BRITISH ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT

BAM CONFERENCE

3RD-5TH SEPTEMBER
ASTON UNIVERSITY BIRMINGHAM UNITED KINGDOM

This paper is from the BAM2019 Conference Proceedings

Building and Sustaining Career Resources – its not the MBA its what you do with it!

Elizabeth Houldsworth, Tatiana Rowson, Andrea Tresidder

Henley Business School, University of Reading, United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper focuses upon personal development and career development as reported by MBA alumni from one of the UK's largest MBA programmes. This study aims to understand the impact of learning reported by MBA alumni, with a particular focus on the development of identity career resources (Hirschi, 2012) Our study uses qualitative data from two sources; open responses to a questionnaire and 29 in-depth interviews with MBA alumni. Although we find that the MBA is reported to be a potentially powerful career development tool, it is personal rather than career development that appears to have the greatest impact. A number of participants report a 'life-changing' impact and the emergence of a new or different sense of personal identity. Thus the paper seeks to provide a bridge between literature on learning and literature on career to suggest how learning may serve as a career resource. To this end we link Hirschi's integrated framework of career resources with existing literature on deep learning (Marton 1975, Marton and Saljo, 1976) We find that the learning literature provides a useful means of understanding the interrelationships between the 4 areas within Hirschi's (2012) integrated career resources framework In particular we find that deeper learning outcomes are relevant to the development of identity career resources; once the necessary 'threshold' knowledge and content has been transferred.

Keywords MBA, self-directed career management, career capital, human capital, management learning, and personal development

REVISED VERSION OF PAPER

Uploaded June 14th 2019 following BAM reviewer feedback – still work in progress.

Introduction and literature review

Farjoun (2010) tells us in a world in which the past no longer stands as a sensible guide to the present, having social and personal skills to adapt and thrive in new environments is likely to be far more impactful that any 'managerial toolkit' with its limited shelf-life. In a similar vein, Schwandt (2005) reasons that the development of a manager must include not only learning how to make sense, (Huff et al, 2000; Weick, 1995), but also learning how to learn (Bateson, 1972 and Mezirow, 1990).   For managers in times of economic recession, the development of skills for survival is likely to be invaluable in an increasingly competitive job market. Arguably the completion of an MBA might be seen to provide these survival skills, both in terms both content and process skills. In this paper we analyse individual reflections on the impact of the MBA. Learning outcomes are analysed using 'management learning' approaches as defined by Cunliffe, 2002 and Perriton and Hodgson (2013) in order to focus upon how the MBA serves to impact the respondents sense of self and personal identity. In terms of career outcomes we use the construct of 'new careers' (Arthur, Inkson and Pringle, 1999) with three career capital types of knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom.   We also incorporate what Vaara and Fay (2011) describe as symbolic capital to capture the notion of prestige and status which has been associated with the achievement on an MBA. We find the integrative model suggested by Hirschi (2012) a useful way of capturing these earlier contributions.

We discover that rather than just being perceived as a ticket to higher paid roles, there is evidence of the MBA contributing to what Bateson (1972) describes as 'higher order' learning. This higher order, or level 3 learning, might be seen to link to 'sense of self' or what Weick

(2012) and others conceptualise in the term 'becoming' (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002 and Hernes, 2008).

MBAs are marketed as a vehicle to deliver career gains with associated increases in salary being seen as a proxy for that (as reflected in MBA ranking exercise) but this transactional career focus brings critics for example see Cheit, 1(985) or Leavitt (1989) who refers to the need for MBA students to develop enhanced personal awareness and interpersonal skills in order to address the gap they refer to as a loss of soul. The alternative perspective is offered by Waddock and Lozano (2013) who focus on programmes which are less related to functional management and more focused on social and personal transformation towards the common good,– i.e. programmes with a 'heart'. Similarly Petriglieri & Petriglieri (2010) have demonstrated how Business Schools can serve as a 'holding environment' to facilitate personal identity work— through the provision of content and networks

The MBA and Career Outcomes

The MBA is arguably a classic example of an individual investing in and seeking to take ownership of his or her own career, motivated by a desire for career advancement and increased status and prestige. The MBA concept is not without its critics of course for example Pfeffer and Fong (2002 p 80) who claim '*there is little evidence that mastery of the knowledge acquired in business schools enhances people's careers, or that even attaining the MBA credential itself has much effect on graduates' salaries or career attainment*".

Nonetheless the qualification maintains its popularity with GMAC reporting that application volumes continue to grow (GMAC, 2016). This underscores the fact the the completion of an MBA has been seen by many as a fast track to career success, providing a passport to senior

roles. Companies, and indeed public sector organizations, may fund this education, either partially or in full, as a means of investing in their human resources. Alternatively, individuals may self-finance, which represents an example of self-directed career management whereby 'individuals take ownership of their own career' (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005; Crowley-Henry, 2006), 'boundaryless careers' (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), or 'new careers' (King, 2004).   Certainly, the challenge of the 4th industrial revolution as described by Schwab (2016) and the rise of the gig economy (Fleming, 2017) suggests that building a career once may not be sufficient, instead having life long career skills to sustain employability in a changing and uncertain context will be a key to prosperity. This is s theme that is reflected in the wider careers literature and its focus upon self-directed career management (SDCM) (Sullivan Carden & Martin, 1998) and the constructs of personal dispositions, readiness and abilities/competencies. In an attempt to integrate different views on SDCM Hirschi (2012) builds on the idea of resources (Hobfoll, 2002) to propose a framework of four key resources areas in the person and environment which can be developed and used for positive career development (Hirschi, 2012). The idea of an active use of resources in the career's literature has been supported in the conceptualisation of sustainable careers (De Vos, Van der Heijden and Akkermans, 2018 Donald and Hite, 2018). In Hirschi's 2012) conceptualisation, SDCM relates to individual's ability to enhance career resources for positive career development in line withDe Vos 's (2018) perspective of sustainable career and the importance of conservation and management of resources for long term career management.

  Vaara and Fay (2011) in their consideration of the MBA suggest that such programmes do indeed create capital through their constituent pedagogic activities. This, they point out, involves the conversion of one economic capital (paid by students) into intellectual capital (knowledge and skills), social capital (networks) and symbolic capital (status and prestige).

Vaara and Fay's (2011) constructs of intellectual and social capital have some similarities with the earlier categorisations of career capital of know-how and know-whom career capital advanced by DeFillippi & Arthur, (1994) and (1996).   However their framework differs with inclusion of symbolic career capital as an outcome associated with prestige which is likely to be very important to MBA learners as the qualification has been described 'as *the only truly global qualification, the only licence to trade internationally'* (by Tom Cannon in 1999 as the then director of the UK 's Management Charter Initiative).

In their discussion of the three types of knowing Arthur, DeFillippi and Jones (2001) suggest that these are persistently connected, for example a person's (knowing- why) confidence and self-purpose is likely to connect to the (knowing-whom) connections he or she has sustained and the (knowing how) new knowledge of the field (pp 101.) The first type of career capital 'knowing-why' provides a sense of purpose and has been associated with motivational energy and the confidence to follow an envisaged career and contributes to performance through increased commitment   (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Jones & Lichtenstein, 2000). Knowing why encapsulates both confidence and self- efficacy as well as sense of self and identity. Hirschi's (2012) contribution is useful here in that it introduces two resource areas psychological and identity to capture these different elements.

Career identity resources are related to one's conscious awareness of oneself as a worker, of one's occupational interests, abilities, goals and values, of the importance of one's work and of the structure of meanings in which such self-perceptions are linked with career roles (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Meijers, 1998). At the core of career identity is the question, 'Who am I and how is my work meaningful to me?' Given the fact that MBA programmes in general are often marketed as being 'life-changing' we might expect these identity resources to be a useful concept for understanding the reflections of MBA alumni.   Hirschi associates this with earlier

work on the protean career (Hall 1976, 1996, 2002) concerned as it is with self-direction and personal values being driven by a desire to achieve psychological success – that is, 'success in terms of one's unique vision and central values', rather than 'vertical success' with its values of promotion and salary (Hall, 2002).

The second type of career capital is referred to as 'knowing-how' and refers to career-relevant skills, knowledge and abilities which individuals can use throughout their working lives (Inkson & Arthur, 2001).   Knowing-how career capabilities refer to career-related skills and job-related knowledge which accrue over time, encompassing a broad and flexible skill base and emphasizing occupational rather than job-related learning. These capabilities provide an individual with the career-relevant skills and work-related knowledge and understanding that are needed for performance. They include soft skills such as people management and team-working skills as well as harder skills such as technical competence in strategic planning and marketing techniques (see for example Sturges, Simpson and Altman, 2003). It might be expected that completion of an MBA will make a considerable contribution to the 'know how' of its students, given its broad ranging wide of disciplines.

The final type of career capital is referred to as 'knowing- whom' and refers to intra- and extra-organizational networks, individual reputations, mutual obligations and information sources that careerists have (Parker, Khapova and Arthur, 2009). The opportunity to become a part of an influential network is often identified as an important outcome of an MBA programme (Sturges et al, 2003). Such social capital (Raider and Burt, 1996) may be created by targeting those persons who may be helpful to one's own career development (Jones and DeFillippi, 1996).

Learning as a Career Resource Enabler

We adopt a view of managerial learning as a sub set of adult learning, as advocated by Schwandt (2005) and thus we adopt a learning theory that has been applied beyond scope of Business Schools and MBAs. In particular we have been influenced by the work of Ference Marton who with Saljo (1976) focused on approaches to learning. Approaches is interpreted as comprising the intentions and processes combined in student learning (see Heikkila, Niemivirta, Nieminen, & Lonka, 2011). Students who apply a deep approach to learning are concerned with the key essence of the materials being studied and their focus is upon being able to understand and therefore they actively engage with the material. . On the other hand students who portray a surface approach do not fully engage their intellect, being more concerned with rote learning in order to ensure coverage of the syllabus. In a similar vein, but applied to a managerial group the work of Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983) found evidence of three levels of learning, similar to those described by Bateson (1972) in their examination of descriptions from managers of the "learning" experience. They describe Level One as being when a manager simply takes in factual information or data which has immediate relevance but no long term effect on their view of the world. Level Two is when the manager learns something which is transferable from the present situation to another - indicating a change in his or her conception about a particular aspect of his or her view of the world. Level Three learning is where the manager seems to learn, or become conscious of his or her conceptions of the world in general, how they were formed and how they may be changed as a result the individual experiences along lines describe by profound sense of personal growth and change, Mezirow's (1990) as "a change in the whole assumptive frame of reference within which our habits of expectation have been formed" (p. 293).

In table 1 we seek to summarise the above discussion by seeking to map the outcomes (forms of capital) described by Vaara and Fay (2011) with DeFillippi & Arthur's (1994 & 1996) modes of career capital. It also includes Hirschi's integrated framework, which presents these career elements as resources (Hobfoll, 2002). The table indicates how these might give rise to different levels of learning as described by Marton (1975) Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983) based on Bateson's earlier work (1972). In so doing we suggest that 'knowing why' is the mode of career capital most likely to be associated with higher levels of learning and that such higher levels of learning may be described by learners in way that imply personal change and 'a reweaving of actors' webs of beliefs and habits' (Tsoukas and Chia 2002) thus indicating that identity work has taken place.

Table 1 Theoretical overview

Hirschi (2012) career resource domain	Brief summary	Modes of Career Capital (DeFillippi & Arthur 1994 and 1996 and Vaara & Kay, 2011)	Learning approaches Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983) Marton and Saljo (1976)
Human capital	Skill, knowledge, experience, training and cognitive ability Licence to practice Career/ occupational skills and knowledge as	Knowing how Intellectual capital (knowledge and skills)	Level 1

	well as transferable softer skills		
Social capital	External to individual Influence of others, networks, contacts Intra- and extra-organizational networks, individual reputations, mutual obligations and information sources	Knowing whom Social capital (networks)	Level 1, understanding importance of networking, level 2 recognising and being able to use contacts
Psychological resources	Personal traits or states such as extraversion or self-efficacy Sense of purpose and alignment with values; associated with protean career	Knowing why outcomes (increase self-confidence/ resilience) Symbolic capital (status and prestige)	Level 2 (seeing things differently)
Identity resources	Sense of self How one views self in relation to work	Knowing why	Level 3 learning – knowledge about self and sense making

According to Hirschi (2012) the different career resource areas work in tandem and all are necessary; thus, it is not possible to compensate for a lack in one area by having more in a different resource area. In fact this is supported in the broader careers literature (Savickas 2005). In common with other resource areas, possession of one resource area supports development of others and similarly a lack of one resource area will hinder development in another.

Methodology

This work is based on two studies. Study 1 was a preliminary, exploratory study using a survey of MBA alumni to inform the design of Study, The second component of the data collection comprised semi structured interviews. Both elements of data collection were qualitative in nature and this is appropriate given our concern for understanding the individual's personal experience (Gummesson, 2006). Both studies were focused upon learning outcomes from the MBA and subsequent career events. The methodology took advantage of one of the author's connections with the MBA programme and the MBA Alumni Team.

The MBA under scrutiny features in the top 50 of programmes worldwide and has traditionally focused on experienced managers with an average age of 37, possessing around 10 years managerial experience. It is a well-established MBA having origins as far back as the 1980s as a residential program which has continued to be run as full-time, part time and modular modes. In the early 1980s the concept was further developed into a distance-learning MBA rolled out using partner institutions initially in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong and establishing itself as an early leader within this field.

In terms of the first component the survey was part of a broader survey around MBA careers conducted electronically in association with the Alumni Services team. Full ethical approval

was given for the study and respondents were informed that by completing the questionnaire they were agreeing to the data being used. If students were willing to participate in Part 2 of the research by interview they were invited to insert their name and contact details, but informed that by doing so they were waiving their anonymity. The broader survey contained a range of questions about career development and career satisfaction but the focus for this paper is upon the final open question: *'In your own words what has been the impact of your MBA and experience in terms of developing your career'.*

The question was phrased in such a way so as to accommodate what we anticipated might be very different levels of experience (and time elapsed) since MBA graduation. 331 alumni responded to the open question about the impact of the MBA. Many of the comments are very broad ranging and in a number of cases rich sources of data. The respondents comprised 76 females and 255 males with this proportion roughly reflecting that of the MBA programme enrolment overall. There were a total of 36 different nationalities reported. These are listed in table 1 at rear of this paper. A total of 188 of respondents reported that their nationality was either British or Irish with 157 reporting the other 34 different nationalities.

See table 2 in appendices for respondents

The data from questionnaire was analyzed in terms of the primary focus of the reported 'career impact' in relation to four broad categories of resource necessary for self-directed career management as articulated by Hirschi, (2012) and for that purpose, the template analysis method was applied (King, 2012) This allows a set of codes to be applied throughout the data (first level codes) which are then revised as necessary thus allowing researchers to combine deductive and inductive approaches to the data analysis (Gale et al. 2013).

See Table 3 for the codes that emerged from the first round of data collection and how they fit into the Hirschi (2012) integrative framework,

The second phase of data collection comprised 29 interviews conducted with MBA graduates who had answered the open question above and had indicated they were willing to waive their anonymity and to be contacted for a follow up interview. Out of 29 interviews, 7 were face to face interviews, 7 were skype interviews and 15 were conducted over the phone. Interviews conducted face to face and over the phone were recorded on a voice recorder. Interviews conducted over skype were recorded with MP3 skype recorder. Interviews all took from 1 hour to 80 minutes. Interviewees were asked to reflect upon their personal career journey and to highlight, the critical events that have been influential. The role of MBA appeared naturally in the course of this discussion as interviewees reflected back on their careers to date. Probing questions were asked to elicit a description at different points of their career with the reflection serving to help to uncover thoughts that might otherwise not have been articulated.

We acknowledge there as some limitations to our study. The initial data from the survey open question emerged from a larger survey of the alumni group in relation to career development post MBA. Over 800 members of the alumni completed the career survey, of which less than one half (331) opted to complete the open qualitative question reported in this paper. It is possible that these 331, are a self-selecting more reflective subset of a group of learners. In terms of the interview respondents these 29 learners represent a further more refined (and possibly extreme) subset of that. They were all individuals who waived their anonymity and indicated their willingness to take part in further work and may be of a particularly reflective mind-set.

Findings

The initial themes from the interviews were generated from open coding and then sorted into a template matrix according to themes from literature in table 1 and analysis of survey data in table 3.

Table 4 (in appendices) provides illustrative quotes from the interviews

Given the content and curriculum-based nature of the MBA it is not surprising that there were many references to human capital development in the alumni reflections.

The comments appear to confirm the importance of knowledge that can be applied to practical management problems. The acquisition of human capital appears to coincide with development of other resources, particularly psychological resources; notably confidence and self-worth from having the MBA badge. Given that MBA programmes are often marketed on the strength of their networking opportunities it is not surprising that interviewees commented on the importance of the network connections they had made combined with the knowledge with one interviewee referring to *"knowing the importance of networking."*

 Similarly there were comments linking the acquisition of knowledge and a qualification linking to personal credibility in line with confidence increases associated with knowing why. For example some learners refer to a sense of becoming legitimized "*personally very important to me as I had no previous degree"*.

This comment suggests that securing the qualification and associated knowledge allows the individual to feel they can legitimately hold a management position enacting what has been described by Vaara and Fay (2011) as symbolic capital.

Another alumnus stated *"it has been the passport to obtaining a more senior position".*

Another reports "*I am today far more confident in different situations and challenges. This has been the critical success factor in my career post MBA*".

<u>Learning theory and changes in sense of self.</u>

Learning theory appears to play a role in understanding the process whereby learners develop identity resources. We found not all learners reflected on their experiences in this way as the illustration below indicates.

"The MBA has been very powerful in helping me develop and advance my career. It has really opened up the range of functions and sectors in which I'm able to operate. The biggest impact was in being to understand and speak the language of business, taking a much more strategic outlook on challenges and opportunities. At a practical level I am much better able to analyse data in order to draw robust conclusions and this has been invaluable in the selection process for certain jobs."

In this example the learner, although clearly reflecting on the value of the qualification is doing so in a vocational manner, not really commenting on personal development. By contrast the following example shows a different type of development

"The MBA made me think about issues differently. In my organisation (the HK Police - probably any police force) there is a lot of like-minded thinking. The MBA made me look at strategic issues and management problems from a different aspect. This meant I came up with different solutions which were not always appreciated!!

Here the example suggest that the learner is aware of how his or her thinking has changed. In a similar vein another reports on the ability "*to comprehend the interconnections (or not) of events in the world around us- I simply cannot stop thinking and analysing*".

Certainly for many students the programme appears to have marked the beginning of ongoing (and often challenging) development opportunities as this example reveals:

 "*The impact was massive - due to skills attainment and confidence! I moved out of power utilities risk management across to Investment Banking IT Risk (disaster recovery) as a Vice President. The cited reason for hiring me into a vastly different sector was that I had completed my MBA at this school. Two years later, I went self employed as a Martial Arts Instructor and expanding that into my own Personal & Professional development consultancy*".

These examples suggest that for some learners the learning transcends career advancement has changed their way of thinking in ways we may associate with higher levels of learning in some instances clearly producing a changed sense of self as the following examples illustrate.

"*When I started my MBA our class organizer made the point that 'it will change the way we think'. Being somewhat cynically inclined I mentally brushed it off as PR babble. On completion I went back to the gentleman and said that he had been spot on and that it had in fact completely changed the way I thought. This has been the catalyst for my career development.*"

Interestingly it does not appear that career advancement is a prerequisite for personal development as this learner reflects. 'The impact was "*minimal in terms of career advancement. However, I believe that I have learnt a lot about myself, my goals, values and ambitions and that these have been clarified since completion of the MBA. Whether this has*

been a direct result of the MBA I am unsure but I feel that the experience of the study was valuable".

Discussion

This research provides insights into the retrospective reflections of MBA alumni around the impact of their MBA studies. Data from this study suggests that irrespective of career progression post MBA there is a wide variety of evidence to indicate considerable personal development, with the MBA being referred to as 'eye opening', promoting development of 'own business' or a change in life direction/ career/ home family.

Our analysis also confirmed what Hirschi (2012) suggests that the four career resource areas are interrelated. We felt our data was providing some further insights into the linkages between the areas as illustrated in figure 1 below

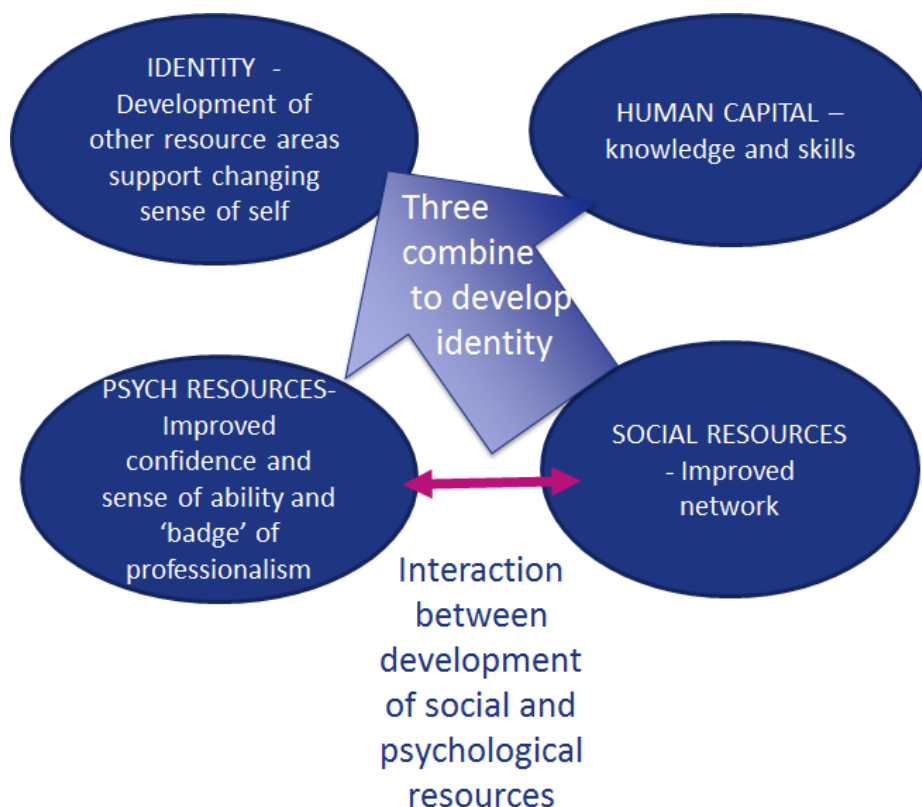Figure 1 Development of Career Resources

Figure 1 presents an amended version of Hirschi's (2012) integrated model of career resources to indicate how the domains of career resources interrelate.

Unsurprisingly the MBA provides content and technical skill in the broad area of management and given that the learners are experienced managers this allows them to integrate the learning in their practice both during and after their studies. Not only does our data underscore the importance of career skill and knowledge for MBA graduates, but also supports the view that the development of one or more of the other areas co-occurs with human capital resource development. One theme to explore in the future is whether the knowledge and content from the MBA is key to unlocking the other career resource domains. Our findings around knowledge and content are not necessarily at odds with Teijeiro et al., (2013) who saw knowledge of the profession as an instrumental competency which has little impact on graduate employability, however they did also recognise that practical application of knowledge as a

17

systematic competency is one of most impactful drivers of employability. Like Teijeiro et al (2013) our data appears to underscore the importance of content from the MBA that can be practically applied, as the following quotation illustrates:

"The MBA has been very powerful in helping me develop and advance my career. It has really opened up the range of functions and sectors in which I'm able to operate. The biggest impact was in being to understand and speak the language of business, taking a much more strategic outlook on challenges and opportunities. At a practical level I am much better able to analyse data in order to draw robust conclusions and this has been invaluable in the selection process for certain jobs."

Moreover there appears to be a sense of reflection amongst MBA graduates that transcends simply development of content knowledge thus allows the learner to move into other areas of career resource development, notably those of knowing whom (social capital) and knowing why (psychological and identity). In terms of key interrelationships it would appear that the psychological and social resource areas are linked with individuals having an opportunity to mix with a group of likeminded peers which serves to make them feel more confident or conversely their increased confidence supports them in forging of useful social networks.

The develop of identity resources appears to occur for some, but not all learners and this is what would be expected from the learning literature in that not all learners will achieve higher level learning outcomes. In summary there is evidence not only to support the fact that the MBA is perceived as being 'good for careers in business' but that it also provides the potential for personal learning outcomes. As well as the accrual of knowledge relevant to employability there is an emphasis upon the area of knowing why with repeated reference to increased confidence. Within this evidence we find some learners who appear to experience a 'reweaving' of habits and beliefs' (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002) as occurs when a change in

personal identity takes place.   We suggest that such personal development or changes in habits and beliefs is synonymous with what Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983) describe as level 3 learning, based on Bateson's earlier (1972) framework and that this links to Hirschi 's (2012) notion of career resources.

Conclusions

In order to consider how learning operates as a career resource for MBA alumni we have analysed data to explore whether learning described by alumni is in ways redolent with the knowledge and content associated with 'lower level learning' as described by Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983) as level 1 learning or if personal growth occurs in ways compatible with deeper learning outcomes described Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983) as level 3 learning. Irrespective of career progression post MBA there is a wide variety of evidence around learning about self with reference to 'eye opening', promoting development of 'own business' or a change in life direction/ career/ home family.

We believe these findings are of great importance to management educators, teachers and also management learner themselves as they emphasise the integrated nature of learning and development in postgraduate management education. We believe our findings provide two important lessons for management educators. Firstly that an integrated model (such as that by Hirschi, 2012) is a useful resource or route map to support MBA programme directors in supporting students in the management of their future management careers. Secondly that whilst networking and personal development are key components of programme design and key selling points for the programme we should not lose sight of the important of knowledge

and content that can be practically applied as this appears to support the development of psychological, social and identity resources.

References

Arthur, MB, Inkson, K and Pringle, JK (1996) The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era. New York: Oxford University Press.

Arthur, M. B., Khapova, S. N., & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2005). Career success in a boundaryless career world. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 26, 177–202.

Arthur, M. B., & Rousseau, D. M. (1996). The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era. New York: Oxford University Press

Arthur, M.B, DeFillippi, R.J and Jones, C (2001) Project-Based Learning as the Interplay of Career and Company Non-Financial Capital *Management Learning* 32 (1) 99-117.

Baeten, M, Kyndt, E, Struyven, K & Dochy, F, (2010) Using student-centred learning environments to stimulate deep approaches to learning: Factors encouraging or discouraging their effectiveness. Education Research Review, 5, 243-260

Baruch, Y. and M. Peiperl (2000) The Impact of an MBA on Graduate Careers, Human Resource Management Journal, 10, No. 2, 69-90.

Borredon, L Deffayet, S, Baker, A.C and Kolb, D (2011) Enhancing Deep Learning: Lessons from the Introduction of Learning Teams in Management Education in France. Journal of Management Education 35(3) 324–350

Bridgstock, R 2009. The graduate attributes we've overlooked: enhancing graduate employability through career management skills, Higher Education Research & Development, 28:1, 31-44

Burgoyne, J & Hodgson, V, 1983, Natural Learning and Managerial Action: A phenomenological study in the field setting, Journal of Management Studies, 20, 3.

Colville,I.D, Waterman, R.H and Weick, K.E (1999) Organizing and the Search for Excellence: Making Sense of the Times in Theory and Practice, *Organization* 1999 6: 129.

Crowley-Henry, M. 2006. The Protean Career. *International Studies of Management & Organisation*, 37(3): 44-64.

Cunliffe, A (2002) Reflexive dialogical practice in management learning, Management Learning, 33 (1):35-61.

DeFillippi, R.J and Arthur, M.B (1994) The boundaryless Career: A Competency-based Perspective' Journal of Organizational Behavior 15:307-24.

DeFillippi, R.J and Arthur, M.B (1996)'Boundaryless Contexts and Careers: A Competency-based Perspective' In M.B. Arthur and D.M. Rousseau (eds) The Boundaryless Career, pp.116-31 New York: Oxford University Press.

Doherty, N & Dickmann, M (2009) Exposing the symbolic capital of international assignments. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 20 (2), 301-320.

De Vos, A, Van der Heijden, B & Akkermans, J (2019 Sustainable careers: Towards a conceptual model Journal of Vocational Behavior, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.06.011

Farjoun, M. (2010). Beyond dualism: Stability and change as a duality, *Academy of Management Review*, 35: 202–225.

Fleming, P. (2017). The Human Capital Hoax: Work, Debt and Insecurity in the Era of Uberization. *Organization Studies. 38*(5) 691 –709.

Franks, L (1963) British Business School Report British Institute of Management, London Staple Press.

Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., and Redwood, S. (2013), Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research, BMC Medical Research Methodology, DOI: 10.1186/1471-2288-13-117

GMAC. (2016). *2016 Application trends survey report,* Reston, VA: Graduate Management Admission Council.

Gummesson, E. (2006). Qualitative research in management: Addressing complexity, context and persona. Management Decision, 44(2), 167–180.

Hall, D. T. (1976). Careers in organizations. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Hall, D. T (1996) Protean careers of the 21st century The Academy of Management Executive, 10 (1996), pp. 8-16

Hall, D. T. (2002). Careers in and out of organizations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hernes, T (2008) *Understanding organization as process: theory for a tangled world.* London: Routledge.

Heikkila, A Niemivirta, M, Nieminen, J.& Lonka, K (2011), Interrelations among university students' approaches to learning, regulation of learning, and cognitive and attributional strategies: a person oriented approach, Higher Education, 61:513–529

Hirschi, A. (2012) The career resources model: an integrative framework for career Counsellors, British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, Vol. 40, No. 4, August 2012, 369_383

Huff, A. S., Huff, J. Q., & Barr, P. S. 2000. When firms change direction. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hobfoll, S.E. (2002). Social and psychological resources and adaptation. Review of General Psychology, 6, 307_324.

Ibarra, H. & Barbulescu (2010) Identity as narrative: Prevalence, effectiveness and consequences of narrative identity work in macro work role transitions Academy of Management Review, 35, 135-154

Inkson, K. & Arthur, M. (2001). How to be a successful career capitalist. Organisational Dynamics, 30(1), 48-61.

Jokinen, R (2010) Development of Career Capital Through International Assignments and its Transferability to New Contexts. Thunderbird International Business Review, Vol 52, No.4, 325-336.

Jones, C. And B. Liechtenstein (2000). 'The "architecture" of careers: how career competencies reveal firm dominant logic in professional services'. In M. Peiper, M. Arthur, R. Goffee and T. Morris (eds), Career Frontiers. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jones, C. & R. DeFillippi (1996). ´Back to the future in film: combining industry and self-knowledge to meet the career challenges of the 21st century´, Academy of Management Executives, 10(4), pp. 89-104.

King, Z. 2004. 'Career Self-Management: Its Nature, Causes and Consequences', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65(1): 112-133

King, N. (2012) 'Doing template analysis', in G.Symon and C.Cassell (eds.) *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges.* London: Sage

Khurana, R (2007) From higher aims to hired hands: The social transformation of American business schools and unfulfilled promise of management as a profession. Princeton. New Jersey. Princeton University Press.

Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2(3), 1–29.

Leavitt, H.J (1989) Education our MBAs: On teaching what we haven't taught. *California Management Review*, 31: 38-50

Lonka, K., Olkinuora, E., & Ma¨kinen, J. (2004). Aspects and prospects of measuring studying and learning in higher education. Educational Psychology Review, 4, 301–324.

Marton, F. (1975). On non-verbatim learning: Level of processing and level of outcome. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 16, 273-279.

Marton, F., & Saljo, R. (1976). On qualitative differences in learning. I. Outcome and process. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 46, 4–11.

Mayrhofer, W, Iellatchitch, A, Meyer, M, Steyrer, J, Schiffinger, M and Strunk, G. (2004) Going beyond the individual: some potential contributions from the career field and habitus perspective for global career research and practice. The Journal of Management Development. 23(9), 870-884.*, 17*(4), 349-372.

McDonald, K, S & Hite, L.M (2018) Conceptualising and creating sustainable career. Human Resource Development Review, 17 (4), 349-372.

Meijers, F (1998) The development of a career identity International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 20, 191-207

Mellahi, K (2000) The teaching of leadership on UK MBA programmes: a critical analysis from an international perspective. Journal of Management Development 19, 4) 297-308.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. 1999. Learning in adulthood (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. 1990. Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to emancipatory learning. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.

Parker, P, Kram, K. E., & Hall, D. T. Peer Coaching: A relational process for accelerating career learning. Academy of Management Learning & Education, 2008, Vol. 7, No. 4, 487–503

Parker, M & Jary, D (1995) The McUniversity: Organisation, managerial and academic subjectivity. Organisation, 2 (2): 319-338.

Parker, P., Khapova SN & Arthur MB (2009). The intelligent career framework as a basis for interdisciplinary inquiry. Journal of Vocational Behavior 75(3): 291-302.

Perriton, L, & Hodgson, V. (2013) Positioning theory and practice question(s) within the field of management learning Management Learning. Apr2013, Vol. 44 Issue 2, p144-160.

Petriglieri, G. & Petriglieri, J. L (2010), Identity Workspaces: The Case of Business Schools, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 2010, Vol. 9, No. 1, 44–60.

Pfeffer, J., & Fong, C. T. 2002. The End of business schools?: Less success than meets the eye. Academy of Management Learning and Education, 1(1): 78–95.

Raelin, J (2007) Towards and epistemology of practice Academy of Management Learning and Education 6(4):495-519.

Raider, H. & R. Burt (1996). ´Boundaryless careers and social capital´. In M. Arthur and D. Rousseau (eds), The Boundaryless Career: a New Employment Principle for a New Era. New York: Oxford University Press.

Robbins, L, (1963) Higher Education Report (the report of the Committee on Higher Education, commissioned by the British government.

Rubin, R. S and Dierdorff. E.C (2013) Building a Better MBA: From a Decade of Critique toward a Decennium of Creation, Academy of Management Learning and Education, Vol 12, No.1. 125-141.

Saljo, R (1975) Qualitative differences in learning as a function of the learner's conception of a task. Gothenburg

Savickas, M. L (1997) Career adaptability: An integrative construct for life-span, life-space theory. *Career Development Quarterly*, 45, 247-259

Savickas, M. L (2005) The Theory and practice of career construction In S.D Brown & R W Lent (Eds) Career development and counselling (pp.42-70) Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons Inc

Savickas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J. P., Duarte, M. E., Guichard, J., Soresi, S., van Esbroeck, R., van Vianen, A. E. M. (2009). Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *75*(3), 239–250.

Savickas, M. L & Porfeli E.J , (2012) Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries, Journal of Vocational Behavior 80 (2012) 661–673

Schwandt, D.R (2005) When Managers Become Philosophers: Integrating Learning With Sensemaking, Academy of Management Learning & Education, Vol. 4, No. 2, 176–192.

Sturdy, A & Gabriel, Y (2000) Missionaries, mercenaries or car salesmen? MBA teaching in Malaysia. Journal of management Studies 37, (7), 979-1002.

Sturges, J, Simpson, R and Altman, Y (2003) Capitalising on learning: an exploration of the MBA as a vehicle for developing career competencies. International Journal of Training and Development, 7, (1) 53-66.

Teijeiro, M., Rungo, P., Freire, M. J. (2013) Graduate competencies and employability: The impact of matching firms' needs and personal attainments Economics of Education Review 34 (2013) 286–295

Tsoukas, H. and Chia, R. (2002) Organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science* 13: 567–582.

Vaara, E and Fay, E (2011) How can I Bourdieusian Perspective Aid Analysis of MBA Education. Academy of Management Learning and Education, Vol, 10, No. 1, 27-39.

Vaill, P.B. (1996) Learning as a way of being. Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Vaara, E and Fay, E (2011) How can I Bourdieusian Perspective Aid Analysis of MBA Education. Academy of Management Learning and Education, Vol, 10, No. 1, 27-39

Weick, K.E (1995) Sensemaking in Organisations, Thousand Oaks, CA Sage.

Table 1 Nationality of respondents to questionnaire

AUSTRALIAN	1
DUAL NATIONALITIES	8
BELGIUM	1
BRITISH	174
BRITISH (NATURALISED ZIMBABWEAN)	1
TRINIDAD&TOBAGO	11
CANADIAN	1
CROATIAN	1
CYPRIOT	2
CZECH	1
DANISH	19
FINNISH	11
FRENCH	3
GERMAN	15
GHANIAN	2
GUYANIAN	1
IRISH	13
ITALIAN	2
LESOTHO	1
MALAYSIAN	1
MALDIVES	1
MALTESE	10
MAURITIAN	1
DUTCH	10
NZ	6
NZ THEN BRITISH	1
NORWEGIAN	1
SINGAPOREAN	1
RUSSIAN	1
SOUTH AFRICAN	17
SRI LANKIAN	1
ST.LUCIAN	1
SWEDISH	8
SWISS	1
TURKISH	1
AMERICAN	1
TOTAL	**331**

Table 3: Sample codes and theoretical codes (themes) with illustrative quotations from data		
THEMES	FOCUSED CODES	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Human Capital Resources	Broadened perspective of businesses and organisations	*the MBA opened up those black boxes of other disciplines for me. I am an engineer and after my MBA I understood marketing, HR, Finance, etc.*
	Complemented previous work-related experience	*My experience in consulting has been the major influence in developing my career. I found the MBA complemented my experience through greater understanding of management theory and frameworks to strengthen the intuitive knowledge I had developed.*
Identity Resources	Consolidation of work identity	*Developing confidence in my identity as a business person beyond my specialty expertise.*
	Enhanced self-knowledge	*I'm clear as to what I enjoy and what gets the best out of me.*
Social Resources	Network	*Excellent and wide professional network*
	Expected credential to senior position	*It has been the passport to obtaining a more senior position as all the next layer of management posts demanded a masters agree preferably in business management.*
Psychological Resources	Self-efficacy to manage own career	*It has given me the confidence to take control of my career and make choices that would not have been possible before*
	Enhanced confidence in self and abilities	*It has given me confidence and built belief in my skills and the value I can add*

Impact of MBA on Career	Accelerated career advancement	*My career would not have developed so fast without the MBA*
	Enabled career change or move	*I had a scientific Background. The MBA definitely helped me to jump out of the box and get options outside R&D. I was told with the Age of 30 that I have reached in R&D the end of my career. I simply felt that I was too Young for just sitting there and wait for my retirement.*
	No major impact	*Practically nil. While I am better as a person, my job spec nor my remuneration have changed.*

Table 4 Development of four career resources – interview data

Human capital	Psychological resources	Identity resources	Social resources
What the MBA really provided me with was a broadening of my overall knowledge base on how organisations work.	The integrated knowledge from the course allowed me to apply myself more confidently to projects	Personal development via character	Theoretical background to solve problems whilst coupling this with knowing importance of networking
The theoretical background to solve problems in practice	Increase in confidence, I do know what I am talking about and I do understand other functions… very important to me as I had no first degree	When I took the MBA I was looking for something for my CV. What surprised me and really impressed me was the way I could use the things I learned, allowing me to stand out	I've loved learning experience and contacts I've made
The MBA gave me an intellectual framework and context within which I could understand and analyse better my employer's operations within the international	It got me out of my comfort zone and became a more rounded individual with solid know how and confidence to tackle any task, bit or small.	It was "a life changer" "I am today far more confident in different situations and challenges. This has been the	Great networking opportunity and an MBA is a pre-requisite at my level

construction industry and the various actors and stakeholders

critical success factor in my career post MBA

A broader perspective and pulling together the different strands of running a business.

Helped me understand better my role in the organisation, my own strengths and weaknesses

It was not about what I learnt, but how I learnt; it wasn't about the technical subject matter, but what I learnt about myself

The people I met at Henley have turned into life-long business contacts