The craft of management: A narrative approach to understanding the subjective learning experiences of individuals that craft their managerial identity

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Abstract

Managers are claimed by Drucker (2007) to be the 'lifeblood' of businesses because they are an integral component to operations, tasked with transforming tangible and intangible resources into significant results that have organisational and economic consequences. Regarding how individuals become managers, extensive research has been conducted regarding formal and informal learning approaches, however, Becker and Bish (2017) state that inquiries into the educational needs and subjective learning experiences of managers are lacking. Thus, my thesis adopts an arts-based qualitative approach, utilising Narrative Inquiry and ethnodrama to explore how managers subjectively locate learning their managerial craft and consequential identity development. Experiential narratives from 15 practising managers were gathered through semi-structured interviews using the Critical Incidents method. The data, findings, analysis and discussion were developed through the crafting of the appended ethnodramatic script, revealing that the majority of management practice and conceptualisation is learnt through experience in workplace milieu.

Though the educational experiences of the managers varied, they all had similar understandings as to the nature of management. Placing management in two distinct yet interrelated camps: managing work and managing people; with the relational, social and personal facets being salient to management craft. Further, the findings reveal that a process of 'becoming', shaping and crafting managerial identity occurred through

learning situations and workplace experiences. The present study shows that managers feel unprepared when entering into their roles, despite undergraduate training. Learning while working on the job, through shaping experiences, was fundamental to crafting their managerial identity and practice.

Dedication

To all those who love and crave learning; continue to be excited by the unknown and expand your horizons.

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

Proverbs 18:15 (ESV)

Acknowledgments

One of the privileges in life are the incredible individuals that you encounter and chose to journey with. I believe I am truly blessed to have intelligent, caring and loving individuals in my life that I call my friends and family. Here is to you, my mum, dad and brothers; Thomas, Luke and Daniel, for supporting me from Australia. I cannot articulate how grateful I am for all you have done for me during this time and the sacrifices you have all made to get me to this point. I am so blessed to have such an incredible family. To my amazing friends who saw the kaleidoscope of emotions my thesis brought with it and encouraged me to keep going. To my best friend – Ru, who came back into my life at such an intense time; me writing a thesis and a worldwide pandemic, yet you stayed and loved me through it. You all have a special place in my heart.

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I have nothing to say but thank you.

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"If the artist does not perfect a new vision in his process of doing, he acts mechanically and repeats some old model fixed like a blueprint in his mind."

John Dewey *Art as Experience* (1934, p. 50)

Chapter 1. Introduction

The stage is darkly lit, the violinists ready themselves, and the orchestra begins. Crimson velvet drags across the stage as the curtains slowly draw open to an empty stage. Silence trickles throughout the theatre as the audience sit; waiting, anticipating. Stage lights flash on as a stream of actors fills the stage bursting into the opening scene. The show is enigmatic and enticing; it appears seamless and infused energy and creativity. It is opening night the destination has been reached, and now the audience will be taken somewhere new, experiencing art in the departure and activation of their imaginations (Taylor, 2012). In this moment, what is experienced is in the foreground – but what is it that lies beneath the surface, that which is not seen?

Much of my lived experience as an actor, practising the rudiments of my craft, is unexamined. The early morning train rides to all-day workshops; the hours of practice rehearsing lines; learning new blocking and exploration of characters, voices and physicality. These backstage experiences inform and control my craft but are hidden from the audience. Yet, the drive to the theatre earlier today, re-running the script over and over again, the cracked mirror in the greenroom where I warmed up my face by pulling obscure facial expressions; all lead to this moment – me as I walk onto a dark stage, face full of makeup and a costume that changes my body shape. All the groundwork of my craft is concealed by the immediacy of this moment – that which is seen and experienced by the audience.

Just like actors, managers have backstage and frontstage performances that contribute to their craft development (Goffman, 1959). Knowledge and techniques developed behind the scenes are important, but ultimately it is the doing, the performing that makes an impression on the audience; that which is displayed onstage and seen (Mangham, 2005; Whittle et al., 2020). For managers, it is not only what they know and possess, but how they act and use that knowledge meaningfully (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). Why? Because simply put, management is about getting things done (Taylor, 2019). Indeed, the value and deemed effectiveness of managers is often determined by the output and end (economic) result they deliver (Drucker, 2007). What is learnt behind-the-scenes that impacts upon the staged performance of management? Actors learn their craft through the dualism of their backstage and stage performances, refining and development occur to hone their craft – what is done backstage, effects the stage; what is done on the stage, effects the backstage (Goffman, 1959). Just as actors grow and mature, how does the individual acting as a manager learn their craft and become a manager?

1.1. Research objective

1.1.1. Background and context

> After four years of studying management in my conjoint undergraduate degree, I learnt a lot about management, yet, at the same time – I felt I didn't learn very much at all. Venturing into the workforce, I realised that many things that I had learnt in tertiary education were relevant, forming a concrete foundation to my knowledge but I also discovered that there was something inherently lacking in my understanding of becoming a manager and enacting the role. I contemplated, 'I've learnt so much about management at university, and yet if I was given a role now, I feel like I would still have to develop and learn many different things to get to the place I would want to be'.
>
> (My reflections about management from a voice memo, November 2019)

According to the diploma I was given at graduation I had a thorough formal understanding of management – but did that mean I could be a manager? As I entered the workforce, I discovered that although my degree had taught me about business and management from a theoretical lens, it had not 'qualified' me for the role. I reflected, 'what does it mean to be a manager?' and 'how can I learn that craft?'. As demonstrated in my thoughts from the voice memo extract, I struggled with the notion of 'possessing', yet not having enacted management knowledge, wondering if my educational training had been enough as my observations in the workplace presented contradictions. I encountered a variety of managers – some had similar tertiary backgrounds to me, others had no qualifications and may not have finished high school (reflected in New Zealand census data available at Stats NZ (2020)). Irrespective of their educational experiences some were excellent managers and others, not so competent. The inconsistencies in what I considered as (in)effective management could not rest on the individual's educational background. Though my university experience was pivotal for me, I realised that if I wanted to understand how management is enacted and works in practice, I needed to start thinking about how one learns to be a manager. What better way to grasp an understanding of such than from the experiences of practising individuals?

I am not alone in my observations, Warhurst (2011) discusses how learning management is intertwined with identity formation and is a state of becoming, as identities evolve through reflexivity, something I found to be neglected from my undergraduate training experience, which focused mainly on the theoretical content than the process. Bolander, Holmberg, and Fellbom (2019) found management dually requires an overseeing of tasks and systems, as well as identity work. Newly appointed managers have to learn to

become managers, undertaking their identity work over time. Several studies comment on formal management education programmes (predominately MBAs) and how these can constrain managerial development. Ghoshal (2005) argues that management education is crafting poor practice, with absent ethical codes, pointing to the misconduct of executives in the USA. Reasoning that, in part, amoral theories in business schools can sometimes create a pretence of knowledge based on unbalanced assumptions and lack moral responsibility.

Further, Rubin and Dierdorff (2009) criticise the relevance of the MBA, stating it is out of touch with 'real world' practice and misaligned to the needs of practitioners. Instead, they suggest that career context should first be considered before an individual seeks further training, to ensure their educational needs are met. Lastly, my struggle with having management knowledge that had not been enacted relates to what Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) term the 'knowing-doing gap'. As a student, I knew theories and concepts but merely knowing what to do was not enough; knowledge requires enactment. Pfeffer and Fong (2002) relate this to a failure on the part of business schools to adequately prepare their students for practice; as good grades alone do not equal managerial success.

1.2. Research approach

The research process has been an interactive, back and forth evolution of my research design (Yin, 2016), evident during the collection and analysis of my findings. The ethnographic nature of this research has resulted in me 'feeling my way' through the ambiguities – by listening, observing and dealing with conflicts within the research

process as they arise (Watson, 2001). My research approach is based on the philosophy that reality is constructed, experienced and understood subjectively and that it is inherently complex. Following an interpretivist position, I consider social phenomena to be multifaceted in nature; thus, I use a qualitative approach with the intention to delineate these complexities. Dougherty (2017) explains that qualitative analysis identifies 'intricate webs' of concepts and appreciates the phenomenon in practice and concerning other dynamics and patterns at play. Far from being straightforward, these social understandings can be messy as individuals continuously try to make sense of their realities bound up in their context of practice. Regarding lived experience, the words of well-known author and theologian C.S. Lewis come to mind,

> Which is the 'true' or 'valid' experience? Which tells you most about the thing? […] It has been assumed without discussion that if you want the true account of religion you must go, not to religious people, but to anthropologists; that if you want the true account of sexual love you must go, not to lovers, but to psychologists; that if you want to understand some "ideology" (such as medieval chivalry or the nineteenth-century idea of a "gentleman"), you must listen not to those who lived inside it, but to sociologists. The people who look at things have had it all their own way; the people who look along things have simply been brow-beaten. It has even come to be taken for granted that the external account of a thing somehow refutes or "debunks" the account given from inside.
>
> (C. S. Lewis, 1970, p. 213)

Lewis notes how we divide knowledge into two categories: external 'looking at', or internal 'looking along' perspectives. He reflects that to understand lived experience an internal view is needed, that exposes the narratives, perceptions and understanding of those who are living in the phenomena, calling this the 'true experience'. In his opinion, the external approach is often favoured; therefore, he is stressing the internal approach, as an additional source of 'overlooked' validity. In my tertiary experience, externally

looking at management was prominent; therefore, in my research I will examine managerial craft from the 'the inside'. Looking along through the subjective lens of managers themselves, with the intention to understand how they learnt their managerial craft and became managers.

1.3. Research significance and contribution

The notion of management as a craft has been noted by various theorists, including Barnard (1968) and his work regarding the function of the executive; Drucker (2007) who promoted the idea of management as a practice, and Mintzberg (1996, 2004) who advocated for managerial education to blend the experience of *craft*, with insight (*art*) and science (*analysis*). Taylor (2013) suggests that the craft and art of management have not been examined in entirety. Specifically, from the perspective and understanding of managers themselves, regarding how they learnt their craft. Further, Becker and Bish (2017) that though extensive research has been conducted regarding formal and informal learning approaches, inquiries into the subjective educational needs and experiences of managers is lacking. Thus, my research contributes to the growing amount of qualitative studies within a business discipline; which has historically been dominated by the quantitative paradigm (Parker, 2014)–examining managerial craft from a subjective perspective to understand how individuals become managers and learn their craft through the lens of their educational and training experiences (backstage) and how it contributes to their managerial performance (stage).

1.4. Structure of the thesis

The research is conducted and written through a (microsociological) dramaturgical perspective. The theatre is a metaphor for day-to-day reality, drawing on the work of Goffman (1959) who sees the 'self' as a part of a social process. Whereby, as in acting, an individual's sense of self is influenced by the activity and is an outcome of human interaction. The notion of private and public performances, that which is invisible, occurring backstage and the visible self shown onstage. I not only related this concept to how managers have similar realities but used this as a structural device for me in approaching this study, differentiating between stage and backstage performances. In the backend I, as a student, have played the part of a researcher for this study: individual preparation (the body and developing character); learning the script (my place in the study and understanding research craft); rehearsing my role (understanding my character and becoming sensitised to others); blocking and movement onstage (becoming aware of the body in relation to others); final preparations (dress rehearsal and receiving the director's notes); contributing to the final performance for an audience. The stage of this study is the final thesis product and the script which presents the interview data, findings and analysis, where readers do not see the behind-the-scenes preparations (and tears), rather the polished performance.

Thus, the performance ensues with the following Acts or *Chapters.* The literature review will examine current research and theoretical articles that examine how individuals learn management and discourses of regarding craft, identity and performance, and how individuals learn. Chapter 3. Method will detail my iterative approach to the research and

explore the ethnographic nature through narrative inquiry, examining the methodological underpinnings. Chapter 4 and 5 will detail the Findings and Discussion, exploring the discoveries from 15 semi-structured interviews through a narrative arc and the appended ethno-dramatic approach (see Appendix E). Finally, Chapter 6. Conclusion, will explore the implications of the findings, discuss limitations and offer suggestions for future explorations.

Chapter 2. Literature review

Managers are claimed by Drucker (2007) to be the 'lifeblood' of businesses because they are an integral component to operations, tasked with transforming tangible and intangible resources into significant results that have organisational and economic consequences. Management is evident across a multitude of industries and businesses, whether used in a light-hearted way, "management are at it again…" or integrated into an organisational function, such as Human Resource Management, the term is commonplace and familiar. In this chapter, I begin by examining what is managing and the practice of management, followed by how this is learnt through formal and informal means. Lastly, I reflect on the literature regarding what managers do and the notion of management as a craft and an identity, before stating my research focus and question.

2.1. What is managing and management?

Djelic (2016) argues that management is commonplace and ubiquitous in society and could be considered a "genetic feature of humanity" (p. 1). Yet, despite its prolificacy, a broad definition is still detailed for the purposes of the research. According to Malik (2010) management has three distinct understandings: (1) as being a function of an organisation, (2) the authority and hierarchical structures of the organisation, and (3) linked to an individual performing the function (they can also be situated within the power structures mentioned in the preceding point). The third notion pertaining to the personal dimension of management and managing is the focal point and exploration of

my research. Warhurst (2011) comments on how management is a relational practice, interwoven in relationships with people. It is not merely task-orientation but linked with relational and identity-based conceptualisations. Bolman and Deal (2017) expand on this, emphasising an artistic notion, "art in both management and leadership [is important]. Artistry is neither exact nor precise; the artist interprets experience, expressing it in forms that can be felt, understood, and appreciated. Art fosters emotion, subtlety, and ambiguity. An artist represents the world to give us a deeper understanding of what is and what might be" (p. xi). Here, managing is conceived as an art, requiring skill and intentionality. Bolman and Deal state that reframing organisational issues to channel the nuances of expression as overemphasising the rational, scientific aspects of organisations is problematic. Mintzberg (2004) used similar language stating that "management is a practice that has to blend a good deal of craft (experience) with a certain amount of art (insight) and some science (analysis)" (p. 1). The notion of *art* (and Mintzberg added *craft*) in the quotes reflect how management has artistic notions underpinning practice which are linked to practical, action-orientated application of practice in the workplace. However, at face-value, this may seem elusive – what exactly is meant by 'craft' and 'art'? These terms will be examined later in this review. However, from here onwards when the terms' management' or 'managing' are used this definition is what I draw from: linked to the individual performing the function, management is relational, identity-based, with overtures of artistry, craft and practically.

Management carries within it a contradiction: it is both simple and complex. On a surface level, good managers can make management appear 'easy' and straightforward. Watson (2001) explores the idea that there is a dialectic paradox in managerial work where

managers' know everything' yet 'know nothing'. Stating that managers are aware that management is simple; nevertheless, it is difficult to perform. This presents a dilemma considering that Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) assert that management requires action and execution and, as Drucker (1999, 2007) argues the goal of practice is to produce significant (positive) results for the organisation, namely of an economic nature, which is achieved through the process of transforming inputs into outputs in an effective, cost-effective manner. Managers require knowledge of these activities, yet it is the 'doing', the action, that is the salient part (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). Articulated in a different manner Wheatley (2009) discusses how 'knowledge management' is an oxymoron which assumes knowledge is an entity, independent from a person that can be captured. Instead, Wheatley states that knowledge ought to be framed as an exchange, created through relational means as one is pulled outside of themselves and forced to react, "knowledge never exists independently of this process of my being in relationship with an event, an idea, or another person" (p. 188). Malik (2010) claims that management moves towards an end-goal and desired outcome through the doing and application of relevant knowledge. It is this action that gives value to the managerial knowledge, in the same way, one's educational knowledge has value when it is enacted and seen in practice. When this does not occur, Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) use the concept of the 'knowing-doing gap' to explain why individuals fail to turn relevant knowledge into successful organisational performance. Hence why colloquially terms such as 'good management' and 'bad management' are attached to the results of the business (Drucker, 1999). Thus, the value and importance of management cannot be separated from its destination and the action that occurs.

Drawing from the above understanding of management as being linked to an individual undertaking that responsibility, the term ‘manager’ is used. Mintzberg (1990) discusses this role stating that a manager is an individual that fulfils the management function in a societal institution and is usually formally-recognised as having authority over a group of people in an organisation. Anteby, Chan, and DiBenigno (2016) argue that a manager is a recognised occupation, a distinct category of work, that, similar to other professions, has been socially constructed over time comprising of structure and culture systems that make up its milieu. Managers undertake the craft and function of practice, undertaking specific job-related activities that contribute to the organisation and its members, wider external stakeholders and have the economic role of ‘making a living’. As aforementioned, Drucker (2007) asserts that managers are pivotal to the health and wellbeing of an organisation – they are the ‘lifeblood’. It is because of the manager that resources are transformed, and action is taken to drive the company forward into success (or failure). Businesses are reliant on managers to execute their function, as their decisions, action and expertise impact an organisation. The question then arises, how do individuals learn how to enact this important role?

2.2. How does one learn to be a manager?

Two categories, regarding managerial learning that are sometimes viewed as dichotomies exist; formal and informal learning. Findings of research articles by Malcolm, Hodkinson, and Colley (2003) and Choi and Jacobs (2011) suggest that though a distinction between the two exists, they are inextricability linked. Within these groupings, certain types of knowledge are favoured. Formal learning is structured and organised,

facilitated through higher education institutions that value theoretical epistemologies lacking pragmatism (Becker & Bish, 2017; Schön, 2016). Whereas, informal learning is generally considered anything that occurs outside of a controlled environment, centring around competence and anecdotal experience (Becker & Bish, 2017; J. Cunningham & Hillier, 2013). Before exploring these further, I will briefly define learning.

2.2.1. The general process of learning

Though education may be linked to learning, Jarvis (1989) argues that there is a distinction between the two, as learning is a broad phenomenon. Learning begins with experience and consists of a variety of processes that lead to change, as a result of transforming experience into skills, knowledge, and understandings. Thus, learning is a process; not a final product, it requires a change of previously held understandings, beliefs or practices occurring over time, and situated within experience which is private and individual (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010; Jarvis, 1989). As Cunliffe (2004) explains that from a broad social constructionist perspective learning is viewed an embodied, responsive and visceral process, evident in the 'aha' moments one can experience, the feeling of being 'struck' by something that leads to change and development.

The notion of learning has been widely covered in the literature with a rich history of andragogical thought leaders discussing how individuals learn. Thus, defining learning for the purposes of my research I turn to the work of Ambrose et al. (2010) in *How Learning Works*, who reviewed the literature over the last 50 years, organising it into

seven concepts. Put succinctly they state, “learning [is] a *process* that leads to *change,* which occurs as a result of *experience* and increases the potential for improved performance and future learning” (p. 3). From this definition, three key aspects emerge:

- learning as a *process,* as opposed to the final product;
- learning requires a *change* of one’s understanding, knowledge, beliefs and/or practices which occurs over time and is not transient;
- learning occurs within *experience* and is the responsibility of the individual.

The developmental process of learning is considered lifelong, self-directed, and private (Jarvis, 1998), intersecting with an individual’s social and emotional experiences (Ambrose et al., 2010) and influenced by formal and/or informal contexts.

2.2.2. Learning through formal means

Malcolm et al. (2003) define formal learning or formal education, as teaching, learning and research regarding management acquired through a tertiary institution (university, formal training courses), whether undergraduate or postgraduate that results in a recognised qualification, certificate or degree. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the tertiary education system is comprised of various institutions, which are considered ‘higher education’. There are eight universities, 18 polytechnics, three Whare Wānanga, many private training establishments, rural education and community education providers (Tertiary Education Commission, 2016). Some individuals may receive educational training at these tertiary establishments, and others may receive formal training at an

organisational level through management development programmes which are a well-established means to advance managerial capabilities (Becker & Bish, 2017). Workplace training is considered tertiary education by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (n.d.-b); however, for clarity I will discuss the terms separately.

Becker and Bish (2017) discuss how management development programmes are a common method used to enhance managerial competencies, from an organisational perspective, ensuring that managers possess the capabilities needed to execute their role aptly. Management programmes are designed to deliver a comprehensive curriculum that builds managers, developing success leadership practices and ultimately, transitioning organisations into becoming high-performing (C. Cunningham, 2012). However, in Aotearoa New Zealand, the sociocultural context of this research, there is an emphasis on promoting tertiary education, supported at the government level (Ministry of Education, 2018), the effects of which have been seen in formal education participation rates as fewer people study at lower-levels (level 1 – 7, see table below) (Ministry of Education, 2018). Census data in the abridged Table 1 from 2006–2018 show the levels of qualifications held by individuals who selected ‘manager’ as their occupation.

Table 1. New Zealand census data from 2006, 2013 and 2018 of formal training undertaken by employed managers (resident population 15 years and over)

	Census year		
Level of qualification	**2006**	**2013**	**2018**
No qualification	50,400	39,411	40,887
Overseas secondary school qualification	16,296	19,410	20,055

Level 1 Certificate[a]	48,291	44,412	44,256
Level 2 Certificate[b]	42,225	42,009	46,242
Level 3 Certificate[c]	26,301	30,078	43,017
Level 4 Certificate	44,148	44,739	46,407
Level 5 Diploma	19,665	21,840	26,100
Level 6 Diploma	18,072	16,968	24,291
Level 7 Bachelor's degree and level 7 qualifications	46,437	59,463	76,035
Level 8 Post-graduate and honours degrees	8,106	12,684	30,816
Level 9 Master's degree	10,782	14,868	22,311
Level 10 Doctoral degree	1,560	2,058	2,928
Not stated	8,247	8,136	17,742
Total people	340,530	356,076	441,087

Note. Adapted from census datasets available with Stats NZ (2020) software tool using the standards in Stats NZ (n.d.) to ensure the level of qualification was correctly labelled.

[a] Equivalent to NCEA level 1 (Stats NZ, n.d.)

[b] Equivalent to NCEA level 2 (Stats NZ, n.d.)

[c] Equivalent to NCEA level 3, indicating the individual has finished high school (Stats NZ, n.d.)

Firstly, the data shows an increase in those stating they are employed as managers, 100, 557 more individuals from 2006 to 2018. Secondly, the education level for managers has risen with Bachelor level degrees growing from 46, 437 in 2006 to 76, 035 individuals in 2018. Translating these figures (summarised in Table 2 below), in 2006 19.64% of managers were tertiary level educated compared to 25.02% in 2013 and 29.95% in 2018,

showing a rise in qualification levels. Thus, demonstrating how both the number of managers and the percentage of which that are tertiary-trained is increasing in New Zealand.

Table 2. Summary of New Zealand census data from 2006, 2013 and 2018 of formal training undertaken by employed managers – reflected as a percentage

	Census year		
Level of qualification	**2006**	**2013**	**2018**
No qualification – Level 6 Diploma	77.94%	72.70%	66.03%
Level 7 Bachelor's degree and above	19.64%	25.02%	29.95%
Not stated	2.42%	2.28%	4.02%

Note. Adapted from census datasets available with Stats NZ (2020) software tool using the standards in Stats NZ (n.d.) to ensure the level of qualification was correctly labelled.

An explanation for this may be, in part, influenced by government reforms from the 2000s, as Crawford (2016) explains, which were administered by the newly created Tertiary Education Commission. Funding shifted towards universities, regulating and subsidising the cost of teaching and amending the student loan scheme, reducing the barriers for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, such as Māori and Pasifika.

However, what the data neglects to display is what type of degree these individuals hold, it is unknown whether their degree was management-specific or in a different field.

2.2.2.1. Learning through formal training and tertiary institutions

Since the latter part of the 20th century, tertiary management education has received criticism and scrutiny, with polemic articles and books questioning its effectiveness and validity for creating competent, ethically responsible and managers (Grey & Mitev, 1995). However, there has been progress specifically around ethical management. Some universities are intentionally creating (or modifying degrees) to integrate responsible management education practices and theory through a United Nations initiative – the Principles of Responsible Management Education (Greenberg et al., 2017). Since inception in 2007, over 800 academic institutions worldwide becoming signatories, including five based in New Zealand (PRME, n.d.), creating a relationship between the United Nations and management higher-education schools, so that students are trained with an awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and an understanding of ethical management practice. However, as Greenberg et al. (2017) note, signing does not translate into an immediate transformation, instead, andragogical practices and learning outcomes need to be purposely examined, scrutinised and crafted to align. This process is multi-phased, occurring over time, utilising current research on managerial development and learning.

Malik (2010) comments that not all business schools and universities should be seen as the ultimate source of management education. Though courses may include the term 'management' in the course name, such as 'Project Management' and 'Finance Management', Malik argues that these courses lack robust content and teaching on management. Malik is not alone in his criticisms; there has been extensive criticism on

managerial education and management training (Mintzberg, 1990, 2004; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Thomas, 2009; Warhurst, 2011). Even domestically in Aotearoa New Zealand questions have arisen as to whether managerial training and education is of high quality and produces competent managers needed to improve the labour force productivity problem, which has been problematic since the 1970's (G. Lewis, 2008). Official reports by both P. Nolan, Pomeroy, and Zheng (2016) and Harris and Le (2018) state that managerial capabilities are below par compared with other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. According to a report from Stats NZ (2017) not all individuals in their jobs roles are well-matched. Skills mismatch can occur where the skills that individuals have (qualifications, soft skills, and relevant experience) do not match the required skills for the role they occupy (being either under- or over-skilled).

Interestingly, this mismatch is prevalent in New Zealand, again, compared to other OECD countries (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2016b). There are economic consequences for skill mismatch as high levels negatively impact labour productivity. Managers are considered as 'highly skilled', the upper of three categories, being within this group well-match individuals would be those with between 13.5 (advanced trade certificate) and 20 (PhD) years of education. Thus, individuals with a certificate, diploma level 5 or below would be considered mismatched if they were in a managerial role. However, according to the normative, statistical and OECD measures used in the report, work and job experience are negated and deemed 'unimportant'. The Stats NZ (2017) report explains this here,

> The normative measure we assume a manager needs a high level of education to be well matched. Yet a manager might have their job due to experience rather than educational achievement. If so, this manager would be considered under-skilled because the measure assumes that experience is irrelevant. (p. 16)

Thus, though not all managers have undertaken tertiary or high-level training, there still exists an assumption, evident at government level, that managers should be highly trained and well-educated.

Mintzberg (1990) criticises management schools for favouring cognitive-based learning over skill-based. The content is information but is disconnected from the skill-based toolkit students will require as managers. Mintzberg argues that management is a skill which requires practical training, practice and feedback and that merely receiving information in a lecture hall may not suffice. Mintzberg's core roles of a manager describe the craft requiring a diverse set of skills that are both tactical and technical. Managers need to be able to resolve conflict, network and establish peer relationships, communicate effectively in the chain of command, gather information and distribute it prudently, formulate solutions and work within ambiguity, amongst other things. Mintzberg (1990, 2004) infers that management schools lack this training and need to reassess their teaching practices.

What then, is the consequence to training or graduate managers? Individuals that dedicate time, energy and resources into learning about management at a tertiary institution. In the same way, an individual can learn the ins and outs of how to play soccer from a theoretical point of view, until that individual has kicked the soccer ball and learnt how to associate the feeling of manoeuvring their leg onto the ball into their muscle memory,

they only have ‘knowing that’ knowledge, so how do managers learn the ‘knowing how’ knowledge (Brady, 1986). For example, they ‘know that’ audience engagement is crucial to a theatrical performance, compared to ‘knowing how’ to engage an audience through character expression and physicality. As Ambrose et al. (2010) explain, the learner is at the focal point of learning, how they engage in the learning process is influenced by their perceptions, prior knowledge and understanding, how they organise and store that knowledge, and their personal motivation and autonomy.

In response to the criticisms mentioned above, scholars there have been calls for management education to have a more arts-based approach, (Darsø, 2005; Irgens, 2014; Nissley, 2002; Taylor & Statler, 2014), which denotes how the arts are integrated into management education (Nissley, 2002); and a need to understand the value these methods offer managerial andragogy (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). Taylor (2019) argues that students are taught in a heavily theory-based environment, devoid of practising management and centring on the assumption that it is an objective, scientific domain. Arts-based methods have explored management education in the context of improvisational theatre to develop managerial competencies (Biehl-Missal, 2010), tangible materials to increase emotional engagement (Taylor & Statler, 2014), and studio critique to critically assess creativity (Mers, 2013). The learning outcomes of these approaches include responsiveness to new material, listening to others, spontaneity, taking responsibility and action, creative use of resources, improved leadership, interpersonal skills and communication, which overlap into generic managerial competencies (Biehl-Missal, 2010; Taylor & Statler, 2014), which as Bolman and Deal (2017) argue, encompass the artistry of management.

Weick (2007) discusses the notion of dropping the old and re-evaluating how things are done, "consider the tools of traditional logic and rationality. Those tools presume that the world is stable, knowable, and predictable" (p. 15), however, these are ill-suited to the unpredictable nature of organisations and management (Adler, 2006). Rather, once the tools of rationality that dominant management education are dropped, arts-based approaches provide a means of exploration (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009; L. Woolsey, 2020), as they "gain access to lightness in the form of intuitions, feelings, stories, improvisation, experience, imagination, active listening, awareness in the moment, novel words, and empathy" (Weick, 2007, p. 15). Further, Eickmann, Kolb, and Kolb (2004) compare management education and art education and polarising themes of science and craft emerge. Managerial learning focusing on theory, discursive, scientific-based, generalised, text-driven approaches with written assessment-based feedbacks loops compared to art education that emphasizes theory and practice, recursive, aesthetic, individualised, experiential and demonstrative methods where the student receives specific critique on their abilities and skills. In an effort to bring more focus onto management craft and practice, arts-based approaches to managerial training are favoured (Nissley, 2002). Similarly, I have mirrored these opinions and adopted an arts-based approach for this thesis.

2.2.3. Learning through informal means

Educational and training are tangible means of acquiring skills and knowledge. Development, however, as Sadler-Smith (2009) explains, is an intangible trajectory, which is the result of the process of learning supported through formal and/or informal

means. Woodall and Winstanley (1998) caution that the term ‘education’ is tainted with the concept of formal training and is therefore detached from informal and workplace contextualised learning. Malcolm et al. (2003) define informal learning or informal education as acquiring knowledge in everyday embodied practices and non-educational settings. Interestingly, in a policy document the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, which was established under the Education Act of 1989 and deemed an accurate source of secondary school and tertiary qualifications, providing information regarding what knowledge, skills and experience individuals with such degrees should have, states that they do “not put limitations on how or where people can learn” (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-a, p. 3), acknowledging that the are many pathways to learning (academic, on-the-job, online).

Many organisations have managerial development practices in place such as professional development courses, external training, mentoring, formal classroom learning, and in the corporate sector job experience and relevant competencies are seen as a substitute for academic education (Ruth, 2007). However, as Stewart (1984) remarks on-the-job learning, the practical, experimental learning occurring through practice, failure and reflection is considered a critical part of management development, but is often ‘left to chance’. Management development is not merely formal classroom training, having a narrow definition and assumption strips the encompassing possibilities out of all the informal learning that can occur. In an empirical study by Becker and Bish (2017) within an Australian not-for-profit organisation, found that of those studied majority of their management capabilities were learnt through informal means. They discovered that managerial learning is complex and requires a mix of developmental methods, beyond

that which is offered by traditional management programmes. However, for ongoing developmental purposes, the managers desired formal learning experiences to be complimented by informal.

Becker and Bish (2017) argue that in recent years there has been a shift from organisations investing in formal approaches to learning to more informal means, such as mentoring, job assignments, and role changes. However, the contribution of the study is whether managers themselves desire this change. In a similar vein, I am curious as to whether formal and/or informal learning experiences are deemed as beneficial to managers in how they have learnt their practice. Becker and Bish (2017) asked specifically in semi-structured interviews how managers gained their current managerial knowledge, what formal training they have had and what developmental opportunities they had at their current organisation. In the study, they interviewed 21 participants with only five holding formal qualifications (two of which were specific to management) and three having undertaken short management courses. Majority of the managers interviewed had no formal managerial training. Given the importance of a manager within the organisational milieu, how is it that individuals can become managers without qualifications, or perhaps the more pointed question is, does one need to possess a formal qualification to become a manager at all?

However, not all managers have the opportunity or means to go to tertiary education. In fact, in early 20th century organisations it was expected that individuals start at the 'bottom of the ladder' and climb their way to the top, as a means of both 'proving' themselves and experiencing all positions within the company; prior to being placed in an

executive position (Margerison & Smith, 1989). Though this expectation is absent in most of today's organisations, this pattern is still evident. Instead, the expectation is that managers are qualified whether that be through tertiary or workplace experience, as in the corporate sector job experience and relevant competencies are seen as a substitute for academic education (Ruth, 2007). Margerison and Smith (1989) argue that 'playing the different' parts in an organisation is key to managerial learning and success. Drawing on a theatre analogy they reflect,

> The ability to adapt and play many different roles is a crucial factor in managerial success. Indeed, if you have been doing one job for five years or more, it is probable that you are getting locked into one part. You may know the script and your lines backwards, but are you really developing any further and learning new things? If modern organisations are the equivalent of theatres where executives have parts to play, who writes the script and what is the plot? (p. 6)

Margerison and Smith argue that within an organisation, one can learn the various roles they are to play, having a holistic understanding of the business. Within the above quote, the notion of continuous learning emerges, that though one may have five years within a role does not make them an expert, rather can run the risk of becoming insular. Thus, as I discuss managerial learning in this section, a temporal element comes into play. Firstly, foundational learning and experience, that is educational experiences that established the 'groundwork' from which managers are made. Secondly, as Jarvis (2010) notes the lifelong, continuous learning component, of development, whereby once an individual is a 'manager' how they learn, grow and evolve in their craft.

2.2.3.1. Learning through experience

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) developed a model separating informal learning into three categories: learning from others, learning from tasks, learning with others, which I have summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Woodall and Winstanley (1998) model of informal learning

Category	Sub-Categories
Learning from others	Coaching Mentoring Observing role models
Learning from tasks	Special projects Job rotation opportunities Secondments Other role-enhancing activities
Learning with others	Networking Working on task forces Working in groups

Adapted from Woodall and Winstanley (1998)

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) emphasise the importance of informal learning in managerial development and, as Becker and Bish (2017) assert, contribute to the extensive research regarding informal (and formal) learning. However, Becker and Bish

state that what lacks in exploration is how managers consider their historical learning experiences and what approach they deem suitable for their learning needs.

Dragoni, Tesluk, Russell, and Oh (2009) state that fundamental managerial competencies are embedded within experience, that the learning journey an individual manager undertakes teaches them crucial competencies needed for their contextual environment. Interestingly, this ties into the notion of failure. As they reason, if core competencies are developed through learning experiences at work, then effective managers should be open to undertaking a range of job assignments, especially those outside of their current 'competency' range. However, as Dragoni et al., along with Argyris (1991) point out, individuals who are achievement-oriented and performance-bound may view the notion of undertaking a challenging project outside their competence level as high-risk. This presents a dilemma: how can those individuals then learn, grow and develop if they avoid failure? Presumedly, they will instead choose assignments that they are confident they will succeed in and thus be able to display their competence to others. Argyris (1991) explains it as a defensive reasoning mechanism, as a consequence for working lives full of successes, these individuals shy away from failure and have not experienced the emotions that accompany it. Thus, because they rarely encounter failure, they are ill-equipped to handle it in a constructive manner which reinforces their maladaptive defences. Adversely, learning-oriented managers, as Dragoni et al. (2009) describe them welcome the challenge of a difficult assignment as there is an appeal to the sense of accomplishment once successfully completed. Reflected in these experiences is a learning-process that occurs, where managers obtain key competencies that advance them.

Further adding to the notion of learning through experience, Brockett and Hiemstra (2019) state that self-directed learning should be a way of life for most adults, as being purposeful and taking responsibility for one's learning empowers individuals to be active learners. The workplace could be looked at as a learning environment where knowledge can be obtained and challenged. Brockett and Hiemstra (2019) explain that self-directed learning is not a new concept but has roots in Greek philosophy and can be identified as an assortment of internal and external factors that make the individual take responsibility for their learning journey. Intentionality shows drive and the personal responsibility an individual has towards their learning which is reflective in a variety of methods and learning processes. Though Brockett and Hiemstra provide a lengthy description and justification for self-directed learning, they do not address how it can be fostered or taught.

2.2.4. The complexity of managerial learning

Though development is available through formal and informal means the process of learning is ongoing, never formally starting or stopping (Anderson & Boocock, 2002)

In summation of this section focusing on formal and informal learning means, I add a proviso recognising the complexity of practice and therefore, the unique sensitivity needed when it is taught. Schön (2016) states, "the unique case [of practice, characterised by distinctive events] calls for an art of practice which might be taught if it were constant and known, but it is not constant" (p. 17). Alluding to how management practice is not as

easily codified, rather, situated within experience in contexts that are wide and variable, resulting in managers needing to learn how to respond to novel situations.

How do those who are supposed to practice management – managers, learn about it? A distinction between management understanding and craft should be made. As Taylor (2019) asserts, one can study a subject yet not learn how to be a 'craft master'. Appreciation for and practice of craft are important components. This leads to an important distinction of 'knowing that' and 'knowing how', which are two types of knowledge, as Brady (1986) explores. However, when assessing 'knowing' a dichotomy exists between represented (also referred to as formal or explicit) and embodied (also referred to as informal or tacit) knowledge. Represented knowledge is easily organised and can be stored as information in artefacts, data repositories and written mediums. Research and literature often rest in this type of knowledge; codified 'know-what' that offers explanations to certain topics (Hulme, 2014). In contrast, embodied knowledge is intuitive, experience-based, context-bound 'know-how' which is difficult to define and codify because it is personal in nature. This knowledge is stored in people as it is tied to personal beliefs, understandings and values (Gamble & Blackwell, 2001). Taylor (2019) states the distinction of knowing that and knowing how with the example of an academic compared with a manager. The academic is knowledgeable in managerial craft and significantly contributes to the body of knowledge; the manager is practising their managerial craft and contributes to tangible results in the workplace. Arguably, both are experts in the craft of management however, they both exhibit different types of knowledge. The academic possesses the 'knowing that' knowledge and the manager 'knowing how'.

2.3. What is managing?

There are many dimensions to understanding managing, some examples include literature explaining the practice through personality styles (Barr & Barr, 1989); metaphorical categorisation of managers (Maccoby, 1976); typologies of managerial roles (Mintzberg, 1973); and more recent articles exploring management as a craft (Taylor, 2012, 2019); and management as becoming and identity formation (Bolander et al., 2019; Brown & Bimrose, 2018; Watson, 2008). For the purposes of this study, in the following section, I will examine the discourses of managing as a craft and as an identity.

2.3.1. Managing as a craft

The history of craft work, from its root in Ancient Greek culture and philosophy, to how it has been affected by modernity, industrialisation and capitalism has been explored. Bell, Mangia, Taylor, and Toraldo (2018) explain that globalisation and mass-production have eroded traditional values of craft. How craft if practiced and managed today, is an interpretive act that is culturally and socially derived and is a consequence of socially-constructed language and patterns. A single definition of craft work does not exist, however, Bell et al. (2018) assert that it needs to be understood through the structural conditions of its production, as craft is a significant cultural practice, having deep historical roots and is linked to the environmentally contextual elements. Whether comprehended as a tangible creation or interpretively, craft is based on aesthetic values; intentionality and care, intertwined with the senses of touch and sight. A craftsperson uses mind and body to combine raw materials, tools and techniques to create something

that is both functional and purposeful (Bell et al., 2018). Craftspersonship is often mistakenly attributed to manual skill and handiwork only. However, Sennett (2008, p. 24) asserts,

> All craftsmanship is quality-driven work; Plato formulated this aim as the arete, the standard of excellence, implicit in any act: the aspiration for quality will drive a craftsman to improve, to get better rather than get by. But in his own time Plato observed that although 'craftsmen are all poets…they are not called poets, they have other names'.

Within the context of this study, the title that craftspeople have is manager. The following section examines craft specifically in relation to managerial practice. Mintzberg (2009) states that craft is a part of a triad; the three components encompassing and effecting management. Barnard (1968), in his well-cited work, characterised management as "a matter of art rather than science, […] aesthetic rather than logical" (p. 253). Moving beyond the notion of management as a predictable, intellectual game to a process that requires sensing and an orientation towards the aesthetic.

Similarly, Drucker (2007) states that management is not an exact science, though it contains elements, it is a practice with distinctive features that is not merely based on natural ability. These features can be systematically analysed and understood scientifically, but management ultimately rests in practice. Mintzberg (2009) parallels this view arguing that within management there is little science, rather, that managerial practice is a craft of learning from experience, requiring art to unearth the vision, with a touch of science involved. Taylor, Ladkin, and Statler (2015) continue along this line, arguing that management is a practice, though some science is drawn upon, the

managerial craft is best highlighted in the workplace by the action it produces. A visual tool is conceptualising the dynamics of the management triad is found in Figure 1 displaying how science (analysis), art (vision), and craft (experience) are required for holistic managing, without which, having only science and art results in a disconnect, or just science and craft, a lack of spirit. Focusing only on one or two elements is insufficient for management practice. Latham (2018) criticises managerial resources as being based in anecdotal, artful notions of intuition and personal experience, claiming the transferability of these skills are limited (which is a broad and thus, skewed assertion as evidenced by the informal learning literature aforementioned). Therefore, all three are required for balance.

Figure 1. Managing as a science, art and craft

Taken from Mintzberg (2009, p. 127)

Mintzberg (2009) uses this figure to explain how these three styles of managing are interdependent. Science is a cerebral style, calculated, deliberate, and analytical, and as aforementioned, has been criticised as a dominant conceptualisation of management (Mintzberg, 2004; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Taylor, 2019). Art, Mintzberg (2009) explains, is insightful in nature, based on ideas, intuition and vision. Lastly, craft is deemed as engaging, immersed in experience, hands-on practicalities and embodied rudiments. Figure 2.1 also displays dysfunctional features, seen at the bottom of each arrow, which can occur if managing using the triad is unbalanced. Thus, managers or a management team should have a fusion of the three.

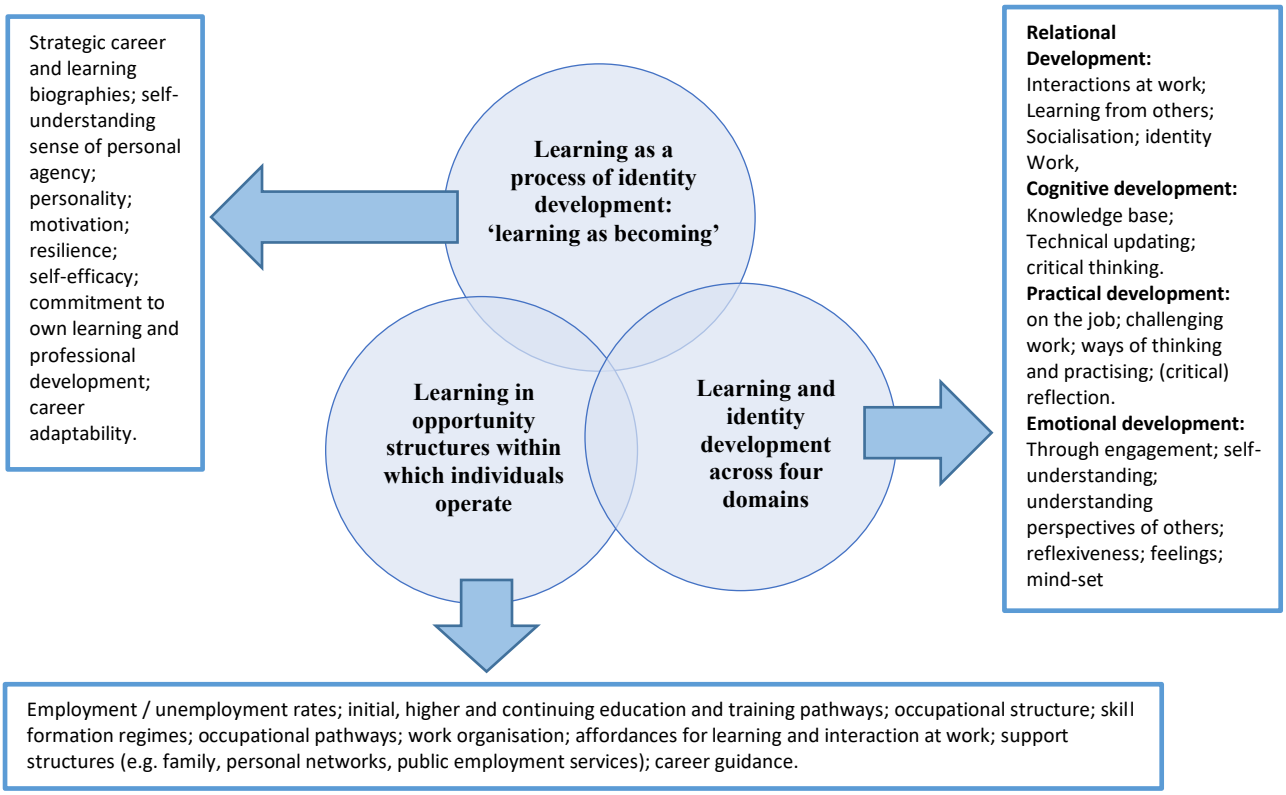
Taylor et al. (2015) explore craft in further depth, commenting that Mintzberg does not thoroughly delineate it. Within the domain of management, Taylor (2012) proffers that "craft applies a systematic set of skills in an established process to achieve a desired end result" (p. 2). However, craftwork is not merely a means to another end, a craftsperson is dedicated to and engaged in their work for its own sake (Sennett, 2008). The notion of craft can be further explored using the allegory of the theatre (as was used in the introductory chapter), particularly denoting the difference between art and craft as due to their nuanced relationship the terms are often used interchangeably (Taylor, 2012). On opening night of a play, the actors are prepared and eager to perform. Craft and art are both displayed at this moment; Taylor (2012) states that craft is about *destinations*, whereas art centres on *departures*. The process of training, rehearsing, practising my character role can then be termed craft. These series of events build towards the 'destination' of opening night, what then happens on stage in those moments with a live audience, that is about 'departure', taking the audience's imagination captive and

painting a narrative – that is art. Craft is then the 'in-between' or the middle that funnels towards the artful end-result. For the purposes of this research, *craft* is the term that will be explored, specifically within the context of management practice.

2.3.2. Managing as an identity

Brown and Bimrose (2018) explain that learning is intertwined with identity development with 'learning as becoming' being fundamental in driving this process. Sturdy, Brocklehurst, Winstanley, and Littlejohns (2006) explain that identity is a verb as it is continuously being developed, reproduced and transformed. Temporal in nature, identity-work is a continuous iteration requiring individuals to engage in forming, maintaining and strengthening their self-constructed narratives, revising when needed. Identity development can be furthered through self-understanding, Biesta and Tedder (2007) describe this as "learning about one's life and learning from life" (p. 144) through life stories. In such a way, learning is considered a lifelong process of learning from experiences. A model developed by Brown and Bimrose (2018) shown in Figure 2 below shows the influences on learning and development in a workplace context.

Figure 2. Influences on learning and development in the workplace



Adapted from Brown and Bimrose (2018, p. 251)

The first influence sees learning as a process of becoming, encapsulated in the strategic career aspirations and learning biographies of individuals. Brown and Bimrose (2018) explain that characteristics of the self and personal agency impact this representation. The second influence shows learning and development as occurring across four categories: relational, cognitive, practical and emotional development. Learning can be achieved in each of these domains differently and to varying levels. Lastly, individuals can learn through the context of opportunity structures, mainly those of a formal nature.

Jarvis (1989) argues that the process of becoming and identity formation is crucial, yet this is a temporal process, extending and evolving over time. Pratt, Rockmann, and Kaufmann (2006) discuss how identities are the lenses individuals use to make sense of and conceptualise the world. Thus, as Warhurst (2011) articulates, understanding management as an identity has consequences for practice and managerial education.

2.4. Research focus

If management education is not deemed as 'sufficient' to create managers, given criticisms that it is logic-bound and disconnected from practice (Sandberg & Tsouks, 2011), then how do individuals become managers and learn their craft? This research explores how individuals develop their managerial identity and their perceptions of how they have learned their craft. Akin to the work of Mantere (2005), who looked beyond strategy as a business practice and dived into the presence of strategy in the working lives of the members within an organisation, I will examine on how managerial learning is encompassed within individual practice and the realities of their situation, rather than just the outcome that their learning journey produces. The majority of managerial learning research has been from a macro-view, looking at the manager within the context of organisational learning, which granted, is immensely useful in offering an organisational overview and understanding how the manager as a part fits within the whole (Armstrong & Foley, 2003; Caporarello, Manzoni, & Panariello, 2020). However, the lack of micro-level assessment of the subjective individual learning journey is limited, particularly within a New Zealand context. The learning journey managers have undertaken based on their workplace experiences deserves exploration. By focusing on their experiences (both

positive and negative), a view of how learning intertwined with these experiences will be revealed and will serve as valuable knowledge to organisations and individuals alike. Therefore, my research question asks: what is the subjective understanding of managers regarding how they have become a manager and learnt the craft of management in the workplace? This has two parts: firstly, how did they 'become a manager? Consequently, how did they learn management craft? These parts are broken into five conceptual questions that influenced the direction of inquiry and address the research question and rationale:

- How do managers conceptualise 'management' and 'being a manager'?
- What do managers experience as being enjoyable about their managerial role?
- What do managers dislike about their managerial role?
- What learning experiences have contributed to their craft development?
- How have their educational experiences contributed to their managerial craft?

The objectives of the research being:

- How do managers define their craft?
- What has transpired for them to learn their craft?

Chapter 3. Method

"Storytelling transforms our lives by enabling us to reshape diffuse, diverse and difficult personal experiences in ways that can be shared"

Jackson (2002), p. 267

The following chapter outlines my methodological choices and research design. It details the three stages of my research, how data collection occurred and the challenges therein. Further, I explain my analysis approach for the findings chapters and the appended ethnodrama.

3.1. Introduction to my research identity

I once heard it said that academic inquiry is like a room, with research methods being the various windows one can look through to understand the world–and yes, there are indeed many windows. These research traditions, coupled with my specific philosophical approach or *worldview,* frame the beliefs and assumptions, I, as a researcher, possess (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Neuman, 2013). Understanding my research tradition and worldview was fundamental in coming into my research identity. It was a part of the journey I undertook as a student approaching research for the first time, framing my chosen methodology and providing justification for some of the choices I made throughout the research process.

The inherent nature of qualitative research is such that its subjective lens shapes the research process and data collection. The research and the researcher are inextricably

linked, and despite the protests that quantitative researchers may make (Bryman, 2008)– that is the point of qualitative research, to create rich, subjective understandings of the world. Therefore, my voice, as the researcher, will be strongly audible in this chapter as I cannot separate myself from the research conducted. My biases, opinions and worldview have influenced the research process, which Yin (2016) asserts, is to be expected; though I have taken mitigating action to reduce this. This research is a narrative of the transition I have made from student to researcher and the development therein. Like all good narratives, I will start at the beginning by reflecting on an excerpt about research methods from an assignment I wrote before undertaking my thesis:

> When I first considered research, the thought of it was intimidating as previously I had only been exposed to quantitative methods of research, which I now know does not neatly align to my understanding of the world. Discovering and understanding both the qualitative research tradition and the interpretivist framework helped me in gaining my identity as a researcher. The ontological and epistemological underpinnings of interpretivism mean that I seek to understand reality as that which is known and understood by the individual and truth is subjective to their reality by uncovering meaning and interpreting the truth. Best practice within this tradition and worldview requires researchers to be authentic towards their research, factoring in their personal influence, remaining ethically robust, as well as flexible throughout the research.
>
> (Adapted assignment extract written in April 2019)

This excerpt marks the beginning of my understanding and acceptance of seeing myself as a researcher, specifically from the qualitative tradition, following an interpretivist paradigm. At that stage, I was yet to explore what that entailed; this thesis project became the catalyst for that.

3.2. Introduction to my methodology

The development and evolution of managerial craft is a story – life experiences of the manager which have challenged, strengthened and advanced them in their craft. In telling their stories, individuals must reflect on their thoughts, actions and interactions that contributed to an experience (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Narrative Inquiry is a way of constructing meaning from the past, present and into the future. The term *narrative* can be best understood as a *story*, a construction of events detailing people, places, and situations told to oneself and others (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009; Rossiter, 1999). Aligning to the philosophical underpinning of social constructivism, as reality is understood through subjective experience and created through everyday social experiences, conversations, interactions and so on, as opposed to objectively determined (Cunliffe, 2004). Put succinctly, Morgan (2001) asserts that the "general social constructionist view that, whatever the characteristics of the 'objective' world, they are *always* known and experienced subjectively. Humans play an active role in *constructing, making,* and *enacting* their realities" (p. 98). Rossiter (1999) states that a narrative understanding of adult development is based on the assumption that stories are a structural device that individuals use to make meaning and organise their experiences. Narrative Inquiry is therefore an appropriate methodological choice as the research question focuses on the lived experiences of managers and how they have learnt their practice.

3.2.1. Narrative Inquiry

Much of my reading around Narrative Inquiry came from studies in numerous fields. C.

Smith and Winter (2010) use a sensemaking approach to analyse three narratives to understand project management formation and power structures. Informing me of one way narratives can be articulated through how they outline their process of analysis. Barrett and Stauffer (2009) provide a detailed explanation of Narrative Inquiry and facets of the methodology I, as a researcher, should be cognisant of specifically as it pertains to educational research. Lastly, Riessman (1990) demonstrates how analysis can be conducted and how to interpret narrative segments thematically. Given that narrative approaches rest on a spectrum reading widely allowed me to investigate the various positions that researchers can adopt, and consequently determine which was ideal for my research.

3.3. Research design

A back-and-forth iteration of the research question and methodology occurred, resulting in three stages of interviews:

- Stage one: Practice Interviews
- Stage two: Round 1 Interviews
- Stage three: Round 2 Interviews

As a novice researcher, I used Practice interviews to familiarise myself with the interviewing process and gain confidence. I sought feedback from each interviewee regarding my style, communication and the way the interview unfolded. I used this information to develop the Round 1 interview schedule. However, my research question

was not clear and pronounced in my mind; thus, with the suggestion of my supervisors, I used the first round of interviews to gather data on the subject matter. From there, based on the data and guiding from my supervisors, I refined the research question. However, as data collection for Round 2 began it became apparent that respondents were not only discussing *how* they have learnt how to manage but also how that has shaped their understanding of their work and their managerial role as a part of a broader identity. Presenting me with iterations and stories that included learning experiences and their conceptualisations of management craft, I made a final amendment to the research question. My approach then consisted of continued data gathering and analysis, going back to the literature review and refining based on the findings. Thereby validating the findings based on theoretical understandings and explanations.

The research question underwent three main developments:

- Prior to the Round 1 Interviews I asked: *what learning processes transpire for New Zealand managers based on their subjective workplace managerial experiences?*
- Prior to the Round 2 Interviews: *through the subjective lens of practising managers, how do these managers learn the craft of management and what have they learnt that craft to be?*
- During the Round 2 Interviews: *what is the subjective understanding of managers regarding how they have become a manager and learnt the craft of management in the workplace?*

Each stage had a different approach as my understanding grew and the nature of the research started to develop. Bryman and Bell (2011) state that this is common for qualitative research, as its methods are not as linear and ordered as quantitative research and can appear 'messy' at times. Best practice for the qualitative tradition follows what Creswell (2018) refers to as methodological congruence, which occurs when the purpose of the study, the research question and methodology align and are interrelated, providing a holistic research approach. My research was designed to be methodologically congruent by ensuring the purpose of exploring the learning experiences of managers feeds into the research question. To further ensure best practice, there were ethical considerations made to respect the narratives of the managers interviewed.

3.3.1. Ethical considerations

The nature of the research was low-risk to the participants and researcher; consequently, a low-risk notification was submitted to Massey University Human Ethics Committee (notification number: 4000021636) and acknowledged (see Appendix D: Ethics). The main ethical consideration was the awareness and willingness of participants; therefore, I sought informed consent from each participant prior to conducting the research. Participants received an information pack, including the consent form and were briefed about the interview process. Interviews were conducted privately, through a phone call or digital medium (Skype or Zoom)–where participants chose their interview space. I conducted an additional briefing beforehand, ensuring that they understand the ethical considerations and implications of the research and I asked if they had questions or needed clarification before commencing. The identity of participants using pseudonyms

and their organisations is concealed, with only their role title and other relevant non-identifying information used.

3.4. Data collection

3.4.1. Stage one: Practice Interviews

For the Stage one: Practice Interviews I assessed two interaction-based strategies: semi-structured and unstructured interview techniques (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011; Sudirman, 2019) because I did not have a clear picture of my research question and wanted to have a conversation with participants to gain their thoughts and experiences of learning how to manage. Subsequently, the conversation allowed collaboration of ideas which I then used as guidance for the Round 1 Interview schedule and method.

Two of the practice interviews were semi-structured and broad questions regarding management and learning asked. Having a framework gave direction to the conversation and allowed me to add in questions to flesh out the conversation, or change direction when relevant allowing for depth to be discovered (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011). The other interview had an unstructured approach; however, I found it challenging to keep the conversation flowing. Another advantage of interviews is that non-verbal cues can be recorded and analysed adding richness to the information gathered, useful in later crafting the ethnodrama (see 3.6.4 How I devised the script). Based on these experiences I deemed the semi-structured approach more suitable.

3.4.2. Stage two: Round 1 Interviews

After conducting the practice interviews, I reflected on how interviewees used specific stories and narratives from their working life, containing rich amounts of information. Research conducted by Sudirman (2019) utilised the approach of Behavourial Event Method to draw out stories from participants, similar to the response practice interviewees had. The method demonstrates an individual's competencies and effectiveness based on their lived-experience rather than gathering that information through questions (Fernandez, 2006; Sudirman, 2019). This approach centres around events that have spurred the learning process during the manager's subjective experience, useful in identifying competencies (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Sudirman, 2019). I followed the step by step process for the method based as Fernandez (2006) and Sudirman (2019) outline.

The Behavioural Event Method provides a clear outline of questions to ask the participants. The limitations of this methodology is that is can be time-consuming, in the research Sudirman (2019) conducted each interview took an average of two hours each. Despite this, the Behavioural Event Method was utilised for the Round 1 Interviews to gather primary data.

Three data-gathering interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. These interviews intentionally had a small sample size of three so that I could analyse and draw out themes from the interviews that would refine my research question, prior to the Round 2 interviews.

When taking participants through the Behavioural Event Method, it seemed more like a 'job interview' style and was too prescriptive. I found that participants wanted to discuss stories freely in a less-linear and messy fashion. However, I still wanted a method that focused on drawing out stories from participants, so I explored an adaptation called the Critical Incident Method for the Round 2 interviews.

3.4.3. Stage three: Round 2 Interviews

The Round 2 Interviews were semi-structured consisting of six contextual questions and three asking for specific examples and stories from their managerial experience. I followed a 'storytelling' approach under the Narrative Inquiry methodology, which allows participants to discuss how they have learnt their managerial craft and what they have learnt freely, structured through the Critical Incidents Method. The questions outlined in the interview schedule (see Appendix C) were given to participants beforehand and focused on:

- the participant's current role and managerial responsibilities;
- the participant's educational experiences and how they have/have not contributed to their managerial craft;
- learning experiences participants have had;
- enjoyable and unenjoyable experiences of management that contribute to learnings and how managers see management;
- the participant's understanding of management in general.

3.4.4. Participant selection process

Given that my research question seeks to examine how managers become managers and their consequential learnings, I chose to assess managers generally. Management is not limited to the business realm and commercial enterprises alone; rather, it is a 'universal societal function' required across society (Malik, 2010, p. 29). Thus, the sample was not confined to one industry, type of managerial role or organisation. I deliberated choosing managers that had undertaken management specific degrees but rationalised that doing so would not be congruent with the study; thus, I selected participants irrespective of their educational background—using purposive sampling to gather rich information from a range of participants for the study. For the Round 2 interviews, 15 formally recognised managers were chosen. They were current managers at a mid- to high-level in their organisation, with a minimum of four years' experience. In the final participant pool, two of the managers were not currently practising as one had sold their business one month prior and the other had stepped into an advisory role a few weeks prior to the interview; however I allowed their participation given their recent (and historical) experience.

L. K. Woolsey (1986) states that usually the characteristics of the participants in a study determine how that study can be generalised, however, for the Critical Incident Technique though gathering demographic data is useful it is only used descriptively. Sampling procedures are 'less-stringent' than traditional research methods because the technique is descriptive and exploratory and the focus is on the content domain. In such a way, having 'complete coverage' of the content domain – managerial craft is what takes precedence. Thus, I worded the description of the study in a manner that would attract

managers at differing places of their managerial craft development, irrespective of whether they were 'good' or 'average' managers.

The sample size was determined by the critical incidents (or narratives), rather than the number of participants. There is no 'ideal' number; however, Flanagan (1954) states that data collection should occur until saturation occurs, and redundancy is evident, which depends on the complexity of the data. The term *theoretical saturation* denotes the point where there is no additional information (or data) emerging or the information gathered is well established (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Around my 12th interview, this started to occur and by the 15th interview theoretical saturation was reached as the information gathered became repetitive, and participants validated what other participants discussed (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007).

The interviews took between 30 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes; all participants consented to be interviewed and recorded. I transcribed the interviews verbatim, though sometimes excluded filler words such as 'um', 'ah', 'you know'. Repetitions, hesitations, malapropisms and pauses were only kept if they contributed to the meaning of the sentence(s) and the 'voiceprint' of the individual, essential later when I was devising the script (Saldaña, 2016).

3.4.5. Critical Incident Method

The Critical Incident Method utilises a set of procedures that gathers information by asking questions that prompt the participant to reflect on an event or situation and recall

their coinciding thoughts and behaviours and how they impacted the situation (Flanagan, 1954; L. K. Woolsey, 1986). The subjective nature of these events means that a researcher can conceptualise the content as images and scripts creating a narrative arc (de Frankrijker, 1998).

An article by L. K. Woolsey (1986) on the Critical Incident Method outlines best practice of conducting interviews following this method; there are five key steps:

1. Outlining the aim of the experience to be explored.
2. Defining the criteria for the information to be gathered.
3. Collecting information through interviews.
4. Analysis of the content.
    a. Here I add 're-storying' (or 'retelling') as a part of the Narrative Inquiry methodology which will frame the stories of participants, reflected in the findings (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).
5. Discussion of findings (which will be influenced by the methodology and include a narrative arc).

3.4.5.1. Step 1 – Outlining the aim

L. K. Woolsey (1986) states that the aim is to be a clear and direct articulation of the activity in focus. The aim being for participants to reveal experiences and stories that have influenced developing and learning their craft and their understanding of management. In developing my aim, I rationalised that managerial craft is comprised of

successes and failures of practising management. In the Round 1 Interviews this was highlighted, as all three participants talked about their failures as being pivotal in their managerial development. Therefore, I kept my aim broad so that I did not channel the Round 2 participants into a specific tone, for example, positive rather than negative experiences, as to not limit the experiences they may be willing to share.

3.4.5.2. Step 2 – Defining interview criteria

Next, a plan needs to be established outlining the specifications and criteria. Flanagan (1954) asserts that is crucial as the requirements need to clearly outline what is to be studied and its intersection with the general aim. L. K. Woolsey (1986) breaks this step into three parts, defining (a) those who are the 'observers', (b) what is to be observed (individuals or activities) and (c) what experiences and behaviours are to be observed.

(a) *'Observers'* refers to those who are familiar with the activity and can reflect. For the purposes of this study, the observers are the managers themselves exploring their subjective, first-hand experiences. L. K. Woolsey (1986) suggests that in some studies where the observer and the observed are the same, that familiarising participants prior to the interview by providing them with the interview schedule, as I did, is beneficial.

(b) *'Observations'* are the moments in time the participants are discussing, exploring observations and experiences that occurred in the workplace during their role as a manager.

(c) Next, *the specific experiences or behaviours observed* needs to be established; this is aided by an interview schedule (see Appendix C). The Interview Schedule was developed following a framework offered by L. K. Woolsey (1986), ensuring that the incidents are relevant to and link into the general aim (established in Step 1).

3.4.5.3. Step 3 – Interviews

It is common practice in Critical Incident Method to use interviews, as opposed to other means of collection, and to utilise an Interview Schedule (developed during Step 2) (L. K. Woolsey, 1986). The purpose of this study was stated informally, "to explore the experiences of New Zealand managers and how they learn to be managers in the workforce" and outlined in the Information Sheet (see *Appendix A*). Prior to each interview I restated the purpose to participants to ensure they were informed; additionally, I conveyed to participants that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' responses promoting open conversations (Flanagan, 1954).

Interview Schedule

As mentioned in Step 1 (above), when developing the general aim, I ensured that the language used did not have a positive or negative tone, so that participants reflected on a range of experiences that developed their craft. Further, I recognised that I ought to decodify my language thus the interview schedule uses layman's language for the aim, description and in the wording of questions to convey clear meaning (L. K. Woolsey, 1986). I derived the questions from those developed for the Round 1 Interviews, modified

according to the Critical Incident Method and were sense-checked on various individuals for the Round 2 Interviews. Morgan (2001) stresses how language is a vital component of how we construct meaning and reality. Using the example of how *black* gains meaning when it coincidences with the concept of *white*, we draw on associated mental models to create understanding. Therefore, it is imperative not just in the questions asked during interviews but also understanding that during the coding process participants used language that frames their reality and constructed meanings.

3.4.5.4. Step 4 – Analysis of the content

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and analysis of the data began immediately (see 3.6 Analysis) and continued throughout the data collection phase. Initial codes and themes were redefined and recategorised as data emerged, to organise it in a meaningful way (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). NVivo 12 software aided in the data organisation and coding process.

3.4.6. Bias and legitimacy

As a narrative researcher, I was conscious that I was participating in the stories of interviewees, and my own stories may intersect and overlap with those collected. Awareness and acknowledgement of this position was necessary, with a need for me to reflect on my biases and motivations that informed my engagement (de Vries, 2017). To make these clear to the reader, I want to be transparent and state that I am a management consultant, observing and coaching managers on a day-to-day basis, seeing how their

experiences, whether they be successes or failures influence their way of managing and contribute towards the development of their craft. I believe that management is best learnt by doing, being on the floor interacting with employees and not merely 'managing by emails'. Further, my own four years in my undergraduate degrees taught me a great deal about the realm of business and management from a theoretical level but only in being exposed to the workforce did I start to develop my craft. I recognise my bias and how my own experience influences my perspective and beliefs towards management; however, I wanted to explore these ideas in a research setting to uncover the stories and experiences of other managers. Seeing what moments shaped them and how they learnt to develop themselves, coming into their managerial identity. To mitigate these biases in the interview process, as Yin (2016) suggest, I developed a list of potential open-ended questions (additional to my interview schedule). I wanted to avoid asking leading questions that could be stained with bias so carefully crafted the language and used the questions as a guide for gathering further information in the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, Wolcott (1994) states that this is achieved through maintaining healthy scepticism and approaching the data as to what is going on as opposed to what one thinks is going on.

Further, elite bias sample problem, as Myers and Newman (2007) explain, when selecting participants researchers may choose to only interview those that have prestige, a high rank or status, overlooking the lower status individuals who may be less-articulate but still have a perspective. Heiskanen and Newman (1997) warn that this can lead to under-representation in the data; thus, I chose not to specify the 'type' of manager to interview, rather left this broad and non-prescriptive.

3.5. Limitations and delimitations

Majority of Round 2 interviews were conducted during the Covid-19 Nationwide Lockdown in New Zealand. The raising of the alert level to 4 the week of the 23rd of March disrupted my interview schedule, delaying interviews further and moving them to a digital platform. I was concerned that some participants could be influenced by the stress of the situation and also that some of the participants were not working in their managerial role during the lockdown period.

3.5.1.1. Interview media

As a response to the Covid-19 restrictions, all face-to-face interviews were prohibited; thus, the interview media used for the Round 2 Interviews were all digital and remote. Initially, I was disappointed as I was excited to meet with participants face-to-face as I had enjoyed this process during the Round 1 Interviews. However, as the data collection progressed, I discovered that there were advantages despite the constraints. It allowed me to interview participants who were outside of Auckland, where I was based. Making data collection quicker, rather than spending time driving and meeting with a participant, interviews only took the time I needed to prepare (laptop setup, Zoom meeting, recording devices preparation) plus the interview time. Meaning I could do multiple interviews in one day, having time to reflect and write notes afterwards. However, like Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel, and Cook (2020) warn, technical difficulties caused some interviews to have lag and inconsistent connectivity, so I had phone interviews as a backup. I interviewed one participant who only had access to a phone and noticed I was able to take

copious notes as they were speaking. In contrast, when video-calling I did not take as many notes because I wanted to maintain eye contact with the participant. The disadvantage, however, is that non-verbal cues are removed (Gray et al., 2020).

Myers and Newman (2007) identify that interviews create an artificial environment and where trust needs to be built. I was conversing with individuals that were strangers, asking them to answer questions under time pressure. To mitigate this, I spent time talking with the participant beforehand to establish rapport. Further, Gray et al. (2020) note that online participants can be amenable and receptive.

3.6. Analysis

Following the same approach used by Mantere (2008) the process of refining the research question as well as the analyses I undertook were "crystallized [sic] in an iterative process" (p. 299). Meaning I moved back and forth between the theory and findings; especially heightened during the Round 2 analysis phase. An inductive approach was used to analyse the data, I started the coding from scratch, not reliant on a framework or preconceived ideas about the findings (as the deductive approach does), though was time consuming (Burnard et al., 2008). Following my methodological approach of Narrative Inquiry, analysis is used in the "restorying" process, which requires the researcher to draw themes and meaning from the stories told. Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) explain that restorying involves a process of reading the transcript, identifying the stories and analysing them to gain understanding about the lived experiences they reveal (see 3.6.4.1 Crafting dialogue from the data, for examples). Including identifying the key narrative

elements and then rewriting the story, sequencing chronologically. As stories are not always linear and can be messy at times due to the recall of an individual, what is key is the meaning and drawing themes from the narratives, then linking the revealed ideas together. I used the three-dimensional space narrative structure to aid in this process. This framework (Table 4) guides analysis, detailing the key narrative elements: *interaction, continuity* and *situation* that should be considered.

Table 4. The three-dimensional space narrative structure

Interaction		Continuity			
Personal	Social	Past	Present	Future	Situation/place
Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions	Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view	Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times	Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines	Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view

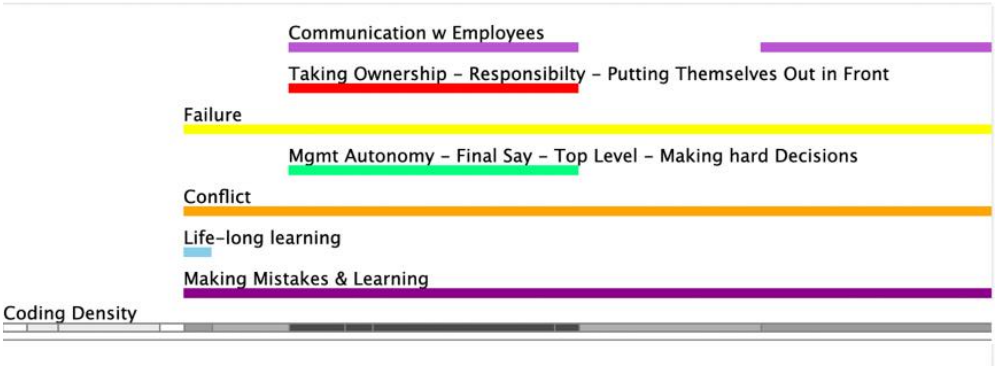
Note. Retrieved from Wang and Geale (2015).

3.6.1.1. Coding

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, uploaded into the software tool NVivo 12 and categorised accordingly. I found the transcription process time-consuming; however, the advantage was that I became more familiar with the data and spurred my thinking towards the analysis. Figure 1 shows an example from a participant's transcript. This

screenshot was taken partway through the coding process as I was refining and renaming codes, as new information surfaced.

Figure 1. Example of unrefined codes from transcript coded in NVivo 12



3.6.2. Presentation of findings

Originally the Findings section was going to be presented as an ethnodrama; however, this has been moved to Appendix E. When presenting research Saldaña (2003) states that the appropriateness of the presentation is crucial, I had to ask myself if the mode of representation would tell the stories of my participants in a manner that was credible, descriptive and informative to the audience. I concluded that an ethnodrama would achieve this; however, my supervisors advised that the Findings and Discussion should be written in a traditional format given I am a novice researcher.

However, as the process of crafting the script was intertwined with the analysis of the data, I will explain my approach The literary nature of my research draws heavily on the interview data, capturing the words of participants as well as their tone and gestural

language in the fictional script. Ethnodrama and ethnotheatre are firmly situated within non-fiction, researched reality (Saldaña, 2016). Through an arts-based research approach, I attempt to draw attention to what K. Nolan (2014) terms as the 'intimate connections' that exist between research and knowing and representation. I discovered a there is a maturing body of ethnotheatre and ethnodrama research (Dell'Angelo, 2019; O'Connell & Lynch, 2019; A. D. Smith, 2005; Taylor, 2003; Walker, Pick, & MacDonald, 1991), with numerous examples of ethnodrama, present as vignettes in *Ethnodrama: An anthology of reality theatre* edited by Saldaña (2005), as well as research articles written as ethnodramas (Malhotra & Hotton, 2019; L. Woolsey, 2020).

3.6.3. Ethnodrama

An ethnodrama is a script which can be used in ethnotheatre (traditional theatre conventions employed to craft to stage a live performance for an audience) (Saldaña, 2003). In my research, I chose to produce an ethnodrama only; however, beyond this project I could stage it as a live performance or reading of the script, which would make it ethnotheatre. The ethnodrama is comprised of significant analysed and dramatised components of my research. Such components include the interview transcripts, field notes, memos and journal entries. Typically, characters in an ethnodrama are the participants and researcher(s) written into the script, in an ethnotheatre production these characters could be portrayed by either actors or the participants/researchers themselves (Saldaña, 2003, 2016).

3.6.4. How I devised the script

As the researcher composing the script I 'playwrite' with the data, the script is written as an informative piece of research that is intellectually resonant, entertains ideas and evocative to the audience (Saldaña, 2003).

There are four methods for crafting ethnodramatic scripts:

- adapting interview scripts;
- modifying non-fiction texts;
- crafting an original autoethnographic monologue;
- devising through improvisation (Saldaña, 2018).

I used the first method and adapted my interview transcripts and audio data. In crafting an ethnodrama from interview scripts some scripts are verbatim, preserving the exact dialogue from the participant, such as the work of A. D. Smith (2005) from her show *On the Road: A Search for American Character*. Other scripts are created through adapting the interview material, selecting and rearranging sections to form a cohesive narrative. Further, scripts can be developed based on the raw interview transcripts producing an original dramatic composition (Saldaña, 2016). I have used a mix of all three of these approaches. In segments, I have utilised the *verbatim* approach keeping the dialogue word-for-word from the interview transcripts, maintaining pauses and sentence irregularities. I also employed *adaption,* restorying the sentences for readability and comprehension so the script flowed smoothly from character to character, scene to scene.

Further, the *original* approach was used to aid in the plotline development, bridging between the sections within scenes. In these cases, the original composition was based heavily on the interview materials.

3.6.4.1. Crafting dialogue from the data

There were instances where the quotations from participants needed to be shortened. I used restorying techniques to ensure the essence of the quote was maintained and the final product was an accurate reflection of what the participant shared. Table 5 shows an example of restorying the verbatim story of one participants' learning experience using an adaptation approach.

Table 5. Example of restorying interview data for the ethnodrama using the adaption approach

Original interview data	Restoryed adapted version for ethnodrama
Me: Can you think of a time during your managerial role where you felt like you were learning how to manage?	*(Lawrence is represented by the composite character Pieter, see Appendix D)*
Lawrence: There was a guy called [Robert] and he's one of the best auditors I've ever seen, very, very enthusiastic and I always thought he was a bit of a show-pony because he's very, very entertaining and really, really enthusiastic but it was only when I saw him manage a team of managers that weren't his managers – he was managing a dealership and they did not want to be there, and they were all different types of people. And as a trainer, as a consultant you know the trick – when they ask you a question you don't really know the answer to you say 'okay, interesting – so what do you think about it?' and you ask the room and hopefully they come back with an answer and you say 'okay cool – it's that one'. And	PIETER: Robbie! …another story for you…Robbie, one of the best auditors I've seen–he wasn't even a manager himself but he taught me how to deal with unruly, difficult people. I saw him manage a team of managers that he was consulting. But John, John didn't want to be there and was annoying everyone in the room, asking the same question over and over again. I was sitting there thinking, 'I'm going to lose it' but Robbie, he handled it differently he said, 'John, all day you've asked me questions and I've answered them, you don't seem to be taking my word for any of it, you obviously

you could see he [Robert – the auditor] was getting a little bit annoyed with one particular person, he wouldn't let go of something so when he [Robert] was asked a question – the question was stupid, I can't remember what it was but it was really thick, and Robert [the auditor] had gone over this ground about three or four times and he [the individual] was getting it but he didn't want to get it. And I was sitting there thinking - I was losing my temper and I probably would've handled it a different way but the way he managed it was really, really good. He said, 'guys, normally I would say with – say his name was John, with John asking me these questions I'd open it up to you guys and you'd come back and I can see you're annoyed with him, and I'd use your peer pressure to shut him up. But I'm not going to do that. I'm gonna do this instead'. He said, 'John, all day you've asked me questions and I've answered them, you don't seem to be taking my word for any of it and you obviously don't want to be here, so I'm gonna give you a choice. Either take on board what I'm saying, you don't agree with me – fine, but I need you to be quiet cause you're now interrupting everyone's learning, so you can either do that or you can leave.

Me: So, he essentially gave him the ultimatum?

Lawrence: Yeah, he said 'it's entirely up to you'. He said, 'I'd much prefer you to stay and maybe open your mind up a little bit for what's happening because the rest seem to be getting on alright with it. Your learning style is a reflector – so you might not be sitting there thinking, 'I get this straight away' but you will tomorrow. But you won't if you don't give yourself a chance. So what do you want to do?', 'So what would you like to do?' – and then he [Robert] shut up.

Me: And stayed in the room?

Lawrence: Stayed in the room? – no, no this isn't the manager, ahh – Rob, he just shut up and just looked at him and then didn't say a word until the guy [John] answered. He [John] said, 'well I'd rather… I think if I leave I'm gonna get in trouble', he [Robert] said, 'it's still up to you, if you are going to stay however, I'd like you to be a little bit more quiet'. And that taught me a couple of things: one you have to stand by your principles, two the minority shouldn't rule

don't want to be here, so I'm gonna give you a choice. Either take on board what I'm saying, you don't agree with me – fine, but I need you to be quiet cause you're now interrupting everyone's learning, so you can either do that or you can leave. And that taught me a couple of things: one you have to stand by your principles, two the minority shouldn't rule the majority in a training environment, or even a company environment, if the person in the room is not participating they need to be called out on it. It's not confrontation –just being assertive but it's effective, I've done it since and it works.

the majority in a training environment, or even a company environment, if the person in the room is not participating they need to be called out on it. And it's not confrontation – it's just being assertive, but the way he did that was really quite good and I've done it since and it works.	

An original approach differs from the adaptation approach above in that an original composition is based heavily on the interview data. The example in Table 6 shows how this approach was required because as the notion of *experience* was being discussed.

Table 6. Example of restorying interview data for the ethnodrama using the original approach

Original interview data	Restoryed, original version for ethnodrama
Me: Can you think of a time in your managerial role at [business] where you felt like you were learning how to manage? Tamati: Probably not in the role that I'm in now, I used manage – over Christmas I dealt with the complete other side of the building I was helping with the despatching side where I – we have what's called a big conveyabelt that basically sorts out the packages to where they go, then we sort them into big mental transport containers then load them into the truck. I was put in that role just because I had the forklift license and I was able to manage my time well to make sure I kept up with it in high volumes. But over Christmas then they'd just start giving me people to manage and tell me look, 'here's a few people, teach them what to do', I learnt more about managing people to make sure tasks are fulfilled through that role than I have through what I'm doing now. *Me: Okay so did that kind of prepare you for what you're doing now or do you think it's unrelated?* Tamati: Yeah, it did quite a bit because now it's pretty much similar type of role because the time when I'm really managing different people is when	*(Tamati is represented by the composite character Hehu, see Appendix D)* HEHU: I use the experiences I learnt in a previous role in my current managerial position as those first experiences are similar they are transferrable learnings.

I'm unloading containers and it's sort of a similar process to do that.

3.6.5. Critiques of narrative approach and ethnodrama

I am cognisant that the stories shared are selective and as Jackson (2002) eloquently states, "for every story that sees the light of day, untold others remain in the shadows, censored or suppressed" (p. 11). Further, Jackson argues that between the public and private realms of storytelling that Arendt (1998) discusses, there is a critical gap. Individuals find agency and a sense of voice and belonging through constructing their stories and placing their experiences within a narrative; however, individual perception can reconstruct these events according to stereotypes. Jackson (2002) articulates,

> To reconstitute events in a story is no longer to live those events in passivity, but to […] rework them, both in dialogue with others and within one's own imagination. This narrative imaginary involves an interplay of intersubjective and intrapsychic processes, since every transformation of inner monologue into social discourse - and every countervailing appropriation or subversion of this discourse in individual consciousness - depends as much on private reveres, fantasies, daydreams, and undeclared thoughts, as on public speech. (p. 15)

Criticism of ethnodrama centres around authenticity due to selective editing, such as the problematic nature of 'verbatim theatre' (Paget, 1987). As the dramatic text undergoes revisions, the playwright must remain true to the original, crafted from the interview transcripts. However, they must also enlist creativity to ensure the plot, structure and dialogue of the script are cohesive, as well as representative (O'Connell & Lynch, 2019).

3.7. Summary

This chapter has examined my research identity, methodological choices and analysis for the research. There were three distinct stages, following the Practice Interviews the Round 1 interviews gathered data to refine the research question and Round 2 interviews used the Critical Incidents approach to collect narratives from participants and solidify the research question. During the data-gathering stage, the interviews were transcribed and analysed through Narrative Inquiry approaches, creating an ethnodrama (see Appendix E) and Findings and Discussion in a traditional format.

Chapter 4. Findings & Discussion – Part one: What does it mean to 'become' a manager?

The intention of my study was to learn and explore how practicing managers come into their managerial role; both in the acting of their role and the conceptualisation of it. To do so I asked the following research question: what is the subjective understanding of practicing managers regarding how they have become managers and learnt the craft of management in the workplace?

The question is two-fold, regarding how managers both come into, and learn their role(s) and craft and can be broken into five conceptual questions that influenced the direction of inquiry to ultimately address the research question and rationale:

- How do managers conceptualise 'management' and 'being a manager'?
- What do managers experience as being enjoyable about their managerial role?
- What do managers dislike about their managerial role?
- What learning experiences have contributed to their craft development?
- How have their educational experiences contributed to their managerial craft?

Reflecting the research question the findings are divided into two chapters:

- Chapter 4. Findings & Discussion – Part one: What does it mean to 'become' a manager?

- Chapter 5. Findings & Discussion – Part two: How do practising managers learn the craft of management?

The findings are divided into these two categories with their respective themes and sub-themes (shown in Table 7).

Table 7. Categories of findings and themes

	Category	Theme	Sub-themes
Part 1	Becoming	The knowing-doing	Knowing Doing The gap
		Identity	The middle (temporal nature) Socialisation
Part 2	Enablers of learning	Learning from experience	Making mistakes Failure Trial and error Gaining familiarity Being thrown in the 'deep end' Figuring it out as you go (number 8 wire) Building on previous knowledge
		Learning from others	Role model managers Stories from other managers Observing what to do Observing what not to do Business coach

		Conversations
	Learning through self-education	Reflection Self-learning Self-assessment Self-teaching Reading: business books, autobiographies
	Learning through formal education	Post-graduate study Knowing where to look for answers Working in teams Internal training (when practicing)

This chapter (Chapter 4 – Part one), focuses on how individuals step into not only the role but the identity of 'being a manager', revealing that there are various steps to *becoming* beyond that of merely carrying a title. Part two explores how learning is a salient element to developing managers, with four distinct groupings of how learning in evident in the workplace experience of participants. Following the data collection, transcription and analysis of 17 interviews from 15 participants I uncovered that majority of the experiences that contribute to these managers learning how to manage is based in a workplace context. The findings reveal that there is a sense of becoming, moving towards and crafting a managerial identity through their learning experiences. Further, there are underlining notions of identity, socialisation and sensemaking approaches that emerge.

4.1. Becoming

Table 8. Categorisation of major themes within 'becoming'

Category	Theme	Sub-themes
Becoming	The knowing-doing	Knowing Doing The gap
	Identity	The middle (temporal nature) Socialisation

4.1.1. Knowing–doing gap

4.1.1.1. Knowing

Hulme (2014), as discussed in the literature review, describes 'knowing' as encompassing represented (formal or explicit) and embodied (informal or tacit) knowledge. For management practice, embodied knowledge comprises a significant part of what it is to be a manager and many participants felt as though they undertook dramatic learning encounters to build this knowledge repository which was primarily based in understanding people. Interacting with and managing people in practice was discussed by participants as something learnt on-the-job through experiences and their own intuition; making it contextually-bound, experience-based and embodied knowledge (Gamble & Blackwell, 2001). The duality between these types of knowledge were represented in the data, with all 7 participants who trained at university level observing this reality. De'M, a young manager displayed this notion stating,

> To a certain extent you can learn how to manage [in a formal setting] but I believe at the end of the day it's the individual and how they're brought up and their personality that makes the best manager. I don't think it's the amount of time you've been on the job and how much experience you have, some people, you know in a certain company the youngest person on the team could be the best manager. He may not know the most but he could be the best manager. [De'M]

Here there is an emphasis on how embodied knowledge in knowing how to manage people is salient in managerial practice. Noting that personal traits and values contribute to whether someone can not only manage but be a 'good' manager. Interestingly, he states that experience is not a factor, here he is not discounting experience as earlier in the interview and sustained throughout, De'M stated that experience was key and that through learning-on-the-job he learnt more about his managerial role than he did through formal education (which he excelled in). Rather, he is placing the personal traits, values and ethical perspectives above that of workplace experience when it comes to being a good manager. Additionally, in the final sentence he states a manager may not 'know the most', contextually he is referring to represented, formal knowledge, yet still best effective because of their embodied understanding. Though he places higher value on enacted, implicit expertise, both represented and embodied knowledge offer value and should ideally be used in conjunction, as De'M remarked:

> Some people just don't know anything and they shouldn't be a manager. They might be really good at talking to people but if they don't know anything about the role, I wouldn't expect them to be in a higher role than someone who does know about it. The perfect manager is someone who knows about their role, is an expert in their field, but is also an expert at interacting with people. [De'M]

Thus, both types of knowledge are required for managing and being a 'good manager'. As mentioned, embodied knowledge is not easily codified and can be difficult to

communicate. However, as it is integral to managerial practice it needs to be distilled and integrated into learning scenarios. This is shadowed by an argument De'M presented, supported by 6 additional managers: can managing people, which is embodied knowledge, be learnt through formal means or is learning it simply something one possesses, determined by personal traits and perspectives?

When participants were discussing their practice, the majority centred on how embodied knowledge informs and guides their decisions. For Daniel when he started practicing as a manager he fell back on his personal values and spiritual beliefs more that his university learnings, he reflects,

> [At university] there was nothing about time management about public speaking, for example, or time management, personal habits, so there's a bunch of small things that are actually really important, like when you say something – there are morals and things like that that you learn from going to church and the Bible that are actually super important and we just weren't taught that. Telling the truth, super important [otherwise] you undermine yourself. [Daniel]

Additionally, as he acted using this embodied knowledge he saw positive results which reinforced his learning.

> I don't swear so as a result, the environments I was in the swearing stopped and when it did morale picked up, there was better behaviour, there was less theft. Morals are unbelievably important, this is what I learnt, in terms of the success of the business. If you had poor morals you were going to have problems in all sorts of different areas. So, you had to lead by example with good morals. Everyone has a different set of morals but you'd find, I found that people that didn't have them invariably had problems and ended up getting fired. Or ended up leaving. And little things like that you are never taught but you just pick up along the way. [Daniel]

Daniel, as well as majority of other participants reflect that embodied knowledge was not learnt via formal educational means rather through experience, their childhood and upbringing and personal sets of values and beliefs. Consequently, embodied knowledge is difficult to communicate, but as the participants reveal, distilling it is essential as it constitutes a significant component of managerial practice. Amongst the participants learning from others through observation presented a means in which to acquire such knowledge (as will be discussed in detail below), as managers learnt how to converse, handle delicate 'people' matters and act with integrity. A challenge, as noted by Hulme (2014), is that embodied knowledge will differ between managers in quantity and quality but equally the same could be said regarding represented knowledge. What is salient regarding knowledge is how it is applied, the action that results as consequence; the 'doing'. Though embodied knowledge was discussed frequently, interwoven in answers across all questions, the findings demonstrated that both types of knowledge are required.

4.1.1.2. Doing

Interestingly, a strong theme of 'getting the job done' appeared in the data, with multiple participants using that phrase and most maintaining that the function of management was to achieve an organisational end (economic, key performance indicator, finished project, satisfied customers), thus action was imperative. For Matiu, he deems his ability to get things done as a prominent part of why he was hired,

> How did I become a manager? I was hired as the operations manager, I guess because the person saw a bit of expertise in me about how to make things happen really.[Matiu]

Not having finished high school, undertaken any management degrees or training Matiu does not have a qualification to formally prove his 'knowing'. Rather he states that he is qualified by experience, this aligns with a significate insight from Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) research regarding learning by doing; where implemented knowledge is more likely to be acquired through action. Suggesting that the 'doing' component to Matiu's managerial stance has, in part, contributed to his 'knowing'. Action, was a dominant theme for Matiu and the other participants that were not formally trained. However, even those with tertiary backgrounds emphasised the importance of action and interacting with employees. For four participants they reiterated action and the importance of 'doing' and getting the job done throughout their interview,

> Between [my colleague] and myself we are both responsible for bringing in the work so that keeps the bucket full, therefore the business can tick over but my role is to then operationally make that work happen, so I allocate resources, equipment, time, staff and all of those things I plan around what's going to happen. [Matiu]

As a part of their managerial role, bringing work into the pipeline and consequently the 'doing' of that work.

Many managers highlighted the importance of 'being in the thick of it' and 'getting the job done'. Six participants stated that walking the floor was a critical component of their role, providing support to employees, whilst also being present and offering oversight, despite it (sometimes) being time-consuming. Hannah attempts to walk the floor first thing in the morning, setting the scene for the day:

> And I do try every day wherever possible just to have a wander around just at the beginning of the day to say hello to people, check-in, see that everyone is alright. [Hannah]

In this way, they are not merely managers sitting behind a desk, firing off emails (though that is a component of some managers tasks), they are active managers who are involved in the day-to-day operations of the organisation. Additionally, this act of walking the floor is a means of communication between managers and employees; Anabell sees it as a way to build trust and allow employees to see her as approachable and available:

> I try and, like you know, when I get in in the morning I try and make sure I go around all the rooms, we've got a really large centre so it takes me a while to go around in the morning and brief everybody, see how everyone is doing, so they are seeing my face. I always try to let them understand my door's always open so that I can help them even if it's a personal issue and there's got to be a certain amount of trust there – and it takes a while to build that. [Anabell]

In this example Anabell is acting out her embodied knowledge, as she revealed later in the interview, she believes that management is about people and relationships, considering herself as a 'relational manager', something that she deems as being inherently a part of her values and manner. The data is not sufficient to conclude whether these values were embedded into her embodied knowledge prior to becoming a manager, or as a result of socialisation, especially as the process of doing is also a component of identity formation or as Pratt et al. (2006) state it aids in the 'creation of self'. But this example demonstrates a linking of Anabell's 'knowing' and 'doing', however, this is not always the case.

As Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) assert, one difficultly in transforming knowledge into doing is substituting talking for action. A Mission statement and vision for the organisation are

examples of this barrier, as managers go through a process of developing or refining these elements to merely be displayed on a placard or in an annual report, when the day-to-day operations are distant from these ideals. Rather, the worth, value and competency of managers and the organisation should be based in what is done, how they perform and what gets accomplished. In such a way, they are then fulfilling the essential economic task of an organisation through the managerial function (Drucker, 2007). Action can further be suspended when individuals communicate in complex manners using obtuse language that may be inaccessible to others. Tamati considers clear, precise and intentional communication to be vital to managing well,

> The main thing would be just communication with people around you of what's going on, just clear communication […] when we see [higher] managers looking like they're not working that's when communication is lacking, between – because some of the people in higher management and other management positions, English is not their first language, that communication barrier when that breaks down and they're not communicating properly when other teams or we're not communicating with them we see quite a loss in performance. [Tamati]

For managers to enhance learning and translate knowledge into doing Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) that simple language, concepts, common sense and clear communication should be held as virtues. When uncomplicated, direct language is used it is more likely overcome language barriers and result in action.

4.1.1.3. The gap

Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) argue that the knowing-doing gap exists in part because managers and organisations misconstrue what they should 'know', focusing on

represented, codified and tangible knowledge and negating the underlying philosophies that guide and inform practice. Deborah offers a striking example of the knowing-doing gap, encapsulating the dualistic nature of knowledge: represented and embodied. During the interview she described herself as a 'true manager', finding the phrase unique I inquired for her definition of the term:

> I define that because I've come through management roles whereas in my context, the context of the law firm, like I say, you have the lawyers or the patent attorneys who have historically been practicing their craft, client facing, and often if they were the most – the obvious choice to take on a leadership position, then they become a 'manager' and it's almost like – you know they haven't done any training for management, they've been trained as a patent attorney or as a lawyer, but it is decided that they have the personal characteristics that give them the capability to manage the business whereas my entire career has been as a manager. [Deborah]

Here she points out that not all practicing managers have managerial training, expertise or a history in the function (which is a finding of this research as not all participants are 'pure' managers). Rather, as she explains, because these individuals are deemed the best at their role it is assumed that they will be a good manager in that area. This shows a naivety of the importance of the management function as it rests on a presumption that being a manager is 'not that hard' and that an individual who is an expert in their field should be able to manage others in it, thus discrediting management as a profession. Deborah continues,

> I've always had management expertise so I'm not a lawyer or a patent attorney, I'm a pure manager. So my first qualification *was* a Bachelor of Commerce and I went straight into marketing roles and from there I've sort of branched out into my gener*al management roles. Then did a MBA, then Ph*D, so management qualifications as well. [Deborah]

In stating her history in management, a unique finding was how Deborah justifyed her claim to being a 'true' and 'pure' manager. Though this might read as prideful through black and white text, the opposite is true. Deborah possessed an innate humility and complete lack of ego which was communicated (through non-verbal and verbal cues) throughout the interview, the notion of which I will revisit later in the findings. Continuing on, Deborah was not overtly critical of how individuals are promoted without training, rather stating plainly that it is a phenomenon that occurs within organisations,

> And I suspect that happens a lot of the time [individuals being promoted without managerial training], you know, if it's an engineering company and you're the best engineer then you get promoted, often you get promoted to the top but you haven't got that really solid grounding in management. You don't necessarily know what you don't know. [Deborah]

The grounding in management, she mentions refers to managerial experience, as well as post-graduate management qualifications was she deemed as beneficial to her craft. The difficulty for individuals promoted into management, as Deborah describes, is that their 'knowing' be it represented or embodied knowledge may not be specific to management. Thus, when they attempt the 'doing' or action of management practice there may be a gap between their expertise and their intended actions. These individuals (as evidenced with the participants that fell into management roles in a similar way) will undergo a process of becoming, including (a new) identity formation, socalisation, facilitated through new managerial-specific learning experiences. Perhaps this explains Robert's experiences in managing, having no previous managerial experience and a trade qualification, he explains that the 'doing' of the job taught him the 'knowing' components needed, however, the process was not without pain,

> [My first managerial position] was probably the job that I learned how to manage people and that was my trial by fire. Wanting to step up and becoming an assistant manager, I suppose it was a baptism by fire at the time because I was pretty green and learning how to manage people was again, on the job, learning what makes people tick, how they react to how I say things, the delivery of how I say things so certainly that was my educational part of it. [Robert]

In this regard, part of doing is experience, as will be discussed in detail below.

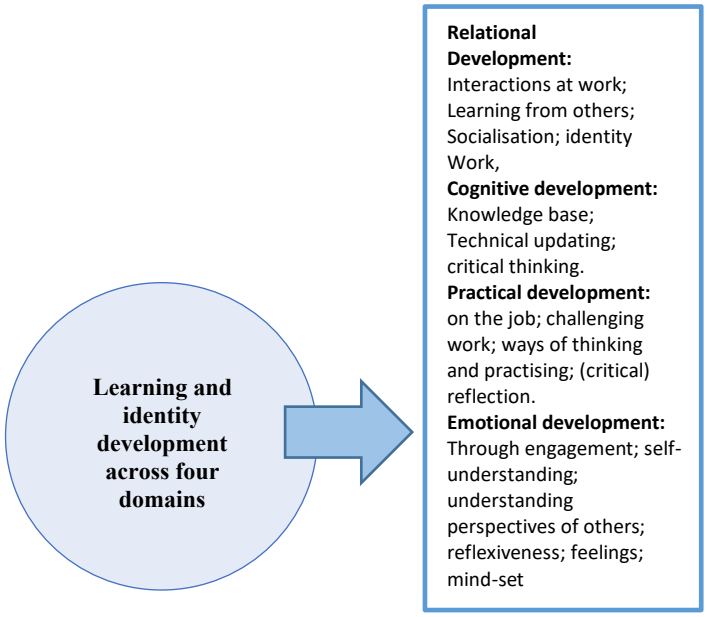
4.1.1.4. Theories-in-use and theories-of-action

To extrapolate the knowing–doing gap further, the work of (Schön, 2016) is beneficial. Schön (2016) begins with the premise that capable practitioners have more knowledge than they can articulate, rather this is reflected as a knowing-in-practice which is a tacit, embodied phenomenon. This notion is carried into the concept of theories-in-use where managers use both formal and informal knowledge to design their action. Thus, extending beyond represented knowledge and encapsulating the intuitive 'know-how' of embodied knowledge. As a part of the analysis I had to examine how theories-in-use were displayed through participant's narratives, especially because participants utilise espoused theory in describing their managerial actions. Of the participations 13 saw their management as both art and science. Science, in that, structures, procedures and policies needed to be designed, implemented and followed to ensure a management system governed the organisation and work practices. Art, as these managers had to motivate, guide, and develop individuals to use the system, as well as, feel valued, seen and appreciated in their jobs and roles.

4.2. Identity

Participants engaging in identity-work came through as a salient finding in the data. The model presented by Brown and Bimrose (2018) in the literature review provides one way of conceptualising this further. Of the three representations of influences on learning and development in the workplace I will focus on the four domains they outline, summarised in the Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Section of Brown and Bimrose's (2018) model – Learning and identity development across four domains



Adapted from Brown and Bimrose (2018, p. 251)

Each of the four areas of identity-work tie into the enablers of learning (which will be further discussed in Chapter 5: Findings & Discussion – Part two: How do practising

managers learn the craft of management?). Relational development links to the enabler 'learning from others' and socialisation at work. Cognitive development is seen in 'learning from experience', as well as, 'learning from formal education' as individuals undertake mastery of an appropriate knowledge base and the craft of managerial expertise. Practical development is also encompassed within the 'learning from experience' finding as this development route relates to on-the-job learning and overcoming work-related challenges. Lastly, emotional development is seen in 'learning through self-education', as participants took an active role in their upskilling and engagement. Brown and Bimrose (2018) assert that learning may occur to varying degrees in all or one of these areas, likewise, the findings revealed that majority participants put an emphasis on cognitive and practical development, through their 'learning from experience' narratives, as well as, the relational domain, more than their emotional development.

One of the questions I asked participants was *how did you become a manager?* The majority of participants gave role-related answers stating they feel into the position or detailing the journey they undertook to get to their current role. However, during my interview with Deborah and as I unpacked the data during the analysis, I realised that question was significant, subsequently influencing how the research question evolved and the articulation of this chapter.

> *Me: How did you become a manager?*
>
> Deborah: Right, so I – when you say a manager, do you mean a manager of people or – like, what's your definition of a manager?

> *Me: That's a good question, when I say 'a manager', I guess in this context it means the role in which you have, so then it falls back onto how that role is defined within the business you're in.*

This intercourse was impactful for two reasons: (1) as mentioned later, it is an overt example of how managers conceptualise management, making a distinction between managing people and other types of management, and (2) the word 'become' was originally used to infer how one entered or gained their role, however, the notion of *becoming* a manager in terms of identity formation and learning the craft, arose. This sense of becoming was evident in the narratives participants shared regarding their managerial role and learning experiences. The process of which is temporal in nature with other phenomena, or 'steps', contributing towards *becoming.*

4.2.1. The temporal nature of becoming

When new entrants begin managing they undergo a process of 'becoming' as they get socialised into the organisation and the occupation of a manager (Anteby et al., 2016). However, the findings suggest that this notion of becoming extends beyond initial socialisation when starting a role, transcending into further learning experiences and being a continuous process. A temporal dynamic is salient as earlier, newer and novel experiences mark a catalyst for managers learning and practicing their craft. This was displayed as older managers reflected on the formative moments in their 'early days' whether specific to management or other job experience. Such as apprenticeship training, their first managerial position or an influential individual would acted as a role model. All older managers provided a history of workplace experience when I asked the question

how did you become a manager? Drawing on narratives that contributed to their current roles. Harrison detailed his history, seeing each workplace experience as beneficial and contributing to his 'QBE - qualification by experience', which I have condensed down for readability as this section was around 3.5 minutes long:

> Well I am a superannuitant, as of last month so my current role is a little bit different, in that, the last couple of years it's been more part-time, and I've had all sorts of roles over a number of years […] my first major managerial role was [in a] church in 1993, [then] we came back to Masterton, we had staff and quite a reasonable sized organisation so that was really my first foray into being a manager as such, prior to that in my policing – because I policed up until 1991 and most of that was having to be a self-manager because my roles were a bit independent. […] I'm a QBE, I'm Qualification by Experience I don't have pieces of paper that say that I've done this course or that course, particularly around the whole managerial side of things, and I'm not sure whether this fits in, but basically my managerial training came as a result of my policing, where initially you are managed – obviously in your day-to-day roles and then so basically that's where I learnt how to manage incidents, how to manage situation, how to do a whole bunch of stuff and that was by experience again. [Harrison]

Harrison, along with other older managers, recalled past events, jobs and situations that he deemed contributed to where he currently is. As Jarvis (1989) assert, the process of becoming is temporal and key moments throughout one's life build into their identity narrative. For Harrison, this is salient as his previous experience has created a legitimacy in his managerial practice, as opposed to formal qualifications. Though older managers recalled the past they still reflected on present and recent realities of managing, which demonstrates the temporal nature of becoming and how it is still being influenced. Younger managers, comparatively, have a great deal more to learn than older managers, based on their experience and time in role. With the youngest of all managers, De'M and Tamati who are in their late 20s and Luci in her 30s, reflecting primarily on their current

managerial role, with only Tamati and Luci having one other previous management position.

A peculiar dynamic exists within becoming as it is temporal in nature yet individuals are constantly 'in the middle' of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari (1988) suggest that there are many plateaus within becoming and individuals are "always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end" (p. 21). So though it's temporal nature makes becoming lively and fluid, identity is also a fixed stated.

> *Me: Can you think of a time in your managerial role where you felt like you were learning how to manage?*
>
> Hannah: [laughs] all the time!

Hannah's identity is currently fixed in the present but will be influenced through future learning experiences.

4.2.2. Identity formation and management

When I first developed the research question, in came at the notion of management from a broad, organisational perspective, neglecting the occupational and professional aspects. However, the participants revealed these dimensions in discussing their managerial craft. Deborah and Hannah both identified as being managers by profession.

When recalling an experience when they had learnt how they had learnt to manage younger managers discussed recent experiences in their managerial role, whereas older

managers often resorted to an event occurring in the past, at a previous organisation, in a previous role, sometimes occurring when they were not a manager. Thus, the findings suggest that becoming is contributes to development and is temporal. Jarvis (1989) states that as individuals age a disjuncture between their solidified experiences and new learning opportunities emerges. As people age they develop their patterns of meaning and construct a sense of self that aids them through their lives. Their responses to learning may be explained through three types: the harmony seeker, the learner, the doer (Jarvis, 1989). If they operate through the type of the harmony seeker, the world in which they once knew has passed away and of the changing world around them,

> They express their amazement and concern: What is this world coming to these days? How do they respond to this potential learning experience? Do they just keep on learning, developing a mind and a self, in a never-ending quest to achieve harmony with a world that is constantly changing, or do they recognize that is a never-ending quest and that they have to find a harmony in the world that they know? (Jarvis, 1989, p. 168)

Learning, given it being a life-long process, may still transpire, but selectively, in some instances, unconstructive learning may occur (presumption, nonconsideration, rejection); rejecting potential learning experiences, in order to maintain control of their pre-established sense of self and system of being. A learner, may approach opportunities as though there are still things to be learned.

4.2.3. Socialisation

Managers learn how to operate within the political, technical and relational facets of their role, through learning experiences that are guiding lessons, teaching the rudiments of

their craft. In this regard, aside from the influence of others an element of self-awareness and intuition is needed to learn from their experiences. Politically, managers learn who they can trust and who are assets to both the organisation and the managers themselves. Participants stressed the importance of surrounding themselves with 'good people' and how retaining these 'good people' who work for, alongside or under them was critical – the team; culture and performance was a common reoccurrence. Five owner-managers stated that to retain these critical people they must be paid well. By having a financial incentive, supported through the use of performance reviews, the reward is linked to performance creating an effort-performance tie (Vroom, 1964). In such a way, these managers used rewards to preserve the social capital within their team; benefitting the organisation and themselves. If these key people are retained managers profit from their abilities. The phrase 'team', 'my team', 'our team', 'the team' was used in all interviews and is a significant component of organisational dynamics (Katzenbach & Smith, 2015). Managers displayed a sense of ownership and responsibility for their team and the success of the team. Within this 'team' there was a dominant iteration that managers needed to ensure they had the 'right' people around them, on the job and working for them. Eight participants commented of the importance of choosing and selecting the right people. Deborah, for example, stated it was one of four key responsibilities in her managing director role:

> One [responsibility] is around our people, ensuring we attract, retain and engage the best people – which is really important in our business because we're a people business we don't have any machinery or equipment, so it's ensuring that is all working well and that we have people with the right skills, doing the right work, at the right time. [Deborah]

A method in which these individuals can be further retain is company culture. Managers also stated that a healthy company culture and 'team' was important to a harmonious, functional, effective work environment, seeing it as a part of their role to ensure the culture stayed that way. The individuals in your team contribute to the workplace culture. Culture is not something that is separate and external, rather as Cunliffe (2014) explains, it is socially constructed, influencing the identity-work of both managers and employees, sustained through conversations and meaningful interactions. Language, dialogue and relationships between a fundamental key to managing. Based on broad social constructivist philosophy, a critical management studies perspective states that reality is not independent from ourselves, our social and organisational spheres are molded and shaped through conversations and interactions between people.

Chapter 5. Findings & Discussion – Part two: How do practising managers learn the craft of management?

5.1. Enablers of learning

Enablers are the key learning moments and methods as revealed by the findings, as to how these managers have learnt their craft, which also facilitates becoming. These enablers can be placed into four categories: learning from experience, learning from others, learning through reflection and learning through education (see Table 9 below).

Table 9. The enablers of learning as identified in the data

Enablers of learning	Learning from experience	Making mistakes
		Failure
		Trial and error
		Gaining familiarity
		Being thrown in the 'deep end'
		Figuring it out as you go (number 8 wire)
		Building on previous knowledge
	Learning from others	Role model managers
		Stories from other managers
		Observing what to do
		Observing what not to do
		Business coach
		Conversations

	Learning through self-education	Reflection Self-learning Self-assessment Self-teaching Reading: business books, autobiographies
	Learning through formal education	Post-graduate study Knowing where to look for answers Working in teams Internal training (when practising)

The model developed by Woodall and Winstanley (1998), as discussed in the literature review, which divides informal learning into three categories: learning from others, learning from tasks, learning with others; did not suffice for my data. Mainly as I assessed both formal and informal learning experiences; thus, I have the added dynamic of learning through education. There are similar notions between Woodall and Winstanley's three groupings and my data; however, I add the additional category of 'learning through self-reflection'; a comparison is outlined in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Comparison of Woodall and Winstanley's (1998) model for informal learning to the informal learning data from my research

Woodall and Winstanley's (1998) model	Present study
Learning from others: • Coaching • Mentoring • Observing role models	Learning from others: • Role model managers • Stories from other managers • Observing what to do

	• Observing what not to do • Business coach • Conversations
Learning from tasks: • Special projects • Job rotation opportunities • Secondments • Other role-enhancing activities	Learning from experience: • Making mistakes • Failure • Trial and error • Gaining familiarity • Being thrown in the 'deep end' • Figuring it out as you go (number 8 wire) • Building on previous knowledge
Learning with others: • Networking • Working on task forces • Working in groups	Learning through reflection: • Reflection • Self-learning • Self-assessment • Self-teaching • Reading: business books, autobiographies

Interestingly, the data centred around learning from experiences, rather than learning from specific tasks. Though managerial tasks were encapsulated in these experiences, participants focused more on how the moments made them feel, think and act, therefore producing knowledge as to whether they should or should not act in a similar manner again. Further, as participants discussed learning from their experiences, these stories were intertwined with notions of identity-work and development. In such a way, these stories became symbolic and encompassed in what Jarvis (1989) refers to as the 'never-ending quest' of becoming (p.169). Additionally, Woodall and Winstanley's (1998)

category of ‘learning with others’ was not salient in the present study, rather, the notions of group work and collaboration were included in the stories of the ‘learning from experience’ or ‘learning through formal education’ categories, contributing to a minor proportion of the data. Instead, ‘learning through reflection’ took precedence with 13 participants discussing the importance of reflection and self-development to their managerial craft. Interestingly, though discussion of self-development occurred across all participants, those that had formal education would place emphasis on this, sometimes repeating the notion multiple times, as being a salient component of their managerial learning.

5.1.1. Learning from experience

Learning from experience is an important necessity in everyday life. Experience informs individuals about themselves and how they interact with their reality. Thus, not only having experience but possessing the ability to learn from it is fundamental. Learning from experience is a broad category, the various subthemes displayed in Table 11 will be further refined to look at three prominent areas.

Table 11. Categorisation of major themes within ‘learning from experience’

Encompassing category	Sub-themes
Messing up and managing ‘wrong’	Making mistakes Failure Trial and error

Baptism by fire	Being thrown in the 'deep end' Gaining familiarity
Ingenuity	Figuring it out as you go (number 8 wire) Building on previous knowledge

5.1.1.1. Messing up and managing 'wrong'

Making mistakes, trial and error and failure came through as predominant themes when discussing how managers have learnt. Managers reframed these 'failures' as learning experiences, taking responsibility for their poor choices and turning what was unfavourable into something to gain from. By reflecting on their mistakes, they were able to learn how to or not to manage a specific situation. Darren shared the story of how his first business went under,

> Well, that company went broke after the sharemarket crash, but it wasn't the sharemarket crash that helped sink us, it didn't actually sink us – my inability to manage a business as big as that probably was the problem. So, I didn't enjoy attending the creditors' meeting. I didn't enjoy everybody ripping into me and going, 'I was a rouge and a crook' so that was a very unenjoyable time. […] So that's what happened, so I probably had six months in the middle where I actually did nothing and licked my wounds and felt sorry for myself and we went again. [Darren]

His reflects that the most important takeaway was that he was not a good manager, in fact, Darren preferred to identify himself as an entrepreneur, rather than a manager. Though this failure occurred in his managerial career, Darren sought the resolve to get up and find a new opportunity, not letting the learning experience be for nothing.

When discussion learning from mistakes, a notion of humility arose, that though failures happen one's response to that scenario is of critical importance. Anabell stated it plainly,

> [In managing] you need to own your successes as well as your failures, sometimes failure is your greatest learning opportunity. But at the end of the day if you've mucked up or you've made a mistake, you've got to own it. And sometimes that's fessing up to the owners and sometimes it's fessing up to your staff and saying, 'yup I blew it here' and yeah, I think like I said they need to see a strong leader, but it doesn't mean you're infallible I think it's really important to step up and to play and to be honest with them if you've made a mistake, especially if you've made a mistake as far as a staff member goes, you've got to be big enough to go back and say that to them. [Anabell]

Here, Anabell states that fessing up and owning your failures demonstrates strong leadership, an integral part of what she deems management to be. To do so, requires self-reflection and humility by the manager. Firstly, in acknowledging the situation and what has occurred and one's role in it and secondly approaching the parties involved and taking responsibility for the circumstances and actions. In doing so a manager would be demonstrating to employees how to deal with failure and be accountable.

5.1.1.2. Ingenuity

Elements of cultural 'kiwi' ingenuity emerged as participants discussed ad hoc management, working it out as they went along coupled by 'number 8 wire' approaches.

> I've never done a management course, never done any official training […] It's something you find is either commonsense and natural and you can determine commonsense, as not necessarily a 'commonsense' because what I determine as commonsense others will think, 'well actually, no no that's totally different, I don't think that's common that a really rare type of sense', but you know, you perceive it differently. But I guess my upbringing of hands-on, number eight

> wire sort of person that I am, if it needs doing you've got to find a way to make it work–saying no is not an option. [Matiu]

Here, Matiu is talking about an intuitive understanding and knowing by which he approaches his work.

The learning process is constantly occurring, however in varying amounts and as it is an internal process (as our definition of learning states), however there will be situations and periods of time where this may occur to varying degrees. A realistic example is at the point in an individuals' working career they are undertaking of a radical role/job change, within the same company or different. In such a situation it would be highly likely that a depth of managerial learning is occurring. Stewart (1984) describes that there is a risk of one growing stagnant in their current position, a radical role change internally claims to spur on an intense period of learning and changing as the individual adapts and rises to the challenges and demands of the new role. Linking to the argument offered by Dragoni et al. (2009) in that challenging job assignments can shift managers into an unfamiliar, uncomfortable zone that they may lack in competencies for. However, the learning process that occurs will be a rich and rewarding experience.

Learning from others was a prominent method of learning that 13 participants revealed in their stories. Mainly through observation and role models, with mentorship and coaching also mentioned. As discussed above learning from others can contribute to accumulating embodied and personal knowledge (Hulme, 2014).

Table 10. Categorisation of major themes within 'learning from others'

Encompassing category	Sub-themes
Observation	Observing what to do
	Observing what not to do
Intentional input	Role model managers
	Stories from other managers
	Business coach
	Conversations

However, when asked to reflect on a time where these managers felt as though they were *learning how to manage*, participants reflected on a time in their practice where they were either faced with something new, observing a 'good' manager at work or come into conflict with someone. However, they did not reflect on conferences, lectures or training courses they had been to.

5.1.2. Learning from others

5.1.2.1. Observation

Being difficult to quantify is a challenge of embodied knowledge, as various managers will have differing levels of such knowledge (Hulme, 2014). A further distinction in the field of knowledge management refers to this as 'personal' knowledge which is accumulated through context-dependent, first-hand experiences or observations. Interestingly, this knowledge can be resistant to change when challenged by explicit knowledge (Hulme, 2014). Perhaps this is why majority of the participants in sum stated

that ‘experience is the best teacher’, favouring their observational and on-the-job experiences to the formal learning experiences they had, Luci reflects:

> Me: Did your educational experience prepare you for being a manager?
>
> Luci: Maybe a little bit but on the whole I would say not–the little bit would come from when you’re working on group assignments and trying to manage the team that you’re working with. But in terms of… like I can’t really remember what theory I did at university around management cause I did a Bachelor of Management Study actually, at Waikato. And my… [pause] oh what do you call them? – Majored in marketing and communication. So I think how I learnt, I think the biggest thing I learnt to become a manager was actually my previous managers. Yeah, I think that was probably the biggest influence on my learning for managing people.

Luci is a manager in her 30s stating that though she specifically studied a management degree she learnt how to become a manager through watching others. Mirroring the model from Woodall and Winstanley (1998) which emphasises the importance of learning from others. A further eight participants mentioned notion of observations and roles models as being a salient component to learning.

5.1.2.2. Intentional input and role models

When participants were asked for an example from their managerial experience where they felt like they were learning how to manage, 12 reflected on experiences that they were personally a part of in their capacity as a manager and eight reflected on experiences when they had observed someone else whose actions influenced how they managed going forward. Lawrence discussed a situation where he observed an auditor talking to managers in a room and one particular individual did not see the relevance of the meeting and was re-stating the same questions over and over again. In this scenario

Lawrence said that if he was the in the place of the auditor running the meeting he would not have known how to 'shut up' the disruptive individual. Observing others manage, whether they were managers themselves or managing a particular situation has surfaced as a reoccurring theme. Lawrence reveals an experience he had were he witnessed an auditor, in a training room deal with a particularly difficult manager who was there to receive training, he reflects:

> [I noticed how he responded] he said, 'John, all day you've asked me questions and I've answered them, you don't seem to be taking my word for any of it and you obviously don't want to be here, so I'm gonna give you a choice[…]
>
> And that taught me a couple of things: one you have to stand by your principles, two the minority shouldn't rule the majority in a training environment, or even a company environment, if the person in the room is not participating they need to be called out on it. And it's not confrontation – it's just being assertive, but the way he did that was really quite good and *I've done it since and it works.* [Lawrence]

Lawrence claimed that this was a situation where he learnt how to manage, through watching, listening and observing the actions of another individual and how he dealt with this (potentially) difficult situation. Luci spoke of how observing other managers has had a significant influence on how she has learnt to manage, she reflects:

> Yes, I think I quite often, probably subconsciously – [I] am learning… and it's just kind of picking things up from, for example, the way that my manager who's the business director for our office, I take notice of the way she communicates when she's talking to the team – to everyone, when she's conveying important messages for example. So I do take note of the way that she's saying things, how she's wording things and having had different managers – I've had very different managers as well so seeing the differences between people, in terms of how they communicate as a manager is quite interesting, so I do take that on board as well. [Luci]

In this excerpt Luci focuses mainly on how she observed other managers talk, converse and convey themselves with those they are managing. She repeats that she notices how things are worded and constructed. Revealing that Luci identifies communication as being important and specifically – intentional, well-worded communication that is clearly articulated to those that need the information. What she does not reveal is whether she employs a 'filtering' process of some kind to determine which examples to 'take on board' and which to discard.

5.1.3. Learning through reflection

Hannah shares a situation where she encountered conflict amongst the nursing team she manages. Importantly, through reflection she came to an understanding of why the nurses acted in an unexpected manner and adjusted her management style accordingly.

> Hannah: So I think it's the fact that they're part of the union and so they expect that they get to have a collective approach to communication. And I didn't have a collective approach, I had an individual approach. So that was a very valuable lesson for me.
>
> Me: Sounds like it, have you had a more collective approach with the nurses since?
>
> Hannah: I have, I have indeed. It really cleared the air and the relationship between the full clinical team [has been] much better since then.

According to Brockett and Hiemstra (2019) self-directed learning should be a way of life for most adults, this is what fosters active learners. Participants, regardless of educational training discussed the importance of reflection and self-teaching, though those with

formal qualifications emphasised it more. Lawrence believes that self-learning places him years in front of others,

> Self-awareness, self-education… [is important]. There's a lot of managers out there that when you tell them something really simple that they should know, they think it's the greatest thing since sliced bread. Meanwhile, you're thinking, 'how don't you know this?'…then you realise that 10 years ago before you read the book – you didn't know either. [Lawrence]

There is an interweaving between self-awareness, self-education and reflection and how they contribute to a managers role development.

5.1.4. Learning through formal education

When I asked participants did your educational experience prepare you for being a manager? 12 replied with an emphasis of emotion, some laughed, some scoffed, some rolled their eyes, some made a wise crack at their educational institutions almost all – 11 said, 'no', that in terms of being a manager they felt ill prepared based on their educational background, two participants said, 'yes and no' recognising that there were foundational experiences that did contribute towards their later managerial roles. With only two participants saying 'yes' but caveated their answer with how their education was complimentary to their workplace experience. A few participants had blunt responses, take Lawrence for example:

> Me: Did your educational experience prepare you for being a manager?
>
> Lawrence: No.
>
> Me: Care to elaborate at all?

> Lawrence: My educational experience is, I don't know what your equivalent would be – I stopped at A levels [in the UK]

He went on to share his humorous educational experience:

> Lawrence: So I left school in '87, I did an A Level in Business studies, I went to three classes and then got a job – so I never went back. Two years later they said, 'your booked in for your exam', so I turned up, did it and passed.
>
> [both laugh]
>
> *Me: That's really funny.*
>
> Lawrence: Not a very high pass but it was a pass. And that's it really. I would say my practical experience as a trainer taught me more to be a manager because it's about reading people.

Interestingly, the findings reflected this distinction. With participants using language such as 'education', 'university', and 'high school' when discussing formal, institutionalised learnings.

I intentionally choose participants that had varied educational experiences and different degrees. What struck me is that though in New Zealand management is recognised as being fundamental to workplace productivity (P. Nolan et al., 2016) and the role of 'managers' is built into the bureaucratic structure of most organisations, based on my findings, there is a lack of intentionality around developing this craft. Most managers I interviewed were left to figure it out on their own, one participant stating it was a 'baptism of fire' and only Tamaki mentioned how he benefitted from on-the-job training provided by his organisation. Others, did not mention it, even if they had on-the-job training they did not raise this as being fundamental to their learning.

It is of the opinion of the participants that there are elements of management that are learnt through experience, in the workplace. That sometimes books and education fall short.

5.1.4.1. Internal and external influences – Learning is contextual

Initially, when conceptualising how managers learnt their craft I thought this would rest on an individual-subjective level. While this is true (as evidence in the findings above) a finding that struck me – in that I did not anticipate it, though in hindsight it makes logical sense, is that part of developing your own craft as a manager is selecting 'good people' to be around you. This interrelationship is explained through Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, stating that individuals are influenced by the key spheres that they are situated within, as development is contextually bound (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). All managers mentioned the team that they manage, with majority of managers emphasising the importance of 'good people'. Luci drew on a quote she had heard and how that interplayed with her own managerial experience,

> I can't remember who said it but you've probably heard it before, a good manager surrounds themselves with people brighter than them. And I probably haven't quite got the meaning right. And I think part of that – surrounding yourself with people brighter than you, they should be able to get the job done and you're just there to help and support. [Luci]

Thus, in the workplace environment, employees managed, individuals along the organisations' chain of command and the mentors' managers have around them *influence* their craft development and learning. Managerial learning is influenced by the context

where it is situated. Amongst other influences, the nature and culture of an organisation can influence how much learning occurs.

5.1.4.2. Covert advantages of education

Though participants stated that their undergraduate experiences did not prepare them for being a manager there may be skills and knowledge they acquired during their education that they have overlooked or taken-for-granted. A report by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (2016a) reveals that individuals with a Bachelor's degree or higher, regardless of field, have higher literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills than those without such qualifications. Though gathering such information about my participants was beyond the scope of the study that is not to say that through their formal educational experiences they have acquired covert and hidden knowledge they do not recognise but benefits their practice in the workplace. Despite some managers were forthright about their educational experiences 'not preparing them', education has merit. Most deem that majority of the content they learnt was mis-aligned to their future managerial roles, whether they only went to high school or a tertiary institution.

5.1.4.3. Formal education as complimentary to workplace learnings

When discussing learning, as in the literature review and Chapter 4, a distinction between formal and informal is often made; sometimes in a polarising manner. Most of the arguments presented have separated these two categories, however, an interesting finding

was made that signifies the importance of both modes of learning. As previously mentioned two participants stated that their educational experience was beneficial in them becoming a manager, both of these participants stated this in regards to their post-graduate (not undergraduate) training and saw it as complimentary to workplace learnings. Hannah explains,

> I think that when I did my undergraduate degree at Waikato, straight at of school I don't think that prepared me at all, I was young, didn't really know what I wanted to do. But then when I had been working for a few years and I went back to university and did some post-graduate study, I was a little bit older and wiser and had working experience in the real world under my belt, I think that I approached my study at university quite differently. [Hannah]

Interestingly, Hannah's workplace experience was required to develop her management craft.

> Because I had a context in which to apply it, whereas when I was an undergraduate working at a supermarket so there really was no context. Whereas when I did my post-graduate stuff I was able to go and actually apply it in my work environment. So it really helped then […] It's just theory otherwise, you've learnt all these wonderful concepts and it sounds great and you think, 'yes no problem I'll be able to do that' and then you start working with people and you realise, people are unpredictable and sometimes incredibly frustrating, so go back to the drawing board. [Hannah]

An interesting finding given that of the only two participants to study beyond a Bachelors, both stated the complimentary nature of their educational experiences.

5.1.4.4. Learning as a lifelong practice

Despite older managers reflecting on formative experiences to describe when they learnt how to manage, when discussing management practice the notion of lifelong learning was evident. Older managers reflected on their attempts with employees to have them embrace technological and cultural changes, struggling to reconcile why they continuously resist it, when they, as managers, had embraced the change.

As though one may acquire and learn elements of being a manager given the nature of reality and experience there will always be more to discover and develop, thus linking to lifelong learning (Jarvis, 2010).

The Enablers are the overt methods of learning revealed in the data, easily identifiable in the stories. However, there are also internal cognitive dispositions that either inhibit or heed learning. Self-efficacy–proposed by Bandura (1977), is a specific self-concept theory. Individuals form perceptions about their competency and ability to perform the task. These opinions are formed by past experience, perceived difficulty and the attitudes of others, consequently, influencing behaviour and learning. Though the enablers reveal the overt learning experiences, there are internal processes of individuals influence how they learn.

5.2. Conceptualisation of management craft

The themes of what management is, according to participants, fit into two broad categories, distinctly identified in the data: managing work and managing people. Both groups have social, relational and political implications regarding practice.

Stated plainly, as they are above, these themes seem bland. What makes these findings fascinating is how they intertwine with the notions of developing a managerial identity and becoming.

Managing work was discussed as though it was the foundation of managerial practice, having structures, process and systems in place not only allowed managers to be effective in their role but aided, in part, to how they managed people, for example, performance reviews used as a method of objectively talking to employees about their poor performance. However, the dominant managerial narrative was managing people and the complexities therein. The skills and knowledge required to understand and manage others was a significant learning journey for all of the managers, when responding to whether their education prepared them for management most responded in the negative with 6 citing being ill-equipped to deal with people as their reasoning. The category 'managing work' was laced with themes akin to the scientific perspective of management. Strategic management, workplace structure, understanding business dynamics, controlling policy and procedures, aligning processes, health and safety, legal issues and crisis management, were dominant themes. However, as mentioned participants focused primarily on managing people, though acknowledge how managing work is significant:

> If you're a manager your managing things, managing budgets, managing meetings you're not actually inspiring or leading anybody, you're just managing what's already there. And to me – that's only one part of being a manager. [Lawrence]

As evidenced in the above statement, managing work, though critical, must be understood in context.

The term and associated theme, 'managing people' was prevalent in the data. All participants told stories that involved conflict with others, these narratives were shared when reflecting on incidents of learning or when discussing elements of management, they did not like. Resolving conflict, interacting in difficult and ambiguous situations and making 'hard decisions' in relation to subordinates, was extensive in the data. Some managers noted that "they just don't teach you that", referring to essential 'soft-skills' for people management, that formal education and training negated. These insights have implications for formal education as well as how management is conceptualised, as Warhurst (2011) expresses, "in defining management more emphasis must be placed on the relational facets of the practice and, as discussed, management can best by understood as a way of being, that is, of having a particular identity" (p. 286).

Many participants highlighted that management is not something anyone can just do, though they may be able to learn the tasks of 'managing work', managing people requires a certain skillset and personal characteristics in order to be effective. Thus, management is not solely based in scientific knowledge, if we understand science to be knowledge discovered systematically through research (Mintzberg, 2009) and therefore cannot be taught outside of practice (Taylor, 2012). This explains why participants claimed their

educational training lacked relevant managerial knowledge and that only once within a workplace context did two participants who went back to post-graduate study find their education complementary to workplace learnings. How can educational institutions then best prepare future managers for the workplace, and how can the workplace grow and develop managers through formal training?

Seven participants related both managing well and understanding management, as being linked to empowering employees,

> Achieving…I suppose trying to get the best out of your staff anyway but that would come down to leading a empowering your staff to, get a result at the end, good end result, yeah, produce an end result. So it would be leading and empowering people to produce an end result. [Robert]

Essentially here Robert is saying that the practice of management is the same, regardless of the business/industry you may be in. The context changes but the essence of what management is, does not. Cunliffe (2014) stated it in this manner, "managing is a relational, reflexive and ethical activity. It is not just something one *does,* but is more crucially *who one is* and *how we relate to others*" (p. xvii). Similarly, Warhurst (2011) found that many participants defined managing people as being a characteristic of management. Some stated they were not managers because they had no line of responsibility for people.

Further, managing people is fraught with difficulty. It is not a straightforward endeavour, rather one that is ambiguous, messy and challenging. One participant stated that it caused him a lot of pain. Understanding that managing people requires a certain skillset and that

it can be painful at times may explain why some managers neglect this component. As Yash observed,

> It's a trap that too many [managers] fall into and that's where we focus on the engineering not on the poetry, not on the person – it's the human-being versus the human-doing. [Yash]

There is a risk that managers fall into the science (or engineering) of management and forget that part of their managerial responsibilities is managing people. Not in a dictatorial, authoritarian manner but in a way that is sensitive and responsive to individuals professional (and sometimes personal) needs.

Communication emerged as a dominant theme within understanding what is management. Three of the younger participants continuously reiterated, "communication is key" going into detail regarding the kinds of communication that is important a theme emerged – intentional, specific communication was needed, that which focused on the right place, at the right time, to the right person with the right information and by the right person. Malik (2010) comments on the value of communication in a similar way stating that a misconception of management is that individuals deem it as being about 'managing people' and in order to do so, communication is needed. Conceptualising management in this manner leads to the risk that psychological notions become focus. Though communication occurs between people it is not the psychological implications that should be focused on, rather, the more significant challenge is ensuring communication which is timely, accurate and focused. Malik continues, stating that this

kind of communication is therefore not understood from a psychological lens, rather, through robust and system-driven management.

As Maloney and Stanford (2011) assert people management is not as 'easy' or straightforward as some assume it to be. Furthermore, it requires active intention by managers to retain good employees who are an asset to the business. Five participants discussed this, stating that as a part of people management the key employees you identify as invaluable need to be retained within the business, money may aid in this but cannot be used on its own.

5.2.1. Summary of findings chapter

Although arguments may deliberate as to the content that universities should or should not be teaching regarding management the findings are clear: the subjective experiences of managers who attended university state that they felt as though their educational experiences did not prepare them for their managerial roles. For managers who attended high school, the finding is the same. Though some participants reflected on aspects that were foundational such as working in teams and learning where to find information, only those with post-graduate qualifications stated that formal education have benefitted their practice. All participants stated that their workplace experience was fundamental to them learning how to manage. Even those who had tertiary backgrounds stated that on-the-job, informal learning experiences that were critical to their managerial development.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1. Review of findings and discussion

This study sought to reveal the subjective understandings of how managers learn the craft of management and the identity-work that ensues. There are salient themes that emerged regarding *becoming* a manager and the formal and informal learning process managers undertake. In this final section I focus summarising the key findings of my research, the macro-implications will be examined, specifically regarding managerial education, training and practice, as well as, the theoretical contribution to scholarship by extending the model of informal learning developed by Woodall and Winstanley (1998). Lastly, suggestions for extending this research topic, as well as the limitations of my study will be considered.

The findings were divided into two sections with their associated themes. For the theme of becoming, the knowing-doing gap and identity were prominent. Whereas, the enablers of learning explored four categorisations: learning from experience, learning from others, learning through self-education and learning through formal education. Lastly, the conceptualisation of management as a craft had two broad divisions: managing work and managing people.

Though *becoming* encapsulates more than merely role acquisition, how managers came to their positions is also of importance, which I will briefly discuss here. Firstly, getting to the point of having a 'manager' title, there are various routes individuals may traverse.

Amongst the participants, 7 went to tertiary institutions with 5 studying management specifically, and two went on to post-graduate study both specialising in management. Of 15 participants, 13 finished high school, one undertook an apprenticeship afterwards, and one dropped out of high school. Yet despite these varied formal educational backgrounds, all participants were either promoted into or applied for a management role and are now practising managers. This finding highlights the importance of informal learning, as well as, formal learning experiences within a workplace context, given that not all practising managers study management at tertiary level.

For those that did undergo tertiary training, despite formal degrees and job-related managerial training opportunities, the participants of the present study revealed that these learning experiences did not provide holistic training. Rather, learning the craft of management required learning moments based in experience, such as on-the-job learning incidents, exposure to conflict, observing others managing and trial-and-error. Interestingly, despite participants representing a range of industries, managerial backgrounds, with different job-specific underpinnings, the core roles and responsibilities of managerial practice were consistent, with a few additional management obligations identified by the owner-managers compared to middle-managers. The discourse regarding the craft of management centred around two elements, (1) people; personal connection, being friendly but not friends, clear communication, handling conflict, choosing good people, and managing aspects of individuals. (2) work; thorough understanding of business dynamics and industry, decision-making, workplace culture, strategic responsibilities, goal-setting and achievement, and controlling process and systems. Further, not all practising managers undertook management specific degrees.

For those who had other degrees of specialisation mentioned that they had one or two papers specific to management, however, these still did not provide them with an adequate context.

The categories of managing people and managing work produced two distinct realities; one of relational means, ambiguous and messy, requiring intuition, sensitivity and ethics, the other of focused, task-driven, system-orientated, objective and tangible realities. Otherwise stated as the dualities of craft (art) and science. As explored in the literature review, management has historically been regarded dually as a science and craft (or art). A preoccupation regarding management as a science has resulted in little descriptions regarding the implications of management being a craft and art (Taylor, 2013). However, the data suggest that both aspects contribute to how managers conceptualise their practice.

The category 'managing work' was laced with themes akin to the scientific perspective of management. Strategic management, workplace structure, understanding business dynamics, controlling policy and procedures, aligning processes, health and safety, legal issues and crisis management, were dominant themes. However, as mentioned participants focused primarily on managing people, though acknowledge how managing work is significant:

> Lawrence: If you're a manager, your managing things, managing budgets, managing meetings you're not actually inspiring or leading anybody, you're just managing what's already there. And to me – that's only one part of being a manager.

As evidenced in the above statement, managing work must be understood in context. The findings and analysis demonstrate what Mintzberg (2009) maintains, that management is three-fold, a blend of science, craft and art. This research focused primarily on the craft of management, being the journey to the destination as defined by (Taylor, 2012) and how that is developed through learning experiences. When discussing managing work, these process of managing these aspects came across being a straightforward and precise task, as opposed to messy and ambiguous when managing people, which participants discussed as being more challenging.

6.2. Implications of the findings

Despite the limitation of the sample size (to be discussed below), the topic of this research should be a salient concern to management schools, training institutions and organisations. Not only regarding how individuals learnt management but how they conceptualise management in practice. As the findings suggest, there is a lack of congruence regarding formal managerial training and higher-education experiences, though 'learning-on-the-job' is a resonate feature across all participants. Tertiary education has the purpose of training and developing individuals, yet participants questioned the value of their education. With the exception of those with post-graduate qualifications who went back to study after having workplace experience revealed that these experiences were valuable, as they have a context and 'grounding' by which to dissimilate and digest the information. Thus, how management education is approached should be re-examined.

During the final stages of this research I came across *Thinking the art of management: Stepping into 'Heidegger's shoes'* by Atkinson (2007), a passage I quote at length mirrors my research premise,

> It is axiomatic that, in the so-called 'real' world of operating a modern business, what the management practitioner is concerned with is the application of acquired managerial knowledge, experience and practical skills as a 'means' towards some organisational 'end'. From this I advance three further axioms of managerial practice. Firstly, successful managers exist today who have received no 'formal' management knowledge. Secondly, 'trained' managers exist today, frustrated by the inability of much formally acquired knowledge to meet the exigencies of their practice; and thirdly, managers exist today, frustrated by the fact that what appeared to work for them yesterday, or in their last job, or what they had heard had worked for someone else, has failed to work for them today. Together, these axioms can be construed as an argument. If 'formal' management knowledge is no essential antecedent of successful management practice, yet a manager's knowledge may be found wanting–preventing the fulfilment of managerial responsibility–then there must therefore be a further type of knowledge that is not formal, but which, nevertheless, can be 'instrumental' in contributing to managerial success. Therefore, if the academic business school is to more fully support managerial practice, it becomes a valid concern to attempt and understanding of the nature and production of this 'other', non-formal (or tacit) knowledge. (p. 2)

These axioms were examined through the subjective lens of managers themselves. In the literature review, tertiary managerial training was critiqued, a notable condemnation coming from Mintzberg (2004) regarding MBA degrees. Part of the argument includes the 'wrong time' being a key issue of education programmes, though in the case of the two participants who study post-graduates after being in the workplace for several years, stated that the context and grounding in the realities of managerial work were fundamental in their Masters degrees and above.

6.3. Recommendations for future research and limitations

As the findings suggest that managers felt that their educational experiences did not prepare them for being a manager in the workplace, consistent across all ages of participants, regardless of whether they left university in the last few years or have been in the workplace for over 40 years. Curiously the individuals that who engaged in post-graduate study and qualifications stated that they found their post-graduate educational experience beneficial because it complimented their workplace learning. These individuals had been in the workplace but went back to academic after some time to upskill and ensure their knowledge was current. The preparatory educational experiences that individuals have prior to becoming a manager in the workplace; these experiences were arguably not holistic and left them feeling 'unprepared'. Suffice to say, the way that managerial training is developed does not rest on the way individuals learn in the workplace and does not encompass key learning enablers identified: mentorship, observation, making mistakes and using failures as learning experiences. Further, managing people is a key component to management, something which managers felt their educational experiences gave them no guidance regarding how that is enacted. Thus, the current state of managerial training requires development.

Perhaps it is time to include more arts-based, aesthetic approaches to understanding management in the curricula and in organisations as Nissley (2002) suggest, facilitating learning through emotional engagement (Taylor & Statler, 2014). Arts-based approaches can allow individuals to draw on the senses and creative thinking, rather than analytical and scientific mental models (Taylor, 2015). In recent decades, scholars have critiqued

current formal educational frameworks and suggested arts-based approaches as an alternative means (Nissley, 2002). Further, the findings demonstrate that experience and practice-based learning is critical to managerial development. Thus, the importance of on-the-job training, being within a real-world setting at tertiary level should be considered, such as the cooperative education model run by Waterloo University in Canada, which according to Basir and Dalziel (2019) and Nevison and Pretti (2016) having beneficial results to both students and employers.

Though these findings shed light on managerial education and how managers have learnt their craft, there is a neglected facet that is of grave consideration; the competency and effectiveness of the managers. Examination of this aspect was beyond the scope and intention of the research but knowing whether the managers were competent, effective managers would have been an interesting, added dynamic. As a recommendation for future study–the interplay between education (high school, tertiary, on-the-job training) and the associated managerial competency should be considered.

A limitation of my research is that it the appended ethnodrama, and has not been stage-tested or performed. Scripts are best seen in practice as they are written for performance (Saldaña, 2003). In hindsight, I would have liked to craft this script in conjunction with the participants and held an ethnotheatre performance. An additional limitation is my sample size, though theoretical saturation was reached, as I conducted the transcription and analysis process; I discovered areas and concepts that I could have developed further (Bryman & Bell, 2011). I had follow-up interviews with two participants, however, some participants were only available for one interview. During my shortest interview, for

example, I was unwell and found it difficult to think straight, though I followed my interview guide when I was transcribing I discovered there were certain questions with brief responses and additional lines of thought I should have explored. I desired a follow-up interview, however, the participant had just started in a higher position and said their schedule was 'chaotic'; hence they could not fit me in.

Lastly, the Covid-19 and the physical restrictions surrounding my research were problematic at first, given I had to change my approach to data collection. However, through the process, I discovered the benefits of online interviewing and had greater accesses to participants who were in remote areas of the country.

Further research could quantify specifics and explore what information new graduates have retained during their formal education, compared to what they use in their workplace roles (Warhurst, 2011). Additionally, the comments and insights from the two participants who had completed post-graduate qualifications offered fascinating ideas contrasted to those with a Bachelor's degree or lower. Thus, comparing the differences between individuals trained at undergraduate and post-graduate level could pose value.

6.4. Final statements

The role of the manager is ubiquitous within societal institutions and is considered to be the 'life-blood' of organisations (Drucker, 2007). Given the commonality of this role and its organisational significance of how individuals learn managerial craft and what they learn that craft to be is of salient importance. Although arguments may deliberate as to

the content that universities should or should not be teaching regarding management the findings are clear: the subjective experiences of managers who attended university state that they felt as though their educational experiences did not prepare them for their managerial roles. For managers who attended high school, the finding is the same. However, some participants reflected on aspects of their educational experience that was foundational, such as working in teams and learning where to find information. All participants stated that their workplace experience was fundamental to them learning how to manage, and the findings revealed a process of becoming and identity-work unfolded within their learning experiences. Based on the findings, managers at university level are not best prepared for their managerial roles, and those that finish their education at high school level, have to learn their role on-the-job. For those that enter the workplace with industry-specific knowledge, there is opportunity for these individuals to be educationally supported, aligning training with practice, in order to learn their managerial craft.

Appendix A. Information Sheet

The Craft of Management Study

INFORMATION SHEET

The purpose of this project is to explore the experiences of New Zealand managers and how they learn to be managers in the workforce.

A Personal Invitation

I would personally like to invite you to take part of this fascinating research regarding managerial learning. My name is Grace George and I am a postgraduate student undertaking a Master of Business Studies in Management.

If you are a manager, located in New Zealand, with two or more individuals you manage – you are welcome to participate in this research.

What is the research about?

The research titled, *The Craft of Management* is a qualitative study based on the experience of NZ managers that explore how managers have learnt (and learn) their craft in the workplace.

What will taking part in this study involve?

Taking part of this research will require approximately 30 – 45 minutes of your time for an interview. It is possible that a follow-up interview may be required for the sake of clarification and due to the iterative nature of the research.

If you would like to participate, what do you do?

Contact the researcher directly at: Grace.George.1@uni.massey.ac.nz. Alternatively, express your interest through google forms: https://forms.gle/RXScVwFt3A9qRgpz7

If you are selected, the *Participation Consent Form* will be either emailed to you or delivered to you at the time of the interview. You will be asked to read and sign the

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Consent Form and then return it to the researcher before the interview, either via email or in person.

If you participate, what are your rights?

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point; ask any questions about the study at any time during participation; decline to answer any particular question (or reflect on any particular issue); provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the research team. When the project is concluded, you may request to view the full thesis and findings.

If you participate, how will your data be managed and stored?

Raw data will be stored securely in password protected electronic files, it will be transcribed by the researcher and used for analysis purposes. The data will be destroyed one year after the completion of the project.

Who else is involved in this research?

My supervisors are Dr Ralph Bathurst and Dr Jason Cordier from the Massey University Business School. If you have any concerns you can contact them directly. R.Bathurst@massey.ac.nz or J.Cordier@massey.ac.nz

Thankyou for you interest and participation in this research. Your time and insights are of great value.

Sincerely,

Grace George
Masters Student

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.
If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

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Appendix B. Consent Form

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

MASSEY BUSINESS SCHOOL

The Craft of Management Study

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read, or have had read to me in my first language, and I understand the Information Sheet, sent separately. I have had the details of the study explained to me, any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

1. I agree / do not agree to the interview being recorded.
2. I wish / do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.
3. I wish / do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.
4. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Declaration by Participant:

I _____hereby consent to take part in this study.
[print full name]

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix C. Interview Schedule

PARTICIPANT COPY

Interview Guide & Questions

Purpose of study: I am curious about how you learn to be a manager and the experiences you have had that have contributed to you learning how to manage.

Focus: *Please focus on your role as a manager in the workplace:*

Manager criteria checks:

- "How long have you been in this role?"
- "What does your role look like?"
  - "What are your responsibilities?"
  - "What are some of the main ways you communicate with your subordinates?"
- "How did you become a manager?"
- "Did your educational experience prepare you for being a manager?"

Managerial Experiences

Experiences:

Please describe a particular experience or example when:

- "Think of a time in your managerial role where you felt like you were learning how to manage?"
  - "What was happening then?"
- "What's an experience you've had when you enjoyed being a manager, what was happening?"
- "What's an experience you've had when you disliked being a manager, what was happening?"

Additional information to clarify examples (if needed):

- "How did you feel about managing after this?"
- "How did this affect how you manage?"

Management Function:

- "What is management to you?"
- "Do you think management is important?"

Is there anything further you would like to add?

Appendix D. Ethics

Human Ethics Notification - 4000021636

humanethics@massey.ac.nz <humanethics@massey.ac.nz>
Mon 26/08/2019 4:50 PM

To: Grace.George.1@uni.massey.ac.nz <Grace.George.1@uni.massey.ac.nz>; R.Bathurst@massey.ac.nz <R.Bathurst@massey.ac.nz>
Cc: humanethics@massey.ac.nz <humanethics@massey.ac.nz>

HoU Review Group

Ethics Notification Number: 4000021636
Title: A qualitative study of the experience of the learning journey's of New Zealand managers

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.
If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter, please login to the RIMS system, and under the Reporting section, View Reports you will find a link to run the LR Report.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix E. An ethnodrama

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players,
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.
William Shakespeare, As You Like It (Act 2, Scene 7)

The following appendix will present my key findings from the Round 2 Interview stage using the refined research question: what is the subjective understanding of managers regarding how they have become a manager and learnt the craft of management in the workplace? The narratives of 15 participants will be explored through narrative inquiry methodology, employing an ethnodrama script which articulates some of the findings and discussion. The script is written in the dramatic style of verbatim theatre, having playful elements and employing symbolism. Similar conventions are used in *Down the rabbit hole* an ethnodrama by Dell'Angelo (2019), who drew inspiration from Lewis Carrol's *Alice in Wonderland,* to explore the first year of teaching.

Round 2 Interviews

When I started collecting data I was focused on how managers learn their craft in the workplace. In asking for their stories I not only learnt about how they learnt the craft of management but what that managerial craft looks like. They told me about their failures and successes, what they learnt to do and not to do, what they learnt *about* management

as well as *how* they learnt their craft. As mentioned in Chapter 3. Methods, following an iterative approach I consequently refined my research question.

Participants ranged in age from mid-20s to more than 60 years old, with 10 (66.66%) male respondents and 5 (33.33%) female respondents. Majority of participants were of Pakehā/New Zealand European heritage (n = 11, 73.33%), while other ethnic groups consisted of Māori (n=2), South African (n=1) and British (n=1). A range of industries were represented including goods and services, medical, early childcare, construction and financial services. Pseudonyms are used and overtly identifiable information omitted to preserve anonymity. Participants are presented as characters in the ethnodrama script, in the character list there are further details regarding their age, managerial level and educational background (see section *Characters*, below).

Interview Questions

I asked participants six contextual questions to get a thorough understanding of their role, responsibilities and educational background, then three 'critical incident' questions asking for specific examples and stories. When I developed the interview script prior to gathering the data, I anticipated that the contextual questions would be answered succinctly and briefly, and that the critical incident questions would constitute of the majority of the interview. However, as data gathering began I noticed that participants would go into detail in the contextual questions – sometimes providing me with a linear sequence of their historical managerial background. Often, in answering these questions

they would provide thoughts and opinions as to what management is. The final question *what is management to you?* required participants to think deeply about what management is within their subjective lived experience. Majority of participants paused prior to answering and some gave the comment, "that's a really good question".

Analysis of findings

Following narrative inquiry approach when examining findings, Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) explain that researchers "restory" narratives and identify and classify emerging themes. I have "re-storied" the narratives to include the relevant experiences from participants' past and present, within their specific context. Consequently, there may be tidbits of my own insight and understanding entwined in the stories (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009). The script addresses the two parts of the research question within the narrative. Part 1 addresses the first part of the research question, *how* managers learnt the craft of management based on narratives of their subjective experiences. From these stories *enablers* have been identified, these are the key driving forces that have contributed their learnings. Part 2 of the findings focuses on the remainder of the research question, *what* managers have learnt about management and their conceptualisations of the craft. Two categories emerged from their stories and opinions about management: managing people and managing work. Lawrence, summed up this duality well,

> If you don't look after [manage] the company, you can't look after the staff. If you don't look after the staff, they won't look after the company.

Emphasising the interdependence of the organisation, managers and employees.

Synopsis of script: Characters, plot, storyline and how the analysis is revealed

The discourse of managers as actors draws on work by Goffman (1959). From a dramaturgical lens, he explores how individuals are actors on a social stage, engaged in performances of reality for the benefit of an audience. Putting on a character and projecting a certain image of ourselves. Managers, can then be seen as actors, performing established scripts and characters (identities), directing and managing performances and defining the roles and playscripts for others (Cunliffe, 2014).

SCRIPT TITLE: Crafting the 'good manager'

Participants not only offered thoughts on *what* management is but *who* managers should be. Consistent in the data was this notion of a 'good manager'. Participants would say such things as "a good manager will always", "a good manger has to", "I think good managers". As I went back-and-forth in the analysis process the more the concept of a 'good manager' started to appear as a figure, entity, and character in its own right. All participants mentioned the term 'good manager', or a synonym 'best', 'great', at least once, offering insights as to what a good manager does, characteristics of a good manager, and managers they had encountered who they deemed to fit this persona. Themes of becoming, identity and evolving towards being a good manager, themselves, emerged. Hence, the title and the central theme of the script revolves around this elusive

character called ‘The Good Manager’. Contextually, the word ‘good’ meant effective, intuitive, strong and sometimes, ethical. The notion of becoming, moving towards and crafting a managerial identity through their learning experiences are a reflection of what Warhurst (2011) describes as identity formation. Explaining that management, itself, is “understood not so much as a state of being but as a process of continual becoming that requires managers giving constant attention to ‘creating, maintaining and repairing their managerial identity’” (p. 263). The persona of The Good Manager reflects this, as revealed in Act 1 the plotline is driven by the quest for finding, discovering and becoming The Good Manager, having both temporal and transformational elements. In the ethnodrama the managers are overtly striving to ‘become’ or ‘find’ the Good Manager, however, from a social constructivist perspective identity formation can be discreet (Warhurst, 2011).

The term ‘craft’ was evident in the information sheet and consent form, due to the title of this study. However, the interview schedule and the in the moment follow-up questions did not mention craft. Rather, I was curious to examine whether the notion would surface through descriptions of participants’ management practice, or if it was merely a theoretical explanation. A few participants mentioned craft (or art) in relation to management, in the following excerpt Yash used the term ‘poetry’,

> I think any manager has to be able to, as one of the commentators said, ‘use poetry and engineering’, so you have to be able to inspire, you have to be able to bring motivation and bring people with you but you’ve also got to have the structure, the engineering and the processes in place so that things get done.

Here, the terms ‘poetry’ and ‘engineering’ which in this context can be translated to ‘craft’ and ‘science’. Craft, he understands as being a destination, ‘bringing people’ along on the journey to an organisational goal or end result, which cannot be done in silo.

Characters

STUDENT

The character of Student mirrors myself, as the researcher. I included this character for multiple reasons, as Yin (2016) assert, the researcher is intertwined within the research. The role of this character situates me in the middle of the world of the other characters– my participants. Mirroring how I stepped into their perspectives, hearing their stories and experiences during the interview process. The character of student is written in two ways: (1) in the first scenes student is portrayed as a ‘greenie’ in The Workplace, she has certain expectations regarding management that are challenged as she interacts with those she meets. Akin to the context and background of my research, as outlined in Chapter 1. Introduction, and how prior to undertaking my research my observations in the workplace made me question how management is learnt and understood. (2) As Student discovers her expectations are misaligned, her approach in the scenes changes to that of the observer and student, learning and questioning the other characters. Reflecting my role as the researcher and interviewer, and how I approached the interviews with a curious, open mind, in attempt to learn my participants and find answers to the research question. The

dialogue of Student is comprised of my field notes, journal entries and memos, as well as, dialogue written during the scripting process.

COMPOSITE CHARACTERS

Composite characters were created based on the 15 participants. As Saldaña (2016) explains, a composite character is an amalgamation of various participants that have similar themes, characteristics or stories. Though a fictional character, they speak the collective realities of the individuals it represents (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009). Further, I employed the dramatic of symbolism which can multiply itself through various meanings Styan (1983).

CHARACTER 1: Marlene – the voices of Anabell, Hannah, Deborah

The character of Marlene was a straightforward character to group together as these participants are all managers by choice. They share similar educational experiences; all having gone to university and believe that in some ways it prepared them to be managers, but in other ways it did not. Further, how they learnt to manage in the workplace is alike, observation, mentorship, tertiary experience and on-the-job learning we key components to their development. Lastly, regarding what they learnt management to be these women jointly discussed themes around people management, communication, managing their employees expertise and empowerment.

CHARACTER 2: Pieter – the voices of De'M, Lawrence

Pieter is comprised of managers who made a way for themselves, both De'M and Lawrence had fascinating educational stories and both worked during their tertiary degrees. De'M worked and studied fulltime, gaining a prestigious award for his studies but still maintained that his workplace exposure was more formative. Lawrence started his degree, got a job, then only went back to sit his exam. Both of these participants made a way for themselves early in their careers, working it out as they went along. Notably they also shared similarities regarding how they conceptualise management.

CHARACTER 3: Erin – the voices of Yash, Luci, Mandy

Erin represents the managers out of necessity, these individuals started their careers working under managers, not having the intention of being one (even though Luci studied a management degree). All individuals worked and gained experience which lead to them becoming managers. When asked how she became a manager Luci answered, "kind of out of necessity", whereas Yash and Mandy stepped into managerial roles when they started their businesses. Their roles as the owners small businesses required them to undertake managerial responsibilities. In this regard, the participants are well-matched to create this character, however, the formal educational stories of Yash differ to that of Luci and Mandy. Thus, the narratives that Luci and Mandy provide for formal learning are discussed through this character.

CHARACTER 4: Hehu – the voices of Tamati, Matiu, Harrison

Hehu reflects the managers by experience, working their way up (from the floor) to their eventual position as manager. Originally, I labelled them the managers who 'fell into it' as I did not want the term 'managers by experience' to denote that some of the other participants lacked experience. However, I reasoned that this term best encapsulated their management practice, as Harrison stated he was "qualified by experience". Tamati, Matiu and Harrison have a shared education through workplace experience, not proceeding past high school education but being 'trained by life'. Additionally, how they approached management practice was similar, adopting a 'can do' attitude and doing what it takes to achieve results.

CHARACTER 5: Fraser – the voices of Robert, Felix

The managers who were baptised by fire are represented in Fraser. Both Robert and Felix launched into managerial roles without prior management education or training, their consequential experiences may be understood by the 'trial by fire' metaphor. On-the-job training, making mistakes and learning from experience were key in their development as managers.

CHARACTER 6: Harry – the voices of Daniel, Darren

The character Harry is comprised of two individuals. As participants, Daniel and Darren were anomalies and produced unexpected revelations in the data. Throughout the

interview Daniel reiterated, “I am not a good manager”, differing from other participants, who did not make any such claims. He offered insights into what it means to be a self-proclaimed ‘bad manager’, yet still be a practicing manager. While Darren preferred to refer to himself as an entrepreneur, rather than a manager, seeing his identity intertwined with his entrepreneurial pursuits and his managerial responsibilities being secondary. When grouping the participants together into composite characters Daniel and Darren did not neatly fit into any of the other character categories because of these differences. Thus, I decided that they would be best represented through the composite character of Harry.

THE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

CHORUS

A central convention of Ancient Greek theatre is the chorus, consisting of multiple actors who move and speak as ‘one’. The function of the chorus is to provide a bridge between the actors and the audience, providing information and insight to the audience which may be unknown to the characters onstage (Sifakis, 1971). The chorus combines musicality, poetry and speech to enhance the performance and present themes (Revermann, 2006). For example, *Lysistrata,* an Ancient Greek comedy, employs the chorus as a voice of social commentary in response to a war. In this ethnodrama the function of the chorus is used as device to convey what would, in traditional academic writing, be a separate ‘Discussion’ chapter. Thus, as would be expected in a conventional discussion section, academic explanations for the findings and the analysis conducted are evident, spoken through this character. Note, that for the purposes of academic integrity I have referenced

throughout the discussion dialogue of the Chorus, however, if performed these in-text citations should be overlooked as speaking aloud may be jarring to the audience.

Plot

In dramatic writing there is a distinction between the plot and the storyline; the plot denotes the structure of the script, whereas the storyline are the dramatic structures within (acts, scenes, vignettes) which comprise the plot (Saldaña, 2003). In devising the plotline Wolcott (1994) discusses the various approaches the playwrite can adopt. I utilise *progressive focusing,* as my research is built around the research question I reveal the findings as they appeared to me as the researcher. Starting from a close-in view, with myself as the researcher conceptualising the problem I want to investigate and how that emerged, zooming out to a broad perspective, that of the participants. Following a traditional beginning-middle-end linearity and mirroring the traditional academic research report; beginning with a problem (introduction), developing a means of exploration (literature review), investigating (method) and then analysing and articulating the findings (findings and discussion), then concluding (conclusion).

The theoretical underpinning for the plot is based on a framework developed by Anteby et al. (2016) to understand managerial occupations and professions; ‘becoming’, ‘relating’, ‘doing’.

Synopsis of the script: Plot and storyline

ACT 1 – Great expectations: The first step

The function of Act 1 is to establish the context, plot and explore the characters in detail, setting a premise for the remaining Acts.

SCENE 1: The classroom where it started

Student reflects on her educational experience, mirroring Chapter 1. Introduction in the Context and Background section where I comment of my motivations for conducting this research.

SCENE 2: The Workplace

Student meets various managers in the workplace; just as I interviewed 15 practicing managers. Realising her expectations and beliefs about management differ to what she has learnt previously (I expand on this notion when discussing the character of Student, above).

SCENE 3: The meeting room

The meeting room is a metaphor for communication, getting people together to discuss a common goal and purpose. This artefact was reflected in the interview data as

participants discussed how they communicate with their employees formally, achieved through structured meetings in a designated room. Additionally, this meeting is a microcosm of how the participants articulated their role: bring individuals together, clearly communicating so that they can achieving tasks that align to the overall objective and goals of the organisation.

In this scene, the Quest of finding the Good Manager is revealed, a metaphor for moving towards, becoming and crafting a managerial identity which was revealed in the data.

Each manager is at a different stage of the Quest, consequence of their background and experience. As learning is a life-long process all managers are engaged in the Quest as there is always "more to learn", however, a temporal dynamic is at play. Younger managers, comparatively, have a great deal more to learn than older managers, based on their experience and time in role. New managers undergo a process of socialisation 'becoming' in order to become occupational members, that is, managers (Anteby et al., 2016).

Similarly, management as an occupation and profession has numerous sub-occupations; project manager, managing director, general manager, middle manager, in various industry and workplace contexts. These are critical aspects in aiding understanding regarding managerial development. However, in the 'becoming', 'doing', 'relating' framework I utilise to explain managerial craft, these individual differences are down-played, seeking a broader, generalised perspective (Anteby et al., 2016).

SCENE 4: The “MANAGER” badge

In this scene the ‘introduction’ to each of the managers is extended, exploring their narratives in further detail. This is the starting point for Student’s Quest as she learns about the other characters she is with and the educational experiences they had, discovering that the path to becoming a manager is not linear.

SCENE 5: The team

The phrase ‘team’, ‘my team’, ‘our team’, ‘the team’ was used in all interviews and is a significant component of organisational dynamics–the team; culture and performance was a common reoccurrence (Katzenbach & Smith, 2015). Participants stressed the importance of surrounding yourself with ‘good people’ and how retaining these ‘good people’ who work for, alongside or under them was critical. 5 owner-managers stated that to retain these critical people they must be paid well. By having a financial incentive, supported through the use of performance reviews, the reward is linked to performance creating an effort-performance tie (Vroom, 1964). In this scene, the team of managers is symbolic of the ‘good people’ that Student should surround herself with, though these dynamics do not translate into a manager-managed situation, they are illustrative.

ACT 2 – Awakening: The journey in the middle

Act 2 is focused around the first part of the research question, *how* managers have learnt their craft revealed through narratives of their subjective experiences. Their narratives

were restoryed and organised specifically to suit the direction of this Act. The organisation of these narratives link to the 'enablers' of learning managerial craft as identified by the experiential stories. The title of this Act *Awakening: The journey in the middle,* points to the awakening experienced by Student and the managers themselves discovering that their educational experience has gaps, leaving them feeling unprepared for being a manager in The Workplace. Thus, they journey towards understanding what a manager is and becoming one through various 'enablers'. The term enablers is how I explain the key six learning moments and methods as revealed by the findings, as to how these managers have learnt their craft.

SCENE 1: The enablers

Student is taken to a room where the enablers are, these are displayed as props which the managers 'put on' when learning, contributing towards the Quest. Here I use the device of symbolism to display the six main ways in which participants revealed how they learnt management in the workplace. The learnings gained contribute to their development to being a 'good' manager, hence these enablers, once put on aid the characters in the Quest, towards The Good Manager.

SCENE 2: Stories of the enablers

The managers share stories of times when they used the enablers, these narratives are restoryed from the participants answers to the question *"can you think of a time in your managerial position where you felt like you were learning how to manage?"*.

SCENE 3: Six

The six enablers as discussed in further detail, with the Chorus having a prominent feature in this scene. Drawing parallels, differences and key findings from the stories shared by the managers.

ACT 3 – Becoming: Destinations

In this final Act, the findings from the second part of the research question are addressed, regarding what the managers have learnt the craft of management to be, encapsulated within the quest for The Good Manager. The title *Becoming: Destinations*, discuss the notion of an evolving managerial identity over time, linked to development of craft. As articulated in Chapter 2. Literature Review, craft centres on destinations, the data suggests that though there is a destination in sight, that is The Good Manager, the destination in itself is elusive. As though one may acquire elements of The Good Manager given the nature of reality and experience there will always be more to discover and develop, thus linking to lifelong learning (Jarvis, 2010).

In this Act there are two different understandings of Becoming that are explored: one; becoming for new entrants in an occupation (Anteby et al., 2016), two; managing as identity-work from a critical management study lens (Cunliffe, 2014). The process of becoming requires socialisation into a set of shared cultural norms and dynamics, they state, “like any form of socialization [sic], this process often entails many surprises and

discoveries that newcomers encounter on their path to becoming legitimate members of their new community" (p. 190). This lens is utilised to understand how participants learnt how to manage in their managerial roles but it also reflects Student's journey through the script; my journey through the research process. One which was ambiguous, challenging though ultimately rewarding.

SCENE 1: Cityscape

The start of this Act begins overlooking the city, from the top of The Workplace. Paralleling the macro-view I adopt to first begin articulating the findings regarding the second component of the research question. Student learns of the broad, generalised definitions of management that the managers hold.

SCENE 2: On the streets

Zooming in to a micro-view, the streets do not look as neat and organised as they did from the height. Metaphorically speaking, this is the same in management – participants who had tertiary backgrounds observed that in theory management is straightforward, though once practicing it can be difficult and messy. Language has an important role in shaping and constructing meaning, through crafted language managers can influence others. It also emphasises the importance of language in shaping meaning and organising action.

Theatre conventions

There are certain theatre conventions and experiences that are difficult to experience through a written script. Such as props, tone, gestural language and other non-verbal language, which can be imagined by the reader but rely on actors to embody in an ethnotheatre performance. Further, not all stage directions and elements of characterisation are written into scripts, rather, those elements are left to the expertise and discretion of the director and actors in the rehearsal and performance of the script (Saldaña, 2003). However, as this ethnodrama is my articulation of the findings of my research, I have included specific detail when necessary to ensure the reader can create a rich visualisation of the narrative when reading. Akin to the theatre adage, "don't tell it, show it", denoting how the visual medium of theatre should not consist of characters merely talking, action is vital (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

How the analysis is revealed

Before the plot and storyline were developed it was essential that the analysis and understandings of my findings were clear and well-defined. I conducted the analysis using a sense-making approach, utilising thematic analysis. Categorising the data and compiling it into frameworks. In vivo codes were used for category development, suitable given how dialogue is a critical component of scripting, therefore in vivo codes could highlight salient passages (Saldaña, 2015). This process generated themes that were encompassed within the research question: *how* managers learn their craft and *what* they

consequently learnt. Initially, I composed a 'traditional' findings chapter, exploring the themes of the data with selective interview quotations, with a narrative approach arc. This findings chapter was then developed into the ethnodrama script.

Crafting of the script

Regarding scriptwriting, Saldaña (2003) crafted an aphorism, "an ethnodrama is the data corpus–with all the boring parts taken out" (p. 221). Though my process of writing the script is cover in detail in Chapter 3. Methods section *3.2.3 How I devised the script*, I will revisit it briefly here, adding further detail. The function of the playwrite is to ensure the story is conveyed with dramatic effect, using an economy of words. Lengthy passages with extraneous information not aligned to the overall storyline are cut out, granted their absent does not influence the quality of the data (Saldaña, 2003).

To achieve this, I followed the approach utilised by Walker et al. (1991) in their dramatised report titled Other rooms: Other voices. In selecting portions of interview data for the script I was guided by (1) thematic relevance, identifying stories that answered the research question. (2) Anecdotal vividness, I searched for 'crystallising incidents' which the managers deemed formative to learning their craft. (3) Range and variation, though not representative in a quantitative manner, the choice of interview data was informed by the research question, in order to reflect the subjective experiences and learnings of the managers. Though these three approaches were used during the initial analyses phase, contributing to the base findings chapter I used to develop the script, more of the 'voice'

of the participants needed to be revealed. Thus, I went back to the raw interview data to expand which also resulted in further analysis during the scripting stage. Miles and Huberman (1994) developed a model which explains how the act of writing a script results in a focusing and refining, stimulating further analysis. Though I saw my scripting as coming after the analysis stage, I discovered that it too, is analysis, as writing requires a back-and-forth rumination of the material and ideas.

Crafting the 'good manager'

CHARACTERS

STUDENT: myself, as the researcher learning from the others

MARLENE: composite character representing the voice of the 'managers by choice'

Anabell: 50s, upper manager, undergraduate

Hannah: 40s, upper manager, post-graduate

Deborah: 40s, upper manager, PhD

PIETER: composite character representing the voice of the 'managers who made a way for themselves'

De'M: mid 20s, middle manager, undergraduate

Lawrence: 40s, upper manager, undergraduate

ERIN: composite character representing the voice of the 'managers out of necessity'

Yash: 50s, owner/general manager, completed high school

Luci: 30s, upper manager, undergraduate

Mandy: 50s, owner/manager, completed high school

HEHU: composite character representing the voice of the 'managers by experience'

Tamati: late 20s, middle manager, high school dropout

Matiu: 50s, upper manager, completed high school

Harrison: 60s, middle manager

FRASER: composite character representing the voice of the 'managers who were baptised by fire'

Robert: 50s, owner/upper manager, completed high school

Felix: 50s, owner/upper manager, completed high school

HARRY: composite character representing the voice of 'the manager anomalies'

Daniel: 50s, owner/upper manager, undergraduate

Darren: 60s, upper manager, completed high school

CHORUS: the voice of the literature, the 'discussion', 3–4 actors

ACT 1

Great expectations: The first step

SCENE 1: The classroom where it started

> The room is rectangular on the wall at the back of the stage are windows, showing that this room is on the second story and revealing a Brick Building outside. There are lines of tables and chairs facing towards the whiteboards at the front, resembling a traditional classroom setup. The room is empty except for a singular figure occupying the right-hand seat, second row from the front. STUDENT is dressed head to toe in regalia and presents a monologue to the audience.

Voiceover: "*After four years studying management in my undergraduate, I had learnt a lot about management, or so I thought, maybe I hadn't learnt much at all." – Student(Grace George, researcher)*

STUDENT: This was 'my seat'. I always sat here, I had to make sure I was early in the first few classes to ensure I got it, but once people knew it was mine I could waltz in three, four, five minutes late and it would still be there, empty, waiting for me, *my* seat…though, I admit, I need to work on my time management.

STUDENT laughs.

STUDENT: A few weeks ago I had my last class in this room. I've passed all my exams now, I have the Qualification that says I can be a manager.

A broad smile appears across STUDENT's face as she tips her trencher

STUDENT: And that's just what I'm going to do – I'm going to be the best manager there is! But…[sighs] part of me doesn't feel prepared. I know a lot about business and management in theory, but how do you actually do it? How does one manage? …and do a good job at it…?

STUDENT freezes, enter CHORUS.

CHORUS: The following ethnodrama was born out of a qualitative research study, here represented as Student is the researcher, at the end of her management degree questions

around what management truly is and what that looks like in the workplace, arose. Here is a narrative of her journey, but it is actually the journey of others–as she met and interviewed practicing managers, discovering how they learnt management and what they understand it to be.

Fade to black

END SCENE

SCENE 2: The workplace

STUDENT enters still dressed in her regalia, there are people bustling back and forth across the stage, holding pieces of paper, talking on the phone, conversing deeply with others. There is a large sign hanging at the back of the stage which reads "THE WORKPLACE" in big, bold letters.

STUDENT: I can't believe it's my first day! I'm finally here, after so many years learning about it, I'm so excited to *actually start* working as a manager.

HARRY is walking by STUDENT and overhears her talking to herself.

HARRY: So… you want to be a manager aye?

STUDENT: Yes, I've just got my qualification and I'm ready to start.

STUDENT holds up her Management Qualification proudly towards him.

HARRY: [laughs] why are you waving that piece of paper in my face?

STUDENT: I just got it, it means I am a manager.

HARRY: [laughs louder] Really girlie? And where have you been a manager before?

STUDENT: What do you mean? I just spent the last few years learning to be a manager.

HARRY: In a brick building. Not managing any people.

STUDENT: Well, yeah but –

HARRY: Then you're not a manager.

STUDENT: Well, not yet…

HARRY: And you don't know *how* to manage.

STUDENT: But I do! I learnt at –

HARRY: Yeah, yeah – The Brick Building. That doesn't make you a manager. Anyone can be a 'manager' and have a badge, doesn't mean they're any good… [inquisitively] Did you learn how to run a meeting?

STUDENT looks at him blankly.

HARRY: Or learn time management?

STUDENT looks at the audience sheepishly.

HARRY: How to deal with other people's problems? Telling the truth? There's morals and values that come into it.

STUDENT: [nods] I get your point, I still think I'm prepared though.

STUDENT looks at her Qualification with a mix of pride and doubt, HARRY pats her on the shoulder and walks away. PIETER is walking past and notices STUDENT looking at her Qualification.

PIETER: Hey, I got one of those!

STUDENT: Really!? And now you're a manager! [pointing to the 'MANAGER' badge he is wearing on his high-vis vest]

PIETER: It was a piece of shit degree.

STUDENT: Oh.

STUDENT pauses noticing PIETER's clothing, underneath his bright personal protective garments and hard hat is worn down, faded regalia.

PIETER: I only got this [indicates badge] because I worked fulltime while doing that degree, I only did the degree because of how it's 'positively recognised'. You learn on the job, through experience, for me more hands-on place would've been more beneficial. But, a place like The Brick Building, yeah well, unfortunately it's recognised more even though it doesn't give you *everything* you need.

STUDENT: But did it help you learn management?

PIETER: [Scoffs] From what I've learnt here in The Workplace, key things come into determining if someone is going to become the Good Manager. One is their personality. The other one is of course, experience.

STUDENT: So, are you saying I can't be a good manager because I don't have experience? I just spent the last few years learning management, [slightly annoyed] and you're implying that's for nothing?

PIETER: [Doesn't directly answer her question, but still makes his point] Experience is key. I had at least two years on everyone at The Brick Building. I started studying and working full time in the second year and that gave me a huge advantage going into The Workplace because the people just did not know enough. So I already catapulted [Pieter makes a 'catapult' gesture with sound effects].

STUDENT looks down at her Qualification, CHORUS enter, all other actors onstage freeze.

CHORUS: [to the audience] Pieter is a young successful manager, he started working full time during his final years of full time university and when questioned about his workload by his employer at the time he countered by asking his boss whether he hires people for their degree or for their experience. His boss relented saying he made a good point–experience was key. Pieter made some smart decisions so that by the time he graduated from university, receiving a National Award for his academic achievement he already had two years of work experience on everyone else. Despite his great academic achievements he reflects negatively on his degree. He did the degree because of how it is positively recognised, however, he states that he learnt more on-the-job through practical experiences and exposure to the realities of the workplace.

Actors unfreeze.

PIETER: Hey look, everyone has a different path. I remember the day I looked as clean and tidy as you [pointing to her regalia]. Come, I'll take you to our meeting room, today we are meeting to discuss our Quest.

STUDENT and PIETER walk off stage.

END SCENE

SCENE 3: The meeting room

The room is filled with all the characters we saw walking back and forth in SCENE 2 they are sitting at a long table with chairs dotted around it. HARRY is at the front of the table reading a book, looking disinterested. MARLENE is standing at the head of the table, a single laptop open in front of her. MARLENE is dressed in PhD regalia. Everyone is wearing 'MANAGER' badges.

Voiceover: "You don't necessarily know what you don't know. It's really valuable knowing what your own limitations are, knowing that you're going to get a better result if you call on someone who is an expert. I think it's quite easy for people in senior roles to think that whatever they're confronting is particularly unique." – Marlene(Deborah)

STUDENT and PIETER enter, the managers are chattering amongst themselves.

STUDENT: Wow! So many managers!

PIETER: [laughs] You really are a greenie, aren't you?

STUDENT and PIETER sit down

MARLENE: [adjusts her Tudor Bonnet and clears her throat] Attention all, today we have come to discuss our quest.

All voices in the room start chattering excitedly, except for HARRY who keeps reading his book.

MARLENE: Alright, alright, it's very exciting. Now please settle down. In this next section of our Quest we have a new recruit joining us.

MARLENE motions to STUDENT who responds with enthusiasm.

STUDENT: Yes! And thank you for having me I am ready to be a manager [she holds her Qualification in full view, beaming].

MARLENE: Well you are in good company, but I must tell you that we all agree [motioning to the other managers in the room] that majority of our learning started here, in The Workplace, so your learning is not done yet [smiles calmly and warmly].

All the other managers speak at once, voices overlapping, the first part of the sentences are distinct then fade into noisy voices.

HARRY: You need to be your own teacher [holds up his book].

FRASER: You can't write a book on this stuff!

ERIN: You need practical experience if you're going to–

PIETER: Don't let your education get in the way–

HEHU: Qualifications come through experience.

STUDENT looks overwhelmed.

MARLENE: Please! Everyone…

STUDENT: Well…ahh…[voices start to die down] thank you all for the… advice.

The other managers [except MARLENE] start indistinctively chattering to themselves, STUDENT looks down at her Qualification and holds it tighter.

MARLENE: [reassuringly to STUDENT] You may find–like I did, that your education is complimentary to what you will learn here. Ten years ago, I went back to The Brick Building, to study my post-graduate and recently, a further Qualification. It gave me confidence as a manager, it's one thing to learn on the job but for me, having that external input, that academic input, gave me a lot of confidence. I had a toolkit that I could draw on but equally, I knew what I didn't know. So that then I think made me a better manager.

STUDENT: But you had already been in The Workplace at that stage, right?

MARLENE: Right, but I only realised the value of my education once I had some workplace experience and joined the dots.

CHORUS enter, all other actors freeze.

CHORUS: [to the audience] Marlene defines herself as a 'true' and 'pure' manager, having solely been trained in managerial craft through her various tertiary experiences. Within the last few years she completed her PhD in Management and reflects favourably on her educational experiences. However, she stresses that these learning experiences have been complimentary to the on-the-job training and exposure she has received. Recently, she's been promoted to the second most senior role in her law-firm organisation yet she maintains that sometimes 'you don't know what you don't know' and recognising that as a manager, is key to continual learning and development.

Actors unfreeze, managers except for MARLENE continue talking amongst themselves.

STUDENT: [pensively] maybe a bit of experience will help, even though this [holds up Qualification] says I can be a manager [half-jokingly].

MARLENE: [inquisitively] Right, so when you say a manager, do you mean a manager of people or–like, what's your definition of a manager?

STUDENT: [taken aback] a manager… one who manages things…ahh, using management techniques, methodologies and theories… [starts trailing off, then gathers her thoughts]. Management is about efficiently coordinating, controlling and facilitating resources in order to reach an organisational end goal and beneficial result.

MARLENE: [laughs] okay, we can work on that definition so you don't fall back on clichés [adjusts her Tudor bonnet and winks]. Now! Everyone! Let's focus again, I hope you all make Student feel welcome here, [to STUDENT] the team is important to us, not just 'human resources' but 'human assets'. Now then, [to herself] the slide is on MS Teams [taps away on the laptop, the 'slide comes up on the back wall].

The slide reads:

'*Quest for the Good Manager'*

good managers don't have egos

good managers need to be good with people

good managers manage people's emotions

good managers know the ins and outs

good managers are good leaders

MARLENE: So, the Quest [she sits].

CHORUS move to front of stage, all other actors freeze.

CHORUS: Manager. Good. Bad. Manager. What makes someone a good manager? What even is a good manager?

CHORUS disband and sit down at the table with others.

MARLENE: Now that Student has joined us I thought it would be good if we showed her our progress so far, especially as everyone is at a different point and this is just the start of her managerial journey.

CHORUS: [speaking from their places at the table] There is a temporal element at play. Pieter [PIETER stands where he is, freezes] is a young manager, a recent graduate he's only been in The Workplace for a short amount of time compared to the others. His experiences are new, novel and may still be undergoing the process of socialisation into his occupation as a new manager (Anteby et al., 2016) [PIETER sits and re-freezes]. Marlene [MARLENE stands where she is, freezes] is a pure manager having a rich history in management theory through Brick Building experiences and in practicing her management craft in The Workplace. She is in her late forties, a senior manager in a law firm, having only spent a brief time out of The Workplace to have children. A decision that can have a lasting effect on remuneration for years after returning to the workplace (Evers & Sieverding, 2013; Reitman & Schneer, 2005).

MARLENE sits and re-freezes.

Erin [ERIN stands where she is, freezes] is an owner-manager in her fifties, spending time in various non-managerial roles in her early career before she started her own small business in The Workplace. She took on the running of the business, becoming all the 'departments' and taking on managerial responsibilities for her employees, she's a self-proclaimed 'hands-on' manager

ERIN sits and re-freezes.

Hehu [HEHU stands where he is, freezes] starting working straight out of high school and is 'qualified by experience', recognising all his previous roles and Workplace experiences contributed to him learning how to be a manager. Hands-on and working it out as he went along, he maintains that you don't need to have a qualification to make you a Good Manager, in fact, many Good Managers he knows have no formal qualifications.

HEHU sits and re-freezes.

Fraser [FRASER stands where he is, freezes] is a 'people-person' who became a manager because he kept saying 'yes' to opportunities. He learnt management through a baptism of fire–making mistakes, failing and learning from those experiences. He also had on-the-job managerial training which taught him the rudiments. After a number of years, he went out on his own and started his own business, becoming an owner-manager.

FRASER sits and re-freezes.

Harry [HARRY stands where he is, freezes] is an owner-manager in his sixties. Though he learnt management at the Brick Building and has been in managerial roles for most of his career he is a self-confessed, 'bad manager'.

HARRY sits and re-freezes. CHORUS stands.

CHORUS: The Quest, as will be revealed, is a symbolic device used here to represent the identity development of these managers. Using critical management studies discourse management can be understood to be identity-work (Cunliffe, 2014). Contrasting with a functionalist perspective of management theory, dominant in the twentieth century, which attempts to construct an ideal goal-oriented manager centring around performing pre-determined and rigid roles (Schultz & Hatch, 1996). The Quest for the Good Manager instead is about identity-work, how managers actively attempt to mould and shape their

identities to be meaningful for themselves and others. Critically, managerial learning is a component of this process of becoming (Anteby et al., 2016; Warhurst, 2011).

STUDENT: [To managers] What is meant by the term the Good Manager?

PIETER: A good manager knows how to read people and get shit done.

MARLENE: Beyond that, they act in an ethical, sensitive and responsive manner.

CHORUS: The managers see the Good Manager in these two ways: effective in managing work, achieving work tasks to a high standard, and managing people and relating, and being inherently 'good', having a moral compass guiding decisions. This is their subjective understanding of the Good Manager an archetype which frames and gives meaning to their role, which is based in a highly ideologised view of management (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2012).

CHORUS leaves the table, going out of view.

MARLENE: A good way for you to learn is through having your own experience, learning from others.

FRASER: She's right! [to STUDENT] Sorry I haven't introduced myself yet [jumps up and extending a hand with a big grin], I'm Fraser.

Black out.

END SCENE

SCENE 4: The "MANAGER" badge

All actors excluding STUDENT and CHORUS are onstage. There is a line of chairs downstage centre facing the audience, each manager is occupying a seat. STUDENT is sitting in the audience, hidden. A single spotlight comes onto FRASER who is in the middle of the line, he stands and delivers a monologue to the audience.

Voiceover: "'Cause it's about relationships, and a piece of paper doesn't give you the ability to read people's body language, or sum up a situation, or, you know, that stuff that you can't learn out of a book–it's not one size fits all" – Hehu(Harrison)

FRASER: I had an apprenticeship training, so basically, you're assigned to–well I worked for my father's company and I was assigned to a foreman. But all I was doing

then was learning the trade and that doesn't necessarily teach you how to manage. You can learn how to manage a job but you don't learn how to manage people. That's a whole different skillset. [Pause] I spent seven in the plumbing trade, then had a serious accident that threw me out for quite a long time. I started working for the Council in their recreation department, I think they trained me very well giving me a lot of coaching and as you progressed up the career ladder at the time, like I did, assistant manager and then to a manager, the more and more outsourced training courses they were willing to book you in for, *learning* how to be a manager. Learning how to manage staff, learning how to manage a complex. For me, that input built me and empowered me to think, 'oh I can actually do this'. [FRASER put his hands in his pockets] So those are really my training grounds, they were on-the-job practical training, learning (a) how to work, (b) how to manage people, that gives you life skills that a degree or a qualification doesn't necessarily give you. Now [laughs, to reassure] I'm not putting down university at all because, believe me, I've got kids who have gone through university and I've encouraged them to do, but I've also encouraged them to follow their passion. [Pause] So, yeah, for me the education came through, practical training, coaching, courses and learning from job experiences.

STUDENT: [from the audience] That's cool, I like seeing that progression, I guess in a way it's an evolution of discovery and it wasn't a fix point in time where you worked out what you were going to do or where you were going to end up but you just reacted to what was in front of you at the time and what you were learning.

FRASER: And that's really important too Student, I always said to my children–they are all grown up and got their own careers now. But I said, 'your first job is never your career–you might have multiple jobs along the way but they are all stepping stones to where you end up.

The spotlight cuts out, FRASER sits. Spotlight comes onto MARLENE, she stands.

MARLENE: Like I said…Both my education and workplace experiences were beneficial for me. Not my early education–my undergraduate; I was young, didn't really know what I wanted to do but then when I had been working for a few years I went back to the Brick Building and did some post-graduate study. I was a little bit older and wiser and had

working experience in the real world under my belt, I think that I approached my study then quite differently.

STUDENT: Why is that?

MARLENE: [Still speaking out into the audience] Because I had a context in which to apply it, whereas when I was an undergraduate working at a supermarket there really was no context. Whereas when I did my post-graduate stuff I was able to go and actually apply it in my work environment. So it really helped then.

STUDENT: You then had a grounding, as such?

MARLENE: Yes, it's just theory otherwise. You've learnt all these wonderful concepts and it sounds great and you think, 'yes, no problem, I'll be able to do that' and then you start working with people and you realise, people are unpredictable and sometimes incredibly frustrating, so you have to go back to the drawing board.

MARLENE laughs. The spotlight cuts out, MARLENE sits. Spotlight comes onto HEHU, he stands.

HEHU: I'm a QBE–'Qualification by Experience', I don't have pieces of paper that say that I've done this course or that course, particularly around the whole managerial side of things. Basically, my managerial training came as a result of my previous job experience in policing, that's where I learnt how to manage incidents, how to manage situation, how to do a whole bunch of stuff and that was [pause] through experience. Not so much people management because I was self-managed, I might've been managing offenders but I wasn't actually managing staff. My steep learning curve of managing people came in '93, I went from being part of a team managing homicides, I changed profession and now I was the team leader, managing outdoor events and such at a church, so I transferred my managing work skills gained through policing into running church.

STUDENT: [From the audience] That's interesting, how they can be very different situations, but that experience, like you said, transfers over.

HEHU: Yeah, well you're always learning and you draw on things you've encountered and learnt in the past.

The spotlight cuts out, HEHU sits. Spotlight comes onto ERIN, she stands.

ERIN: I learnt through experience and need, as in, through my career I was kind of gaining more experience and growing and becoming a bit more senior in terms of my

responsibilities, and so then – in my previous job, there kind of became a point where we needed to have someone working for me because I was juggling too much. I became a manager out of necessity.

STUDENT: I thought this Qualification was the pinnacle of my managerial learning; but it's really just a part of a continuous process.

The spotlight cuts out, ERIN sits. Spotlight comes onto HARRY, he stands.

HARRY: I'm a bad manager.

STUDENT gasps.

HARRY: [Speaks convincingly] I'm a bad manager–I mean I'm a 'manager' by title but I'm a bad manager. Not everyone can be a manager and I discovered it's not what I'm cut out for. I'm a small business owner but I used to have a bigger business, like the ones you would have seen around The Workplace. It was that business where I discovered that I wasn't the best manager. It's not what I sort of specialised in, I had to find my niche; I downsized the business in terms of its size, and that meant size of employees and tried to focus on the stuff that I liked. Even as we were downsizing–we had 20 employees at one stage and that was too much, it didn't suit me because I was running around managing everyone all the time and I wasn't doing a good enough job of it.

The spotlight cuts out, HARRY sits. Managers move offstage with their chairs,

CHORUS comes downstage centre standing in a line.

CHORUS: Being a manager is not characteristised by exclusivity, with differing barriers of entry existing (Anteby et al., 2016). For some managers, formal training and qualifications are required for their role, for other managers they are assigned the role because they have worked their way through the ranks, so to speak, thus the formal education barrier is lacking (Atkinson, 2007). The path to becoming a manager is not linear. Each individual has had different experiences, formal or informal, shaping them along the way. BECOMING. What does it mean to 'become' a manager? To wear a badge, to have a title, to do managerial things? The process of becoming is more than externalities, it is identity formation–and managerial learning is a process of becoming (Sturdy et al., 2006).

Black out.

END SCENE

SCENE 5: The team

ERIN and PIETER are sitting in the lunchroom together at a round table, eating lunch. There are a handful of other empty tables around the room.

Voiceover: 'I can't remember who said it but you've probably heard it before, a good manager surrounds themselves with people brighter than them.' –Erin(Luci)

ERIN: Up and down?

PIETER: Yup [taking a big bite of his sandwich], up *and* down.

ERIN: Right, well I suppose you're still in the middle of the ranks, aren't you?

PIETER: [Finishing his mouthful] Yup, that's what I've learnt recently, it's not just managing the people that work beneath me but how I interact with the bosses above me [points upward].

ERIN: Ah, I see what you mean.

PIETER: It's like [wiping sauce from his mouth] there's conduit between the owners (the higher ups) and the staff without that conduit the communication doesn't work. A manager has to realise there's two ways of communication, the cascade down but also the cascade up. You could be a good manager in how you manage employees but you're a bad manager because they don't know how to manage the bosses. You have to manage the upwards otherwise you can't protect the people down.

ERIN: Having a small business it's just me then my staff I haven't anyone above me in a very long time…

PIETER: Must be nice [laughs].

ERIN: Sometimes [laughs], there's advantages to it for sure, but everything comes with its own challenge.

MARLENE and HEHU enter in the background a sit at a nearby table and start to eat lunch.

PIETER: What are some of the challenges you face?

ERIN: People, mostly [nervous laugh]. But a good manager will always work with a human-being and understand that they have feelings, they have emotion, they have a

world outside work that affects them. All of those things come into play and you have to find ways of managing but you've still got to work with the team to get the job done.

PIETER and ERIN stop talking and continue eating, attention is drawn to MARLENE and HEHU's conversation.

HEHU: …yeah talking to them afterwards, most of the people in my team–I have quite an experienced team under me so there's no need for micromanaging, rather I support them and invest into them. It's getting to the point where if I was had to be away, I can trust the people under me to continue on and get the job done if I wasn't there.

MARLENE: Good, good, one responsibility we have is around our people, ensuring we attract, retain and engage the best people–which is really important in this business because we're a people business we don't have any machinery or equipment, so it's ensuring that is all working well and that we have people with the right skills, doing the right work, at the right time.

HARRY and FRASER enter, the focus switches to them and their conversation.

FRASER: There are good days and there are not so good days, I'm the first one to admit we've had some great times where we have a laugh but we've also had some trying times with my team as well.

HARRY: The pain of management, aye? [Playful hits FRASER on the back].

FRASER: The pain, yeah–I'm getting to the point where I don't want to go through the pain anymore. I mean the team is great, like I said, we have a laugh and I've hired some top people now to take my place and I'm paying them well, so I'm looking forward to see what they do.

CHORUS enter, the conversations continue to happen silently in the background.

CHORUS: All managers mentioned 'their team' using possessive language such as 'my team' or 'our team'. Within the 'team' that participants talked about there was a dominant theme of ensuring that you had the 'right' people around you, on the job and working for you. Stressing the importance of choosing and selecting the right people, that being a key responsibility for Marlene. The individuals in your team contribute to the workplace culture. Culture is not something that is separate and external, rather it is socially constructed, influencing the identity-work of both managers and employees, sustained through conversations and meaningful interactions (Cunliffe, 2014).

STUDENT enters and goes to talk to PIETER and ERIN.

STUDENT: So, I realise that through your stories there's more I need to learn, to add to the knowledge I got at the Brick Building.

ERIN: You are now in a different context, here learning is not based in a classroom style. You are embodying management practice and working it out as you go along. Stories from us managers may provide insight to how individuals learn in The Workplace.

STUDENT: Yes, so how do I learn that exactly?

ERIN: [To PIETER] I think we should take her to see the Enablers.

PIETER: Sure thing, [jokingly] you think you can handle it greenie?

STUDENT: I'm tougher than you are and don't need to wear a hard hat everywhere.

PIETER: Very funny. It'll be good to see the Enablers again, I mean I'm probably the closest of all the managers to you in age, greenie. Still early-on in the Quest too.

ERIN and PIETER are still finishing their food.

CHORUS: The Enablers are identified as components of learning. From the experiential narratives of the managers in this room there are six Enablers of learning management craft that emerge. The Enablers aid managers in their quest to find The Good Manager, whether or not they actually make it. [To the audience] The Quest; it is a search for identity, in pursuit of this persona, this entity that is the 'Good Manager'. Is it a persona or an entity? An internal or external identity? The Quest is an individual pursuit, however, both internal and external realities influence and it is not divorced from social influence.

STUDENT: All right, well [getting impatient] can you both hurry up and finish your lunch?

Black out.

END SCENE

ACT 2

Awakening: The journey in the middle

SCENE 1: The enablers

STUDENT and ERIN enter. The room looks like a dress-up closet with clothing hanging from a rack, shoes neatly lined and multiple boxes and tables with an array of props on them.

Voiceover: "If you ask did I learn through my formal education, I'd say no, did I learn through self-education, reading and putting into practice what I read, then yes."
–Pieter(Lawrence)

CHORUS: Welcome to the room of the Enablers [addressing both STUDENT and the audience]. If we are talking about learning, this is the place to go.

STUDENT: What are Enablers?

CHORUS: Amongst the managers you've met there are 6 they collectively hold. However, as you can see [CHORUS split up, going around the room picking up various objects, interacting with them, trying them on], there are many more than 6. When asked about how they learnt management the managers tell stories including one or more of the Enablers, these are what are identified as being useful.

STUDENT and ERIN are still standing side stage at the entrance, STUDENT is taking it all in.

ERIN: Each of us prefer to use some over the others.

STUDENT nods, slightly confused.

ERIN: Here, let me show you.

ERIN goes to the table with different coloured glasses, she finds 'her' pair and puts them on dramatically.

ERIN: How do I look?

STUDENT and ERIN laugh.

ERIN: Out of all the Enablers these are what I use the most, they are called 'observation'.

STUDENT: Observation?

ERIN: Yes, quite often, probably subconsciously I am learning… I just kind of pick up things from observing others. For example, at a previous job I took notice of the way my business director communicated when she's talked to the team and conveying important messages. I took note of how she worded things. Having had different managers in my past experience you can see the variances between how individuals manage, so I took that on board as well.

STUDENT: I see.

ERIN: Nice pun, but yeah, that's why I wear these [points to glasses], my observation glasses.

STUDENT: So observing other managers has had a significant influence on how you have learnt how to manage.

ERIN: A specific time when I used these, and! It got me this… [walks to table, searching] – was something that I hadn't dealt with before and it was this management role in the first few weeks I was there.

ERIN finds a trophy that looks like a Picasso painting and holds it up for STUDENT.

STUDENT: Oh, how… lovely?

ERIN: It's experience. Very important in learning how to be a manager…[she puts it down]. When I had just started here there was one person who was still in their probation but it was coming to the end. But they hadn't been doing well, so, as a new manager with the help of my business director, we had to decide whether to give them a permanent role or not. And there were challenges going either way – it could've gone either way. I'd only been there for two or three weeks, so definite learning there about going through that process. It was difficult, as you can imagine, I have a few conversations with my boss and she coached me through it. But it was challenging and I wasn't looking forward to the final conversation but actually it ended up happening off-the-cuff without me after everyone had left the office and so it hadn't intentionally been like that but that was a challenging time.

STUDENT: I see.

ERIN: Your pun isn't as funny the second time

STUDENT: Oh, sorry I'm just reflecting…it's just that the only thing I observed at the Brick Building was powerpoint slides and the beads of sweat dripping off the lecturer's face.

ERIN: Ew [pauses] you're in The Workplace now though, the Brick Building gave you one kind of learning. I mean for me how I learnt, I think the biggest thing I learnt to become a manager was actually my previous managers. They were role models, some showed me what to do, some what not to do. So, it's not just these that I use [adjusts observation glasses] but also… this.

ERIN picks up framed portrait of someone unknown to STUDENT.

ERIN: A manager of mine…

STUDENT: So I need to get a manager, to learn how to be a manager?

ERIN: Worked for me [takes off her observation glasses and puts down the portrait].

HARRY enters.

CHORUS: Though some individuals have the role of 'manager' this does not ensure they are suited to the role.

STUDENT: [To HARRY] There was something you said before…about being a bad manager…

HARRY: Yes, what are you not sure about?

STUDENT: Well… you still have the badge…[pointing to HARRY's badge].

STUDENT points to HARRY's "MANAGER" badge.

HARRY: Just because someone has this badge doesn't mean they are any good. I mean, look at these folk [gesturing to the other managers in the room], some of them haven't discovered they're bad managers, some of them know they aren't quite in their fit, some know they are good at what they do but they are all striving for the same thing.

STUDENT: The quest.

HARRY: Ahh, but it's what is at the end of the quest. The Good Manager. That's what they all want and what they are trying to reach.

STUDENT: But not you?

HARRY: Hey look, I did a lot of self-training but at the end of the day my heart's not in the quest, I decided being a good manager was not for me.

STUDENT: So, your mistakes, your observations and your other learnings, they are all a part of this Quest?

CHORUS: However, not all managers endeavoured to become the Good Manager. Harry, though a manager, had already conceded framing his managerial practice in another identity.

Fade to black.

END SCENE

SCENE 2: Stories of the enablers

Voiceover: 'Yeah, well you learn on the job and again, afterwards it's saying, 'okay, how well did we manage that?'' – Fraser(Robert)

Everyone returns to their seats.

PIETER: Robbie! …another story for you…Robbie, one of the best auditors I've seen–he wasn't even a manager himself but he taught me how to deal with unruly, difficult people. I saw him manage a team of managers that he was consulting. But John, John didn't want to be there and was annoying everyone in the room, asking the same question over and over again. I was sitting there thinking, 'I'm going to lose it' but Robbie, he handled it differently he said, 'John, all day you've asked me questions and I've answered them, you don't seem to be taking my word for any of it, you obviously don't want to be here, so I'm gonna give you a choice. Either take on board what I'm saying, you don't agree with me – fine, but I need you to be quiet cause you're now interrupting everyone's learning, so you can either do that or you can leave. And that taught me a couple of things: one you have to stand by your principles, two the minority shouldn't rule the majority in a training environment, or even a company environment, if the person in the room is not participating they need to be called out on it. It's not confrontation – just being assertive but it's effective, I've done it since and it works.

END SCENE

SCENE 3: Six

Voiceover: 'You only learn to sail your boat in the storm' - Erin(Yash)

STUDENT is roaming around the Enablers room looking at various items. She picks up some objects, looks over them and puts them down again, she finds one that she really likes as she is looking at it in detail the CHORUS enter.

CHORUS: Common amongst the managers is the phrase *experience.* In their stories, they all mentioned elements of learning from experience, building on experience or having experiences in order to learn and grow.

STUDENT comes into full view of the audience, they can now see the trophy she is holding which looks like a Picasso painting, the 'Experience' enabler.

STUDENT: [To CHORUS] That what I don't yet have, experience being a manager, being in the 'thick of it'.

CHORUS: Management is a socially embedded practice, requiring to be taught within context (Cunliffe, 2014; Taylor, 2012). This understanding explains why the stories of the managers revealed that on-the-job learning from experience is salient.

The voices of the following managers are heard but not seen, spoken as though they are in the middle of a conversation with someone.

HEHU: [Voiceover] …I use the experiences I learnt in a previous role in my current managerial position as those first experiences are similar they are transferrable learnings.

ERIN: [Voiceover] …A lot of my management experience and leadership experience was gained in a previous managerial role before I started my business.

PIETER: [Voiceover] …that's how I got into my managerial role, even though I'm young–it was the experience that I have in the role. Because I started working full-time while at the Brick Building.

CHORUS: Some managers explained Workplace experience as giving 'context'. Perhaps this explains Frasers favourable Workplace training and educational experiences, because he was situated within his managerial role, learning and practicing concurrently.

MARLENE: [Voiceover] Once I went back to the Brick Building for post-graduate I learnt a great deal and that's because I had a Workplace context in which to apply my managerial knowledge.

STUDENT goes to grab the diploma.

STUDENT: [Holding it out to CHORUS] and education?

CHORUS: Though some managers can on strong about their educational experiences 'not preparing them' education has merit. Most deem that majority of the content they learnt was mis-aligned to their future managerial roles, whether they only went to high school or the Brick Building. Though these managers stated that their undergraduate experiences did not prepare them for being a manager there may be other skills they acquired during their education that they have overlooked or taken-for-granted. A report by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (2016a) reveals that individuals with a Bachelor's degree or higher, regardless of field, have higher literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills than those without such qualifications. However, there is a understanding amongst the managers that formal education is not enough.

CHORUS: Making mistakes and learning from them

HARRY: [Voiceover] For me, it was messing up. By making mistakes, that's how I learned. I mean when my first business went under I spent six months licking my wounds – then got up and went at it again.

MARLENE: [Voiceover] You need to own your successes as well as your failures, sometimes failures are your greatest learning opportunity. But at the end of the day if you've mucked up or you've made a mistake, you've got to own it and sometimes it's fessing up to you staff and saying, "yup I blew it here".

> STUDENT goes to pick up observation glasses, holding them out then putting them on.

CHORUS: Based on broad social constructivist philosophy, a critical management studies perspective states that reality is not independent from ourselves, our social and organisational spheres are molded and shaped through conversations and interactions between people. Language, dialogue and relationships between a fundamental key to managing (Cunliffe, 2014).

ERIN: I just kind of pick up things from observing others. I took notice of the way my pervious manager communicated when she's talked to the team and conveying important messages. I took note of how she worded things.

CHORUS: Erin focuses mainly on how she observed other managers talk, converse and convey themselves with those they are managing. She repeats that she notices how things

are worded and constructed. Revealing that Erin identifies communication as being important and specifically–intentional, well-worded communication that is clearly articulated to those that need the information. What she does not reveal is whether she employs a 'filtering' process of some kind to determine which examples to 'take on board' and which to discard. Social learning theory, a prominent theory in learning and development bridging behaviourist and cognitive learning theories, explains why social interactions and observing the behaviours of others can be formative; encompassing attention, memory and motivation (Muro & Jeffrey, 2008).

STUDENT goes and picks up a walking cane.

CHORUS: Despite older managers reflecting on formative experiences to describe when they learnt how to manage, when discussing management practice the notion of lifelong learning is evident. Fraser reflects on his attempts with employees to have them embrace technological change, struggling to reconcile why they continuously resist it, when he, a Boomer himself, embraced it.

STUDENT puts cane down and goes to look at other items.

CHORUS: The Enablers are the overt methods of learning are revealed and identifiable in the stories. However, there are also internal cognitive dispositions that either inhibit or heed learning.

The CHORUS move to stand in a line, centrestage their posture is one to teach and inform.

CHORUS: Self-efficacy–proposed by Bandura (1977), is a specific self-concept theory. Individuals form perceptions about their competency and ability to perform the task. These opinions are formed by past experience, perceived difficulty and the attitudes of others, consequently, influencing behaviour and learning. Though the enablers reveal the overt learning experiences, there are internal processes of individuals influence how they learn.

STUDENT: Okay, well I've discovered *how* these managers learn but what have they learnt? Is it the same to what I learnt at the Brick Building? And how does that contribute to them finding the Good Manager?

Fade to black.

END SCENE

ACT 3

Becoming: Destinations

SCENE 1: Cityscape

STUDENT, FRASER and MARLENE enter, the stage is bare with the backdrop of high-rises at a height. STUDENT is blindfolded, with FRASER leading her.

FRASER: Oh, watch your step!

STUDENT feels her way with her feet trying to ensure balance.

MARLENE: Was the blindfold really necessary?

FRASER: [Dramatically] It adds to the suspense.

STUDENT: Can I take it off now?

FRASER: Yeah sure.

STUDENT: Where are we?

FRASER: From up here, the city looks brilliant, exciting and busy. The streets curl and intertwine and we can see exactly where we need to go. This is what we do as managers.

STUDENT: What do you mean?

MARLENE: He's trying to use a metaphor, but being oddly elusive about it.

FRASER rolls his eyes.

FRASER: Fine, specifics. [Clears throat] A summary of management, as we are looking at the city [gestures dramatically]. Management, I think, is about leading and empowering people to produce an end result. We are currently here [gesturing to the rooftop], needing to get there [points obscurely in the distance] for our Quest. Same with management.

STUDENT: But individually our end result is to find The Good Manager, what is the end result of management?

FRASER: The end result is infinity really, because you've got from A to Z, a myriad of end results. That being what you actually want to achieve, or what your organisation wants to achieve and what is the purpose of your organisation? If you're running a café the purpose of your organisation is simply to provide an experience for your customer and that is done through coffee, food, atmosphere. Would be three critical factors in a

café. If you're in a clothing store then again it's an experience with the clothing, with the stylist, with the clothes that that person might be interested in the style. So if you've got a stylist in that shop it's how they communicate and build a relationship with you in a very short time to selling you clothes you felt comfortable in and feel good in. So that would be that. A tradesperson they want someone who is prompt and on time, does a good job, is clean and tidy and the end result for a lot of customers, unfortunately, cheap. [laughs] Some people don't mind paying for the experience, others go 'woo that cost me a lot of money'. So each different, whatever business you're in will have a certain criteria of steps along to way to achieve an end result or produce an end result.

STUDENT: Essentially, Fraser you're saying that the practice of management is the same, regardless of the business/industry you may be in. The context changes but the essence of what management is, does not.

FRASER: You got it! [exaggeratedly gestures two thumbs up]

CHORUS: The managers talk about management in two distinct ways. Managing people and managing work. Managing people is ambiguous, messy, filled with pain and challenge. The most disliked elements of their managerial roles is dealing with conflict, that conflict being with and between individuals.

STUDENT: Ultimately the function of management, the toolkit and craft is so nuanced.

FRASER winks, fade to black.

END SCENE

SCENE 2: On the streets

Voiceover: 'It's 'the pain' of being in leadership. Sometimes I'm unwilling to face the pain in a situation, especially as a manager, being a business owner and a manager in the last few years, well yeah… there has been pain along the way' –Fraser(Robert)

There are words that appear on the back wall that look like signs, containing words related to management practice. They flash on the back wall:

'Managing work'
Vision
Common Goal
Strategy
Process
Autonomy
Control
Decisive
Policy
Procedure
Economic
Results

'Managing people'
Conflict
Emotions
Personality
Communication
Team
Empowerment
Trust
Relationships
Pain
Leadership
Culture

Fun

STUDENT: Being a manager is so multifaceted, at the higher level, like when we were ontop of The Workplace it looked so orderly and straightforward. But...it's a lot more messy than I expected.

FRASER: A good manager will make it look easy, but there's a great deal of pain involved too.

HARRY: Don't freak her out [jokingly slaps FRASER], you keep going on about the pain of managing, and don't get me wrong there is–but there's a great deal more goodness in finding your fit.

CHORUS: There is a connection to practice: being in the thick of it, walking the floor and interacting with the facets of managing people (and work). Managers who approach with humility and practice ethics in their craft. Mintzberg and Glouberman (2001) warn of the other–[CHORUS forms a line centrestage] "the manager who has learned everything–at least about management, and at least in a classroom (e.g. an MBA). The trouble is that the professional model–based on the standardization [sic] of skills and knowledge – hardly applies to management, where nothing can really be standardized [sic] and barely anything of significance has been codified with reliability. Control here thus risks becoming 'remote control', as the manager sits in an office and reads performance reports, disconnected from a practice he or she never experienced" (p. 24).

HARRY: [To STUDENT] So what are you waiting for? The way for you to learn the craft is to start managing.

Black out.

END SCENE

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