‘what ought to be’ (Simmons, 2006: 483).

The use of Grounded Theory to make the explanatory and operational theory

The exploring of ‘gyroscopic management’ into an explanatory theory I made pure on qualitative methods. I started with the isolation of the characteristics, features, and core variables that relate to the field of interest, the use of it and the possibility to divide it into stages. This is the ‘open and axial coding stage’ of the used methodology. By using this, I established relationships between the variables and could understand better the field of interest. In the following sections, I will describe these stages in the process of identifying and exploring these characteristics and variables.

a. Establishment of the main categories

In order to understand the field of interest better it was for me necessary to identify the issues and elements that are important. I did this by the process of ‘open coding’ in a qualitative way, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990). They explain that qualitative research means, “*any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification*”.

It is clear that in quantitative research, the researcher is seeking for ‘cause-and-effect’, prediction, and generalization of findings, while I, more in a qualitative way seek for illumination and understanding. I want to explore and extrapolate to similar situations. That this last way of analysis can result in different types of knowledge than a quantitative research is obvious.

I could identify the variables in the open coding based on initial preliminary study of several years’ sampled data (2005 – 2011). After every session, I asked participants to reflect on their behaviour and list features that they considered being important for them during the lectures and training. Individual written reflections, individual logbooks, and interviews, I read, examined, analysed, and summarised during those years.

The participants gave their written (final) reflections to me after a total course in which they experienced the approach in an interactive setting for about 30 - 50 hours. More than 700 reflections I used and archived. To support the students in writing this final reflection they could make use of given structure in an example form.

The example form is the global overall ‘Grand tour questioning’ as presented by Simmons (2005). It served to gain unforced and freely given reflections and to use as guide for the participant instead of a structured questionnaire with closed questions.

The participants also made written individual logbooks after every course and handed them in to me. There was no given structure for writing this logbook and I read all the logbooks weekly and put remarks and questions in the logbooks. In this way, I aimed to encourage them to react on this again in the next log in a free and non-forced way. More than 1000 logbooks I read and marked this way during the last 7 years.

The individual logbooks were very personal and confidential and therefore always given back at the end of the whole course to the participants. This was a conscious choice that I can explain on the base of the confidential status that the individual log had for most of the participants.

Participants knew before writing the logbook that I was the only one who would read it, and it gave them the opportunity to react freely and personal on everything that they

wanted. Many participants used the logbook to express confidential their feelings. Before writing their end reflections, I always announced that I would take this end reflection out of the logbook and that I could use it, anonymous as data for further research and evaluation.

The goals of this part of coding were:

- Identifying the main categories in the perceptions of the participants of the lectures and training;
- Finding the tentative relationships between factors in gyroscopic management that participants consistently rate as being important;
- Finding the way that the categories are occurring in behaviour, and refining and modifying them in a certain order;
- Identifying the relation between the variables.

During this study, I identified the main categories that came back in a constant way, in relation to the gyroscopic management approach. Many synonyms, used by the participants, came back repeatedly and I explored them into certain standards, which I made on the base of defining to own chosen categories or stages. These are: Listening, Awareness, Accepting, Adapting, and Advancing.

For defining all synonyms into categories, I used descriptions that I found in definitions and terms from the Oxford Dictionary and I explored them and put them into the definitions after reading the data repeatedly. I identified the relationships between the categories because I was involved in the day-to-day delivery of the interactive approach. During this action-based approach, I was able to read back and understand the perspectives of the participants in their written logbooks and reflections on the use of the gyroscopic approach after trainings.

I also conducted randomly open interviews with participants. These interviews were unstructured or semi-structured with the intention of exploring issues and synonyms identified in their written reflections. I also had interviews with and asked questions to participants during and after the receipt of the written logbooks in written and/or oral settings.

For example, where 'accepting' was identified as an important theme by the participant in the approach, issues and synonyms that were related with that 'accepting' were discussed or commented with the intention of identifying related variables, issues and understanding of the relationship between them for me and the participant.

Doing this, I made a tentative logical ‘structure’ for the phenomenon of gyroscopic management, in the form of several stages of ‘what is’ for the students when they change their roles. With the mentioned five stages, I made a first attempt to clarify that there is a relationship between the categories or variables involved in the phenomenon. The structure of the five stages I modified in this way upon evidence from the research.

This tentative representation of just one (my) view of the many possible ways resulted in exploring and presenting an (explanatory) theory that gyroscopic management consist of the five stages as mentioned. This theory now has the strong advantage that it derives straight from the action, as the participants understood it.

By reading and exploring the data repeatedly, I reached the point of ‘data saturation’ as explained by Simmons (2006). It means that I was not able anymore to find new information that could change the tentative five stages in the explanatory theory.

To give an example of how I explored the gathered data, I worked in the following way: While reading the data I discovered for instance “realize” as a very common used word by the participants. Besides “realize” the following words were also used regularly: “listening”, “changing”, “accepting” and “discover”. I could place those synonyms in stages/ categories in an easy way.

There were also many words that I could not place directly in a specific stage. Examples of this are words like “unaccepted”, “doing the right thing”, “failure”, “wanting to change” and “don’t care”. These words did not come back that often and some of them I used later in the exploring of the operational theory in relation with Gyroscopic Management.

Because this whole exploring process took place in an inductive way over a longer time, I could not use statistics. This would influence in a very subjective and deductive way the whole exploring process. Although I made use of the method of coding and axial coding, I did not statistically count the words but rather explored them further.

It is, in my opinion, not possible to do this process statistically and therefore I kept all the used datasheets in a special place together as proof. In a later stadium in the research, I used focus groups to research my findings in their own research methodology, based on inductive or deductive text analysis of the material.

b. Refining of the relationships

The next stage of my study was to re-exam the founded core categories, and to identify how they link with each other. Strauss and Corbin (1990) called this process ‘axial coding’. I compared the founded categories of the ‘open coding’ and combined them again in new ways to get the ‘big picture’. My purpose was not only to describe, but also to get

new understanding of the phenomenon of role change from student to professional and gyroscopic management.

Therefore, I started to explore as many causal events and details I could discover that relate to the phenomenon. During this axial coding, I made a conceptual model for the explanatory theory to determine whether sufficient data exists to support my interpretations.

An important point in exploring the relationships between the stages was for me to find the dimensions in which a stage can occur in showed behaviour. For example the separate stage of 'adapting' and 'accepting' have several associated actions and forms of behaviour for and from participants. Moreover, these have again several dimensions of levels that participants can experience in values like 'low' or 'high'.

Once I can describe the dimensions, I can also describe the range of possible values for each stage. The result of this part of the study gave me the opportunity to explore the discovered stages into a more detailed and extended 'structure'. In this way, I was able to attach code notes or memos for each of the stages, the dimensions, and possible ranges of values.

At the same time, it gave me a more detailed and richer understanding of the research field of interest.

I used code notes and memos in several ways. For example, earlier comments and questions on the written logbooks and reflections I reviewed several times again and attached them to relevant stages in the conceptual structure. In this way, I gained more understanding of the relationships, and used it to consider if categories seem to be important and then checked this. Besides that, I looked for possible reasoning for this. I discovered new occurrences, added them to the 'structure' during the process, and reorganised it where this was necessary.

I got more and more understanding of the phenomenon and the core categories that I identified as the five stages in the "*change of role from being a student to being a professional*". All stages I organised around this central theme, with the intention to test it against data later in the study.

The actions and the process I describe here looks like a linear exercise in time, for the sake of clarity. In real, this process was a very iterative process. I continuous am modifying the stages throughout and after the whole study, including the data collection and analysis phase. The relationships become every time clearer, and as more data becomes available, the structure of the stages becomes clearer.

The further development of the operational theory

“Once the explanatory theory has been fully developed by means of the Grounded Theory process, the operational theory can be generated. The operational theory is where explanatory grounded theory leaves off and grounded action begins” (Simmons & Gregory, 2003: 31).

In this ‘Grounded Action’ part, I am looking at the underlying core variables as ‘action stages’ and see if I can generate actions towards the stages that I discover at each stage of the theory (Simmons, 2005).

I use the issues, outcomes of observations, interviews, field notes, and research in the Netherlands and Romania during this part, to explore possibilities for actions. While doing this, I create an own explanation and reaction to the explanatory theory and can make a base for interventions, new ideas, actions, or initiatives that may follow.

During this part of the research I was in a training, educational and therefore interactive setting in which the actions that result and occur are mentioned in the detailed operational theory.

These detailed descriptions are my ‘leverage points’ as mentioned by Olson & Raffanti (2006a). I am aware that in these described occurrences and actions it is very possible that there are individual personal paradigms and mind-set shifts of the participants and it is part of the gyroscopic management approach to deal with these again in an exploring way. Mintzberg argues this issue very strong in his explanation that *“learning must emphasize contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions and validating meaning by assessing reasons.”* (Mintzberg, 2004).

A ‘reliable’ Grounded Action methodology must consider both ‘what is’ (the explanatory theory) and uses the operational theory to look at the possible ‘what might be’ actions. If the explanatory theory of ‘listening, awareness, accepting, adapting and advancing’ are the stages of ‘what is’ in the phenomenon that business and management students go through when changing from the role of student to professional, then the operational theory shows ‘what might be’ in the way these stage can occur for them.

Implementation of the Grounded Action methodology

As researcher, I am also lecturer and a therefore a (subjective) participant in the whole research. Many lecturers, in Romania and The Netherlands, approach the classroom and give a lesson or course as if they were working off a script (Brookfield, 1990). In this way, according to Brookfield, *“interruptions or detours from this prescribed lesson will cause distress or anxiety for the lecturer”*.

Implementing the Grounded Action method, therefore I can not do in this form of a 'script'. I therefore involve a dialogue between the 'what is' in the explanatory theory and the 'live action' of the classroom in an interactive way.

The 'Gyroscopic management' approach brings, as described before, already naturally this dialogue. It has no 'script' and no planned structure. Just an idea, a theme, and I can make use of the real situation in the classroom and the interaction of all participants.

I have experienced that if I include participants as co-learners and colleagues in this process, it serves to demonstrate and encourage a very democratic learning environment in working together to approach issues. "*This way of collegial interaction helps to promote a shared learning environment and community!*" (Brookfield, 1990).

I admit that the operational theory of 'gyroscopic management' I made is still not exhaustive or fully comprehensive¹. However, in my opinion, it does show a reliable, conceptually theoretical concept and gives a good picture of what behaviours and intervention participants can show in the action situations, which can lead to meaningful understanding, and may induce intervention that makes it more reliable for the future.

The use of Focus groups

Because of my very subjective and direct participation in this research, I decided to make use of focus groups as a program evaluation method. Morgan and Krueger (1993) discuss situation where focus groups can be beneficial. I made the decision to make use of focus groups, based on the following criteria and quotes of Morgan and Kruger:

- The target group is so different from decision makers that different terminology and points of view can be illuminated and understood. The desired information about behaviours and motivations of the participants is more complex than a questionnaire is likely to reveal;
- The research is about finding out the nature of consensus;
- It could happen that the target group does not take questionnaires seriously or answer them honestly.

The focus groups consisted out of second, third and fourth year students from Arnhem Business School. As part of their courses in 'Research methodology', they got from me as their teacher and in the role of their 'client' a research project.

1 The fully description of the operational theory (version 2012) is available and can be requested from the author.

The aim was to evaluate and ‘test’ my explanatory theory and conceptual framework, made out of the preliminary study. The focus groups tested and evaluated both in inductive and deductive ways the explanatory theory with the given data, the operational theory and the target groups.

Target groups

The target groups for the whole research consist of the so called: ‘*New generation of managers*’:

- First year business and management students – not experienced with the approach of gyroscopic management;
- Second year students business and management – with first experiences in the use of gyroscopic management;
- Third and fourth year business and management students – more experienced with the approach of gyroscopic management;
- Alumni from business and management studies – experienced with the approach, and already applying it in their positions in business.

The use of focus groups is for me as a researcher, an important way of finding information about how participants used the lectures and trainings and what they felt and perceived about the approach. The focus groups used several research methodologies: Based on a sample for every separate group, consisting of 60 to 80 randomly chosen written reflections from students that followed a whole course of about 30-50 hours training, given with the gyroscopic management approach, each separate focus group evaluated and tested these in the following ways:

- Research if the given sample of data shows the five stages as defined by the client given explanatory theory (deductive research);
- Research based on the given sample data in an inductive way, stages that can be found in the development of change in roles of the participant (inductive research);
- Research based on a combination of methods, given in A and B. In this group, the members of the group divided themselves. One part of the members did inductive research in which they did not have an insight into the explanatory theory and made an ‘own’ exploring theory. And the other part of the group tested the given explanatory theory with the given data sample;
- Research on the added value that gyroscopic management have had for alumni of business and management students at Arnhem Business School;
- Research on the added value of gyroscopic management among managers of international organizations.

All focus groups did their research in 2011 and 2012 and came with research results in separate research papers. This included separate research in Romania of a group of business and management students at the University of West Timisoara. To not let myself be influenced by their results during the operational part of the Grounded Action research, I would only use the results and conclusions of the focus groups in the final analysis.

Conclusions

The intention of this paper was to give an overview of the most important parts of the ongoing research. Because this research is still ongoing and in the final stage it is too early to draw already preliminary conclusions. While the forming of an explanatory theory and the making of an operational theory according to the 'Grounded Action' research can be seen as a result, it is now still too early to relate this to the added value for management. In a second paper, that will be published later in 2012 I will give a final overview of the results of this PhD research, including conclusions and recommendations.

Literature

- Allen, K. R. (2009) *Launching new ventures, an entrepreneurial approach*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
- Beatty, R.W., M.A. Huselid & C.E. Schneier (2003) The New HR Metrics: Scoring on the Business Scorecard. In *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 107-121, Elsevier Science Inc., NY.
- Becker, B.E., M.A. Huselid, D. Ulrich (2001) *The HR Scorecard: Linking People, Strategy, and Performance*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.
- Beer et al. (1984) *Managing Human Assets*, Spector, the Free Press, NY.
- Bianco, L., J.C. Crozet & A.J. Liddicoat (Eds) (1999) *Striving for the third place: Intercultural competence through language education*. Canberra, Language Australia.

- Bigus, O. (1973) *Becoming Alcoholic: A Study of Social Transformation*. Un-published Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Francisco.
- Boselie, P. (2010) *Strategic Human Resource Management*, McGraw-Hill (Reviewed by J. Vinke).
- Brooks, A.C. (2009) *Social entrepreneurship, A modern approach to Social Venture Creation*, Pearson International Edition, Upper Saddle River NJ.
- Carr, W. & S. Kemmis (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*, Falmer Press, London.
- Clary, E.G. & M.A. Snyder (1991) Functional analysis of altruism and pro-social behaviour, in: Clark, M.S. (red.), *Pro-social behaviour*, Sage, London.
- Coupland, D. (1991) *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, St. Martin's Griffin, New York.
- Crossan, M., M. Cunha, D. Vera & J. Cunha (2005) *Time and organisational improvisation*, *Academy of Management Review*, 30(1), 129–145.
- Deming, W.E., (1982, 1985) *Out of the crisis: quality, productivity and competitive position*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Dessler, G. (2004) *Human Resource Management*, 10th edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River NJ.
- Drucker, P. (2003) *Post capitalist Society*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- Fombrun, Tichy & Devanna, (1984) *Strategic Human Resource Management*, Wiley & Sons Inc., Canada.
- Floren, J. (2010) *The Innovation Generation*, New Year Publishing, Danvil, CA, USA.
- Glaser, Barney G. & Anselm L. Strauss (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine, Chicago.
- Johnstone, K. (1981) *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*, Methuen Drama, London.
- Kemmis, S. & R. McTaggart (Eds) (1988) *The Action Research Planner*, 3rd edition, Victoria Deakin University Press, Australia.
- Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential Learning*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Kovary, G. & A.K. Buahene (2011) *Loyalty Unplugged: How to Get, Keep & Grow All Four Generations*, N-Gen, Toronto, Canada.
- Krueger, R.A. (1994) *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, Sage, London.
- Lewis, D. (2007) *The management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations*, Routledge, London.
- Lewis, W.S. (Ed.) (1965) Horace Walpole's Correspondence, Yale edition, in the book by Theodore G. Remer, Ed.: *Serendipity and the Three Princes, from the Peregrinaggio of 1557*, by Theodore G. Remer, Preface by W.S. Lewis. University of Oklahoma Press, LCC 65-10112, Oklahoma.

- Mezirow, Jack (1990) *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning*, Jossey-Bay, San Francisco, California.
- Mezirow, Jack (1991) *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, California.
- Mezirow, Jack (2000) *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, California.
- Mintzberg, H. (2004) *Managers, not MBA's*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Morgan, D.L., (ed.) (1993) *Successful Focus Groups Advancing the State of the Art*, Sage, London.
- Năstase, M. (2009) Understanding the managerial culture, Review of *International Comparative Management*, Volume 10, Issue 2, May, The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Romania.
- Noffke, S.(1997) Professional, personal, and political dimensions of action research. in *Review of Research in Education*, 22, 305-343, American Education Research Association, Washington DC.
- Olson, Mitchell (2006) *Driven succeeding—the serpentine path of adult learning: A grounded action study in adult education*, Dissertation, Fielding Graduate University Santa Barbara, US.
- Olson, Mitchell, & Michael Raffanti (2004) *Grounded learning: An application of grounded theory in educational practice*, Paper presented at the Grounded Theory Symposium, Alexandria, VA.
- Olson, Mitchell, & Michael Raffanti (2006a) Leverage points, paradigms, and grounded action: Intervening in educational systems. *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*, 62(7), 533-541. Taylor & Francis Inc., Philadelphia.
- Olson, Mitchell, & Michael Raffanti (2006b) A grounded theory-inspired approach to teaching: The emergence of grounded learning, In Michael Firmin & Patricia Brewer (Eds.), *Ethnographic and qualitative research in education* (Volume 2, pp.17-46). Cambridge Scholars Press, Newcastle, UK.
- O'Sullivan, Edmund (2003) Bringing a perspective of transformative learning to globalized consumption in *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 27 (4), 326–330.Lang, University of California.
- Osborne, S.P. (2008) *The third sector in Europe*, Routledge, London.
- Price, A. (2007) *Human Resource Management in a Business Context*, third Edition, Thomson Learning London.
- Quinn, S. (2010) *Generational challenges at the workplace*, Ventus Publishing Aps, www.bookboon.com
- Regalado-Rodriguez, M. (2001) Tug-o-warring toward change: The push-pull dynamics within organizational change efforts, a grounded theory analysis. Dissertation in

- Abstracts International*, 63(01), 45 [UMI No. 3040943] Fielding Graduate Institute, US.
- Schön, D.A. (1991) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, Arena (new Ed. edition), Basic Books, NY.
- Siegel, A. & H.N. Saprú (2010) *Essential Neuroscience*, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia.
- Simmons, Odis (2006) Some professional and personal notes on research methods, systems theory, and grounded action, *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*, 62(7), 481-490, Taylor & Francis Inc., Philadelphia.
- Simmons, Odis & Toni A. Gregory (2003) Grounded action: Achieving optimal and sustainable change. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 4(3), Art. 27, Freie Universität, Berlin.
- Sparrow, Paul R., C. Brewster & H. Harris (2004) *Globalizing Human Resource Management*, Routledge, London.
- Sparrow, Paul R. (2006) *Globalization of HR at function level: Exploring the issues through International Recruitment, selection and Assessment Process*, working papers, Cornell University. Sage, London.
- Stokes, D., N. Wilson & M. Mador (2010) *Entrepreneurship*, Cengage Learning, EMEA, Hampshire, UK.
- Vinke, J. & L. Orhei (2010) Human Resource and Quality Management and Colliding Gyroscopes, An Alternative Way of Looking at Value Creation in Organizations, in *Timisoara Journal of Economics*, Volume 3, nr. 4, Timisoara, Romania.
- Vinke, J. & L. Orhei (2011) Gyroscopic management, a new managerial challenge in the contemporary society, in *Managerial challenges in the contemporary society*, ISSN 2069-4229, nr. 2, Editura Isoprint, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
- Vinke, J. (2011) (Published in Russian) Добавочная ценность ГИРОСКОПИЧЕСКОГО МЕНЕДЖМЕНТА для стратегического управления человеческими ресурсами (The added value of gyroscopic management for Strategic HRM) in Челябинский гуманитарий, ISSN 1999-5407, 1(14)/ 2011, Энциклопедия, Chelyabinsk, Russia.
- Weimer, Maryellen (2002) *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.