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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Enhancing Ways to Teach Leadership to Millennials

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| ABSTRACT
While students have plenty of opportunities to mingle with successful business leaders, often they form only a very general impression of them through meeting, interacting, and work-shadowing them. Notwithstanding the merits of these opportunities, any student's subsequent application of leadership concepts based on their real-life encounters with these business people is inevitably mediated by their own background, up-bringing, education, and personal experience that may be subjective and biased. In a teaching project described in this paper, we enhance students' learning experience to enable them to conduct syntheses and evaluations of the leadership styles, social responsibility, and ethical standards of business leaders by using the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) called ATLAS.ti. Here, we ask students to conduct semi-structured interviews with leader executives to talk about social responsibility, business ethics, and leadership. Then, they transcribe the verbatim interview into text transcripts. Students were provided with an opportunity to synthesize knowledge by employing the CAQDAS, whose artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms are based partly on principles of lexical semantics.

| KEYWORDS

Management teaching, leadership, millennials, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The millennial generation is believed to have a strong mentality of civic-mindedness, global citizenship, and a propensity to feel personally responsible for making a change in their respective communities or spheres of influence (Klenke, Martin & Wallace, 2016). University graduate employability was enhanced in a learning experience project at this university that resonates with millennial values and beliefs. The research project investigator helped students to synthesize together facets of the leadership styles, ethics, and social responsibility of the business executives and leaders whom they interviewed. "Leadership" is one of the most significant topics in business management studies. Companies large and small around the world spend approximately US$46 billion annually on leadership development programs (Carroll, Singaraju & Park, 2015). Rising expectations from employers to put emphasis on training socially responsible and ethical leaders among their graduate-employees prompt us to think about how to meet the market demand and boost graduates' employability. With Bloom's taxonomy in mind, this project was intended to nurture our future student-leaders and better enable them to synthesize and evaluate ethics and leadership knowledge. The students' own self-reflection and evaluation of the learning outcomes were considered to have been better instilled into the minds of our millennials so that they internalize the noble values to become socially responsible leaders and do all the correct things in a chaotic world eventually.

Under the guidance of the project investigator, tuition and coaching of 57 students who took business management courses were first coached on how to develop an interview guide and to conduct semi-structured interviews about ethics, social responsibility, and leadership with established and successful business executives and leaders. Secondly, they transcribed and coded the interview

transcripts. Thirdly, they analysed the interviews and the verbatim transcripts using contemporary servant leadership and ethical CSR leadership models and with the help of ATLAS. ti CAQDAS software.[1] Guided by basic and jargon-free lexical semantics, students employ qualitative data analysis software to unveil layers of meanings and semantic contexts that are sometimes embedded within the raw data or text (i.e., verbatim transcripts of an interviewee's spoken discourse in natural language).[2]

Conventionally, any student who listens to a business leader talk forms an overall impression, given healthy and legitimate biases, which is fair enough, but the nuance or richness of what was really said is often lost somewhere between the lines. When anyone's speech or discourse is articulated, the strings of imaginative clusters of terms that s/he uses, the lexicon and vocabulary deployed by the speaker-interviewee, his/her sentiments and the tenor of what was spoken, the summative meaning of his/her discourse can only be interpreted by another discrete listener-researcher subjectively, in his or her own terms.[3] Only when the verbatim transcript is handed over to more objective and closer semantic analysis with artificial intelligence and machine-learning algorithms can the verbatim "data" reveal further, often overlooked, higher-tier categories or concepts. For example, the relationship between CSR, leadership styles, and ethical principles held by an executive-interviewee when s/he talks about them is mediated by sentiment and the use of lexicon or imaginative clusters of related words around a topic. These contexts, tenors, sentiments, and nuanced meanings are often overlooked, diluted, or mis-interpreted by a novice who listens to a tape-recording of the interview or merely reads the written speech-discourse. In this case, we trained students to display the interviewees' spoken verbatim data using high resolution qualitative data analysis based on lexical semantic algorithms. The 57 student-researchers were better able to "visualize" the nuances better.

The reason is that the powerful interactive visualizations provided a bird-eye view and, hence, a deeper understanding of what was said and was unsaid. The results in the network diagram and word cloud contained information displayed with codes that had been previously developed by student-teams, and these codes acted subsequently as cues to search for more systematic derivations of finer verbalized elements within those leadership models that came from the mouths of the interviewees. For example, the notion of "compassion" now becomes an organizing device that encapsulates higher concept categories that are now displayed in a user-friendly networked fashion. Therefore, the 57 students re-examined the spoken expressions of the interviewees in a newer light and in a neater and thought-stimulating manner.

In these data-visualizations, much broader perspectives became available in a clearly parsimonious fashion, for example, what the respondent had inside his mind about the "acts of leading". This newly re-organized information or perceived *affordance*[4] via data visualization enabled students to exercise their discretion and make further human judgment. Under the auspices of the investigator, students were able to make sense of, interpret, and synthesize the speakers' nuanced intentions, as well as assess and evaluate the interviewee's leadership qualities, his/her personal standards, and values underlying ethics, CSR, and leadership. The illustrations below will elaborate on these points further.

3. Methodology

ATLAS.ti is a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software that helps researchers systematically categorize interview transcripts. ATLAS.ti stores the audio-visual recording, displays the captions of the discourse word-by-word in slow motion, and transcribes the captions into verbatim texts so that researchers can easily listen to the recordings. The software can be used to carry out thematic and textual analysis to find patterns, frequencies, similarities, or differences in these verbatim transcript data.

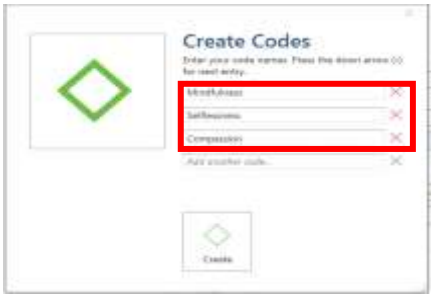
[1] ATLAS.ti (v22) can easily import HTML/PDF files, audio and visual data, images, documents and social media data. It analyzes qualitative data and can generate deep insights automatically and interactively, leveraging the latest AI machine learning algorithms.

[2] Natural language is dynamic and people write and speak using imaginative clusters of related words around a topic. Such clusters of terms concerning a topic travel around together and throughout the speech/text to form concepts and often the meaning and sentiments are implied by the context. Lexical semantics shed light on the contexts using a rule-based calculation of word proximity and correlations of words in the text.

[3] Natural language is dynamic and complex. People write and speak using imaginative clusters of related words around a topic such as leadership, social responsibility and ethics. Such clusters of terms concerning a topic travel around together and throughout the speech/text to form concepts and often the meaning and sentiments are implied by the context. Context has a texture-like property which lexical semantics will analyze the contexts using a rule-based calculation of word proximity and correlations of words in the text. These lexical semantic rules are encapsulated in an algorithm within commercial CAQDAS like Leximancer, NVivo, ATLAS.ti which can produce powerful interactive visualization amenable to further human-researcher interpretations because the meaning (of what the leader-interviewee say) hence becomes emergent from the text itself and not predetermined with "healthy" bias of the interviewers. In other words, verbatim script on the topic, after subject to software analysis can now reveal further high-level concepts displayed in immersive, interactive visualizations and manifested in data exports, delivering the key ideas and actionable insights that are needed for synthesis and researcher's evaluation.

[4] "Affordance" is a use or purpose that a thing can have, that people notice, or implicitly understand, as part of the way they see, experience or interact with it.

Firstly, the group-based ATLAS.ti software was used by 57 students to simultaneously collaborate on-line. These students were formed into teams of 5-users each and then coached in manual coding (See Figures 1 & 2 below).



Figures 1 & 2. Codes created based on the MSC Leadership Model (Hougaard & Carter 2018)[5]

Secondly, after pre-setting the coding requirements, the software could detect interview transcripts. For example, the excerpt in a live interview between business students and the first interviewee, a philanthropist called Mr To Chung, was a case in point (See excerpt below). For example, if a code named "aware" is created, ATLAS.ti software could detect texts, including dialogues in interview transcripts, with the text-search tool called "Auto-Coding." It automatically selected related synonyms like "concern" (02:00:08-02:00:25), relevant phrases like "Seeing is believing" (01:22:25-01:22:46), or even a full sentence like "Every year, we actually understand their need a lot more." (01:06:20-01:06:40). Therefore, relevant contents were traced according to the "codes" so that the discourse of the interviewee was further analyzed.

Thirdly, by applying qualitative analysis with CAQDAS ATLAS.ti to these transcripts, more layers of meanings were displayed as a result of immersive, interactive data visualization in the form of diagrams, including tree diagrams, hierarchical diagrams, organic diagrams, or word cloud, to name a few (See Figure 3 below). Students were better able to make connections between social responsibility and business ethics and then assessed the leadership styles of business executives.

Figure 3. Visualization Output in the Form of Organic Diagrams

Fourthly, in this step, they coded individually and then compared their collective outcomes to achieve a synthesis, which is, paraphrasing Bloom, "by putting together elements and parts so as to form a whole." Teams synthesized and compared among themselves those interactive visualizations, which were facilitated by displays showing correlations among meanings and sentiment, higher categories, and concepts. Students in different teams compared these interpretations and synthesized different

[5] See Reference.

versions with theoretical models of ethical decision-making, CSR models, and leadership styles of the different business executives whom they interviewed. They composed their analyses and shared them with other teams to carry out final evaluations.

4. Results

To summarize, students who participated in this teaching-learning project were able to:

- Obtain first-hand data based on interviews with real-life business leaders;
- Integrate rich and context-sensitive descriptions of discourse on leadership integrated with ethics, CSR, and leadership models;
- Carry out qualitative analysis using ATLAS. ti software amenable to synthesis and evaluation;
- Enhance their interview skills and qualitative research skills;
- Obtain the executive interviewees' feedback on their interpretations for verification and triangulation purposes;
- Carry out self-reflections, post-project evaluation of the grant, and then close the learning loop;
- Internalize the values of ethical business, social responsibility, and leadership.

Paraphrasing Bloom (1956), evaluation in this project engenders judgments about the "value of material and methods for a given purpose." Students who took courses in Management, General Education, courses Business and Hong Kong Society, and Loving Work, Work to Love were invited to pass judgments about the value and how meaningful this project is in widening their perspective about working knowledge in business ethics of their interviewees. Here are three elements of the evaluation process:

- Before the start of the project, participating students completed a pre-training questionnaire about their prior knowledge and competence in ethics, CSR, and leadership. After administering this project, the same students completed a follow-up questionnaire to gauge those changes in their behaviours, attitudes, values, and beliefs about the topics.
- They were asked to submit self-reflection reports and describe their observations and impressions about this learning journey.
- Executive interviewees were subsequently invited back to give feedback on triangulating the students' learning outcomes and project deliverables. This step has helped to assess the extent of closeness between the leaders' own perceptions vis-a-vis the learners' interpretations and assessment of their interviewees' leadership styles, social responsibility values, and ethics standards.

Students' own self-evaluations, as well as their feedback about the overall learning experience, were included as project deliverables. They are intended for wide dissemination to obtain a sense of the scalability of this project for further adoptions in other courses or campus learning experiences, for example, exchanging ideas about similar efforts that are made by the University's Career and Leadership Centre. Natural language discourses, interview transcripts, audio- and video-recordings, Twitter and YouTube, and social media resources of internal and external constituencies were also intended for general showcasing of the results.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, a common way that business students learn about ethics, CSR, and leadership through chalk-and-talk teachings is contrasted with the novel chance offered in this teaching project. Here, students obtained first-hand information, received coaching in semi-structured interviews using an interview guide, practiced qualitative research skills, and accomplished higher-order synthesis of this corpus of knowledge. This project has been entirely teaching oriented and learner-centred. It was considered genuine in its pedagogical design, sincere in its intellectual appeal, and genuine in its aims with the ultimate benefits of students in mind. The purpose of teaching development. Finally, the aim of broad dissemination of enhancement of pedagogical methods in teaching ethics, leadership, and CSR to millennials in our classrooms was achieved with students' general satisfaction.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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