

Institution: Coventry University
Unit of Assessment: 19
Title of case study: Understanding organisational change and leadership and their impact on organisational wellbeing
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The impact of the research detailed in this case study has been made at four levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on management and leadership practice generally given wide dissemination through public debate, the media and practitioner orientated journals; • direct influence on management and leadership education and practice in professional bodies by stimulating policy development in the Chartered Management Institute, the Australian Institute of Management and the Malaysian Productivity Council; • direct impact in organisations that have used the research to improve business practice through consultancy interventions (Telford and Wrekin Council and the UK National School of Government); • commercial impact in Simplyhealth and Spring International that have used the research to develop new products and markets.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The “spine” of the underpinning research is the longitudinal, survey-based “Quality of Working Life Project” (QoWLP) which began in 1997 with Principal investigators Worrall and Cooper (Lancaster University). The QoWLP is designed: to monitor the scale and nature of organisational change and the effects on managers; to examine leadership styles and the effects on managers; to monitor change in managers’ work-life balance; to monitor working hours and their effect on managers’ physical and psychological wellbeing; and to assess employee engagement, motivation, productivity, reciprocal trust and job/job facet satisfaction. The project was designed in partnership with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) in response to their need for an evidence-base to support policy development. In 2008 and 2012 the research was extended to include Australia, (with Professor Lindorff (Monash University) in partnership with the Australian Institute of Management (AIM). In 2012, the project was further extended to include a Malaysian study with Professor Ahmed (Monash University) in partnership with the Malaysian Productivity Council (MPC). The questionnaire and the research process were designed in all cases by Worrall.</p> <p>QoWLP has been funded by commercial sponsors including the Post Office, Adecco, the Health and Safety Executive and Simplyhealth (who funded the 2012 survey). The latest survey was designed to provide Simplyhealth with commercially useful product and business strategy intelligence. The QoWLP has culminated in eight research reports for CMI; two reports for AIM; one report for MPC; eight book chapters; twenty refereed journal articles and over forty articles in newspapers and professional journals. Papers derived from the research programme have been published in the ABS 4* rated journal “Work, Employment and Society”, the ABS 2* rated “Employee Relations”, “European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology” and “Personnel Review”. Two papers published in “Employee Relations” have received Emerald Literati Awards.</p> <p>Emphasis has been placed on providing practical guidance to practising managers by publishing articles in the “HR Magazine”, “Personnel Today” and “Professional Manager”. The QoWLP surveys have provided evidence to complement subsequent, related research. This includes research projects with the Work-life Balance Centre (Worrall and Skinner produced annual reports in 2007, 2008 and 2009); trust in organisations (Worrall, Skinner and Searle, 2011); and the labour process of public sector managers/professionals (Worrall, Mather and Seifert, 2007; 2009; 2010; 2012). These integrated projects have resulted in one book, one edited book, four research reports, four refereed journal articles and extensive media coverage including TES, Guardian and the Times. Internationally, the research has been covered in the Times of India [h] and the Straits Times (Singapore). Worrall has recently contributed to the LSE Politics Policy Blog [l] and his research, as disseminated in that blog, has been cited by the Trade Union, Unison [m].</p> <p>The key research findings from these projects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scale, pace and impact of organisational change has increased and change has had increasingly negative effects on managers’ attitudes and behaviours; • Leadership styles in the UK have been found to be perceived negatively, have worsened, and

compare unfavourably with those in Australia;

- Managerial work has both intensified and extensified as managers are working harder and longer – this has had major implications for managers' physical and psychological wellbeing;
- Trust in UK business organisations was relatively low (compared to Australia) and directly influenced by perceptions of prevailing leadership styles.

3. References to the research

- [1] **Worrall**, L., Cooper, C. & Campbell, F. (2000) The new reality for UK managers: perpetual change and employment instability, *Work, Employment and Society* 14(4) pp.647-668 (ABS 4*; IF 1.255; citations 18)
- [2] Mather, K., **Worrall**, L., Seifert R. (2009) The changing locus of workplace control in the English Further Education sector. *Employee Relations*, 31 (2), pp. 139-157 (This paper received an Emerald Quality Award in 2010. ABS 2*; IF 0.468; citations 9)
- [3] **Worrall**, L., Cooper, C. L., Lindorff, M (2011) A picture of trust in UK business organisations. In Searle, R and Skinner, D (ed) *Trust and Human Resource Management* (pp18-41) Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.
- [4] Lindorff, M., **Worrall**, L., & Cooper, C. (2011) Managers' well-being and perceptions of organizational change in the UK and Australia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 49(2), pp.233-254. (IF 0.546)
- [5] Mather, K., **Worrall**, L., and Mather G. (2012) Engineering compliance and worker resistance in UK Further Education: the creation of the Stepford lecturer. *Employee Relations*, 34(5), pp. 534-554 (This paper received an Emerald Quality Award in 2013. ABS2*; IF 0.468)
- [6] **Worrall**, L & Cooper C. (2013). Improving the quality of working life: positive steps for senior management teams. In *Management Articles of the Year 2013* (pp7-12). London: Chartered Management Institute (This paper received the CMI/John Wiley award as the best article of the year in 2013)

Key Funding

The project has been commercially funded since its inception in 1997. The project was initially funded by the Post Office (£75,000) and has since been funded by Adecco, the Health and Safety Executive and Simplyhealth. Total funding since 1997 has been in excess of £250,000.

4. Details of the impact

Shaping and informing practitioner and public debate: Each of the QoWLP reports has generated a substantial number of media hits. Information from Kindred (the CMI's PR agents) revealed that the 2012 study generated over 520 hits in media such as the Financial Times, the Daily Telegraph, the Independent, Public Finance, Sky TV News, BBC Radio 4 and 5, the Huffington Post and several regional BBC Radio channels. **Worrall** and Cooper also took part in a CMI sponsored webinar with practitioners to discuss the implications of their research. Clear evidence of impact on management practice can be seen from the award of the CMI's "Management Article of the Year 2013" to **Worrall** and Cooper. The CMI Management Articles of the Year competition was introduced in 2011 under the oversight of CMI's Academic Advisory Council. The purpose of the competition is to assist universities in disseminating their research findings to a wider audience, to help them demonstrate societal impact and to raise the profile of their work with managers and employers. The aim of the competition is to produce articles that will benefit practising managers "by providing them with insights from credible, authoritative and leading edge research". The articles are rated for their usefulness and rigour by CMI members - the clear majority of whom are practising managers. **Worrall** was the principal author of the 2013 winning paper.

Impact in Telford and Wrekin Council: The research has provided a comparative base against which individual organisations have been able to benchmark themselves. Telford and Wrekin Council, with consultancy support from **Worrall**, conducted biennial surveys using the QoWLP questionnaire to gather evidence to design and deliver an organisational development strategy. This process ran from 1998 to 2009 during which time the council was classified as an "Excellent" council. By being able to benchmark itself against the QoWLP norms, the council could identify its strengths and weaknesses and put in place a development strategy that could be monitored and

continually evaluated. During the consultancy intervention, targeted actions by the Council resulted in the level of bullying in the council declining by half. Insights developed from the QoWLP were built into the council's organisational development strategy. The former Chief Executive of the council (Michael Frater CBE) stated that the research had been "absolutely essential" to the identification of issues in the council, in monitoring the effectiveness of policy and in learning from interventions. The Telford and Wrekin research was published in 2011 as "A case study in organisational analysis and organisational development" in Dundon T and Wilkinson A (eds) Cases in global people management, strategy and innovation (Sydney: Tilde Publishing).

Impact in Simplyhealth: Additional questions were included in the survey to support product and strategy development in Simplyhealth. Simplyhealth also decided to work with the CMI/QoWLP team to improve their brand positioning. Meesha Birch, Product Development Manager at Simplyhealth stated that the survey enabled them to achieve their targets of brand awareness and that the survey had had a significant commercial impact. More specifically, Birch indicated that the survey helped them to "steer their marketing", to improve their marketing focus and had changed "how we talk to our customers" [b]. She also indicated that the survey had been used to improve their products and their credibility with their customers. She indicated that the study would generate long term benefits for the company and have a significant commercial impact from the development of new business. Simplyhealth intend to fund further research through the QoWLP/CMI in 2014. Simplyhealth has also extensively broadcast the research through its own publications and website.

Impact in the CMI, AIM and MPC: The research was used extensively to reshape 75 Australian Institute of Management (AIM) leadership and management courses delivered to practising managers in Australia and New Zealand. The prime input from the research was the analysis of leadership styles and their effect on issues such as employee engagement [d]. The CMI reported that the 2012 main report had been downloaded 373 times and the executive summary had been downloaded 169 times. The survey had been extensively covered in the CMI's house journal – Professional Manager – which was distributed to all of its 90,000 members. The CMI estimate that the research will have reached over 100,000 of its stakeholders via the CMI newsletter [a]. A "Workplace, Wellbeing and Stress" summit hosted by the CMI and Simplyhealth in November 2012 attracted 60 practitioner delegates from major UK employers all of whom were influential in the field. CMI estimated that the survey generated an advertising value equivalent (AVE) of £126,000 and AIM estimated that the survey generated an AVE of £75,000 in Australia and New Zealand. Research with Ahmed in Malaysia assisted the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) to improve employee welfare programmes. These research findings were presented to the MPC and onward to the Malaysian Ministry of International Trade. The research was publicised widely, including on Malaysian TV and in the Straits Times [f]. In 2012, Lindorff presented the QoWLP research to a workshop comprising 200 of the most senior public officials in Sri Lanka. The workshop was designed to assist the development of employee health and wellbeing policy and programmes in Sri Lanka's public sector.

Impact at the Work Life Balance Centre (WLBC) <http://www.worklifebalancecentre.org>: In 2008 and 2009, **Worrall** and Skinner undertook research into work-life balance in parallel to **Worrall's** research on the QoWLP. The surveys were designed to complement each other. Hurst (Director, Work Life Balance Centre, WLBC) estimated that the advertising value equivalent (AVE) of each survey was in excess of £60,000 and that the research had achieved over 300 media hits annually [c]. As a result of the research the WLBC had secured business from BP, BT, Welsh Water and the Royal Mail valued at over £70,000. The publication of the research has had significant reach, having been quoted in the House of Commons and House of Lords, and covered in BBC News 24, BBC1 News, the Daily Express, the Guardian, Personnel Today, Radio 5 and the THES.

Impact in Spring International: **Worrall** has been appointed as a founding member of the Global Advisory Panel (GAP) of Spring International which is an HR and OD consultancy based in USA. Spring International established the GAP to demonstrate to its international clients that it was aware of HR/OD developments worldwide and as a basis for providing international comparators to its clients particularly Wal-Mart and Amazon. The availability of UK comparators has made a significant impact in Spring International by enabling them to secure work from Amazon's

European Order Fulfilment Centres. Jameson (Senior VP of Spring International) commented “having access to research from outside the USA – especially in the UK where our clients Staples, Cintas, Amazon and Walmart have a significant presence, gives my company a significant competitive edge which we are trying to develop further with Professor **Worrall**’s help through the continued development of our Global Advisory Panel” [e].

Impact in the National School of Government: Coventry University (Talbot) has delivered a leadership development programme to the National School of Government at Sunningdale. Research from the QoWLP was used to underpin a developmental programme that explored the relationship between organisational trust and leadership styles. Feedback from the executive development programme for senior civil servants labelled the programme as “excellent” and “thought provoking” (Moirra Wallace, Permanent Secretary, DECC).

Summary of impacts and the research dissemination strategy

A three-tier dissemination strategy was adopted. The first tier focused on producing peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters in publications targeted on practitioners and those engaged in masters/executive level education. The second tier focused on mainstream practitioner-oriented publications such as Professional Manager, People Management and Personnel Today [g,i]. The aim of these publications was to put the research into the practitioner domain in order to raise practising managers’ awareness of the salient points arising from the research. The third tier focused on disseminating the research more widely to engender public debate using vehicles such as the TES; the THES; the Guardian [j], the Financial Times [k], BBC Radio 4’s Today Programme; and, a regular set of articles in the Sunday Times Business Section.

Conclusions

In summary, the QoWLP has made impacts at four levels and has had a wide reach:

- It has had an impact by encouraging public debate as evidenced by a significant volume of high quality media hits (for example, the Financial Times, the Times, BBC Radio 4/5 and over 500 other media articles in one year);
- It has had an impact on policy development in professional and governmental bodies such as the CMI, AIM and the MPC as evidenced by its dissemination to 90,000 CMI members and over 100,000 CMI stakeholders
- It has had an impact on improving how individual organisations are managed as evidenced by the consultancy work conducted at Telford and Wrekin Council for over a ten year period; and,
- It has had a commercial impact in organisations such as Simplyhealth which has used the research to improve their market positioning and product development and by Spring International which has used the research to win new business and to provide international comparators for their consulting work in large, international organisations such as Wal-Mart, Amazon and Staples.

The geographical reach of the research has also been considerable and has included the UK, Australia, Malaysia, the USA, Sri Lanka and New Zealand.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- a) Testimonial from Head of Policy, Chartered Management Institute, London
- b) Testimonial from Product Development Manager, Simplyhealth, Andover, Hants
- c) Testimonial from Director, Work-life Balance Centre, Leicester
- d) Testimonial from Head of Stakeholder Relations, Australian Institute of Management
- e) Testimonial from VP, Spring International, Pennsylvania, USA
- f) Monash Article: <http://tinyurl.com/qc3o7p3>
- g) HR Magazine Article: <http://tinyurl.com/alijibe>
- h) Article in Times of India: <http://tinyurl.com/ojqs5ty>
- i) Personnel Today Article: <http://tinyurl.com/oemos4g>
- j) Guardian Article: <http://tinyurl.com/qy4t27v>
- k) Financial Times: Article, 17 July 2012 <http://tinyurl.com/odnzuj5>
- l) LSE Politics Blog: <http://tinyurl.com/q2yfvts>
- m) Unison Blog: <http://tinyurl.com/pdadff9>