

# A logo-leadership intervention: Implications for leadership development

## Authors:

Frances Scholtz<sup>1</sup>  
Freddie Crous<sup>2</sup>  
Adèle Thomas<sup>2</sup>

## Affiliations:

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Management, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

<sup>2</sup>Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

## Correspondence to:

Frances Scholtz

## Email:

frances.scholtz@monash.edu

## Postal address:

PO Box 1779, Glenvista 2058, South Africa

## Dates:

Received: 03 Dec. 2014  
Accepted: 26 May 2015  
Published: 31 Aug. 2015

## How to cite this article:

Scholtz, F., Crous, F. & Thomas, A., 2015, 'A logo-leadership intervention: Implications for leadership development', *Acta Commercii* 15(1), Art. 297, 9 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ac.v15i1.297>

## Copyright:

© 2015. The Authors.  
Licensee: AOSIS  
OpenJournals. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

## Read online:



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

**Orientation:** Logo-leadership development challenges leaders to move beyond financial or individual gain to accepting leadership as a calling.

**Research purpose:** The objective of the study was to ascertain whether an intervention embedded in the life and teachings of logo-therapist Viktor Frankl affects the way aspiring leaders construct leadership in terms of meaning (logo-leadership).

**Motivation for the study:** A consideration of Frankl's life gives rise to the question of whether aspiring leaders can learn from and use his life teachings as an inspiration in the discovery of meaning for themselves as leaders.

**Research approach, design and method:** Participants comprised 20 students registered for an MCom degree at a South African metropolitan university. The research process involved three phases: (1) a pre-intervention questionnaire, (2) an appreciative inquiry intervention and (3) a post-intervention questionnaire. Framework analysis and a comparative method were used to analyse the data.

**Main findings:** A meaning-centred leadership development intervention may impact the leadership role orientation of aspiring leaders, changing it from a predominantly career orientation to a calling. However, this effect largely occurred on an explicit (extrinsic) level.

**Managerial implications:** Organisations that wish to develop logo-leadership may consider using the life teachings and work of Frankl as a development tool.

**Contribution/value-add:** This study contributes theoretically to a relatively new development within the field of Frankl's logotherapy, leadership with meaning (logo-leadership). On a practical level, this study introduced the concept of logo-leadership for leadership development and suggests that leadership may be influenced by exposure to a leadership intervention.

## Introduction

### Setting

Effective leadership is a source of organisational competitive advantage (Lord & Hall 2005; Wasserman, Anand & Nohria 2010) and the importance of leadership remains indisputable (Bartone *et al.* 2009). In addition, an organisation's competitive advantage is linked to its ability to develop a continuous supply of effective leaders (Fisher-Yoshida & Geller 2008; Leskiw & Singh 2007). Two mutually exclusive views of leadership exist. One school of thought argues that leaders are born and therefore the needed characteristics develop subconsciously; hence, no development programme can assist the process (Grint 2000). The second school of thought states that leaders are made and seeks to understand the conscious steps needed to become a leader (Mostovicz, Kakabadse & Kakabadse 2009).

Frankl (1984) was of the opinion that meaning in life is discovered and not created. Wrzesniewski (2012) concurs that callings (related to meaning) can be discovered. This presents a third school of thought: leadership, in general, and logo-leadership or leadership with meaning, in particular, may be discovered as opposed to leadership being either innate or made. This suggests that an intervention for the development of logo-leadership should start with a phase involving the discovery of meaning. Frankl's logotherapy assists individuals in finding meaning by creating an environment that facilitates the search. Therefore, the methods and principles of logotherapy, or the search for meaning in life, could, in the same way, be used to facilitate the development of logo-leadership. This study set out to explore the latter.

Increasingly, leaders are encouraged to reflect on meaning in their organisations as there appears to be a relationship between engaging in meaningful work and organisational outcomes (Cameron 2008). This presents a challenge to aspiring leaders to go beyond merely increasing

their own wealth or that of their shareholders through their work activities to finding meaning in the work they do (Owen 2004).

The difficulty of developing leaders by challenging them to seek meaning in their work beyond that of financial or individual gain might be enabled by approaching leadership development from the vantage point of an individual's search for meaning in life, or what Frankl (1973a; 1973b; 1984) refers to as the spiritual dimension of human existence. This dimension has also been expressed as the need of human beings to find meaning in what they do (Hood, Hill & Williamson 2005). According to Thompson and Janigian (1988), meaning relates to the significance and worth of one's life. If leaders can recognise that life has meaning, and, in effect, that leadership within organisations has meaning, this awareness may provide motivation and inspiration for these leaders to move beyond the prime pursuit of financial and individual interests. Accordingly, the research question posed is: Can aspiring leaders learn from, or be influenced by, the life, teachings and work of Frankl and his discovery of meaning in severely adverse circumstances? Frankl challenges one's perceptions of meaning and the importance thereof by his example of living a life of meaning in times of great suffering and through his life's work on logotherapy.

The objective of the study was to ascertain whether an intervention embedded in the life and teachings of Frankl could influence the way aspiring leaders construct the concept of leadership in terms of meaning. This objective incorporated two sub-objectives. The first was to ascertain whether aspiring leaders were able to change their views on leadership on an extrinsic (explicit) level with regard to leadership with meaning (logo-leadership) that is change their views of the concept of leader role orientation from job or career orientations to a calling orientation (Wrzesniewski 2003; 2012). The second was to ascertain whether aspiring leaders were able to change their views on leadership on an intrinsic (implicit) level with regard to leadership with meaning (logo-leadership), that is, change their role orientation to a calling orientation rather than to job or career orientations (Wrzesniewski 2003; 2012).

The literature review that follows highlights the work of Frankl and the concept of logo-leadership. A description of the research process followed is given. The findings of the study are then presented and the ethical considerations relating to the participants are noted, along with a reflection on the trustworthiness of the findings. The discussion of the findings locates such findings within the context of the theoretical foundation laid in the literature review. The limitations of the study are stated and recommendations for future research in the field of logo-leadership development are offered.

## Literature review

Frankl (1984) set an extraordinary example by embracing the tragedies of his experiences within the Auschwitz

concentration camp in the Second World War and saw this as an opportunity to study man's reactions to horrific circumstances. He is an example of a man who held onto meaning despite facing terrific tragedies including the loss of identity, human dignity, almost his own life on several occasions and the murder of his parents and pregnant wife (Coetzer 2003; Maxwell 2006). Frankl (1973a; 1973b; 1984), who subsequent to his death camp experiences, became 'the prophet of meaning' (Krasko 2004:22), focused on the importance of finding meaning in life, which he referred to as logotherapy (Shantall 1997). Thus, logotherapy is built on the premise that the search for meaning in life is the primary motivational force for all human behaviour (Marshall 2009). Frankl (1969) explains that meaning in life can be found in one of three ways: what we contribute to life, what the world offers to us, primarily in terms of relationships, and the stand we take towards an unchangeable fate.

Contribution to life includes engaging in work as an avenue to find meaning. Therefore work, irrespective of its nature and type, can be meaningful and purposeful. This thought resonates with the work orientation theory by Wrzesniewski (2003; 2012) and Wrzesniewski *et al.* (1997), who propose that individuals subscribe to three work orientations, these being job, career or calling. Those who see work as a job do their work primarily for financial or material rewards from which to benefit outside work life. Hardly any personal satisfaction is gained from the work itself and passions are pursued outside work with the financial means provided by the work. Individuals with a career orientation are motivated by success and seek to achieve power, recognition and advancement that come from performing their work well. Work is thus a means to promotion or gain in advancement, recognition and development of potential.

Holding the view of work as a calling characterises individuals who work for the sake of the work itself. They consider work inherently fulfilling. They seek a greater good, regardless of the material rewards offered by their work. Their work offers a sense of meaning that reaches beyond personal benefit or acquisition of reward. Work is seen as an expression of one's life's purpose. Wrzesniewski (2012:46) defines a calling as 'a meaningful beckoning toward activities that are morally, socially and personally significant'. Hall and Chandler (2005:160) note a calling to be 'work that a person perceives as his purpose in life'. Wrzesniewski (2012) argues that callings are action-oriented, prosocial in focus and evoked by a sense of meaning. The calling orientation has a strong connection with the concept of meaningfulness (Wrzesniewski *et al.* 1997). The more individuals experience their work as a calling, the more meaning is found in work or a higher sense of meaning is attained. Wrzesniewski (2012:48) affirms that those who look at work through the lens of a calling experience their work as 'deeply meaningful'.

Frankl's (1969) idea that meaning can be found in work corresponds with, and appears to be aligned to, the calling orientation of Wrzesniewski *et al.* (1997). Both Frankl (1984)

and Wrzesniewski (2012) are of the opinion that meaningful work is not limited to particular types of work and may be experienced in any job, and that experiencing work as meaningful has substantial positive effects that include benefits on individual, group and organisational levels. On an individual level there are behavioural, attitudinal and emotional benefits, including increased performance, enthusiasm, success, happiness and a decrease in stress and depression (Bunderson & Thompson 2009; Cameron 2008; Easterling & Smith 2008). On a group level, employees evidence more faith and trust in leaders, less involvement in conflict, higher intrinsic motivation, stronger identification with the team and healthier group interactions (Wrzesniewski 2003; Wrzesniewski, Tosti & Landman 2006). Finally, on an organisational level, meaning within work ensures a higher level of satisfaction and commitment by employees (Schlechter & Engelbrecht 2006), lower absenteeism, tendency to work overtime without demanding compensation (Wrzesniewski *et al.* 1997), higher retention of key personnel (Cartwright & Holmes 2006) and increased organisational commitment (Mayfield & Mayfield 2012).

Wrzesniewski's (2012) theory of calling, built on the theoretical foundations of Frankl (1984), is illustrated in Table 1.

Leaders at various levels can find meaning in work and can inspire followers to do the same. The person, not the status of a career or profession, provides meaning to the job (Pattakos 2004). If leaders appreciate the importance of meaning and internalise this concept, they may be challenged to reconsider their work orientations or, more accurately, their leadership role orientations. Therefore, the individual leader is challenged to reflect on the question: why do I lead?

Leadership with meaning, or what Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) refer to as logo-leadership, is the connection between leadership and Frankl's logotherapy. Mayfield and Mayfield describe logo-leaders as those who incorporate logotherapeutic techniques, find their own meaning in what they do, and assist employees to search for meaning in their work. For that reason, leaders must first appreciate the importance and benefits of finding meaning in order to be motivated to search for their specific meaning in work. Only when leaders have an appreciation of meaning can followers, in turn, be encouraged to find meaning in their work. Therefore, the point of departure in developing leaders in this regard is to promote an appreciation of the importance of meaning in work for leadership in general, as well as an appreciation of the importance of meaning in work

for the individual as a leader, in particular. The present study also raises the question of whether leadership can be developed by exposure to a leadership intervention and contributes to the consideration of the practical steps that can be considered in the development of leaders.

## Research method and design

### Research approach, strategy and setting

This exploratory study aimed to gain insight into a relatively unknown phenomenon and to explicate central concepts and constructs. The philosophical underpinning is social constructionism (Gergen 1985) which is embedded in postmodernism and suggests that meaning is co-created (Ellingson 2009; Ospina & Foldy 2010). Accordingly, a qualitative methodology was chosen which is useful for the study of human behaviour (Bryman 2004; Denzin & Lincoln 2003; Nastasi & Schensul 2005) and, particularly, when the concept of leadership is explored (Conger 1998).

A case study approach was adopted to explore a complex issue over a particular period of time and within a specific context (O'Leary 2006) in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the issue (MacPherson, Brooker & Ainsworth 2000).

### Participants and sampling methods

The population comprised all 59 first-year students registered in 2011 for a master's degree in Commerce at a metropolitan university in Johannesburg. From this population, 22 students volunteered to participate in the study, with 20 participating throughout and thus comprising the sample. These students aspired to leadership positions as indicated on their applications for the degree. They also evidenced a particular interest in leadership as they volunteered to participate in the study knowing that it would involve a leadership development opportunity. Accordingly, purposive, non-probability sampling was used to understand the issues under consideration in the designated population (Greener 2008; Zikmund *et al.* 2010).

The average age of the participants was 32 years, with most (14) being between the ages of 31 and 40 years. Sixteen of the participants were male. English was the home language of five participants and Sotho of four participants. The remaining participants evidenced a spread across the other six South African language groups. Participants worked in five different industries: financial services (7), supply chain management (5), business consulting (2), information communication and technology (2) and education (4). The majority (16) held positions within the private sector and management levels varied from top management (9), middle management (7) to lower management or operational level (4). Half of the participants had been in their positions for less than 36 months.

### Data collection methods and recording

The data collection method and recording of the data are set out in Figure 1.

**TABLE 1:** Alignment of the work of Frankl and Wrzesniewski.

Meaning Frankl's logotherapy (1984)	Calling Wrzesniewski (2012)
Freedom of will. The individual has to take responsibility and has to take steps (action) towards finding meaning.	Action-oriented
Meaning flows from reaching beyond egocentric needs and goals towards others. Ultimate meaning (knowledge that one forms part of a bigger picture) assists the search for meaning.	Prosocial in focus
Will to meaning. The most basic human need is to find meaning in life.	Evoked by a sense of meaning

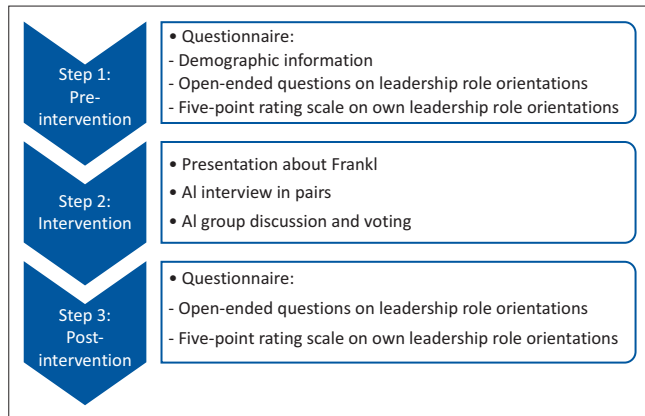


FIGURE 1: Summary of data collection method.

Two questionnaires were administered, at the pre-intervention and post-intervention stages. The questionnaires were identical with the exception that questions relating to demographic and biographic information and knowledge of Frankl's life and work were included in the first (pre-intervention) questionnaire only. The first section comprised three open-ended questions designed to ascertain the participants' perceptions of leadership in general. An example of a question in this section was:

'Leaders will find their role rewarding when ...'

The second section included three questions to assess the participants' personal leadership role orientations based on each of the work orientations described by Wrzesniewski *et al.* (1997). Participants rated themselves on a five-point Likert-type scale for each question that related to a specific role orientation. An example of a question in this section was: 'As a leader, I regard a leadership position as one that mainly provides financial and material wealth'.

The questionnaires were piloted with six undergraduate students in order to ensure that all questions and instructions were understandable.

## Intervention

The intervention consisted of a presentation about the life, ideas and work of Frankl by Burger (2007) who, for his PhD in Industrial Psychology, interpreted the work of Frankl for organisational developmental purposes.

The second part of the intervention consisted of an appreciative inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros 2008) into logo-leadership inspired by Frankl and his work. AI is an organisational development approach for effecting positive change and is an alternative to the traditional problem-solving approach to organisational development and change (Crous 2008). Three streams of thought underpin AI (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003): social constructionism, based on the idea that the world is socially constructed and communication is the central process that creates, maintains and transforms our realities. Image theory, in the sense that positive imagery, approached collectively, may be considered to be the strongest

approach for co-creating a positive future. And grounded research methodology, based on a willingness to understand the system through the eyes of its participants. These streams of thought maintain the integrity of AI (Crous 2008).

A typical AI intervention consists of five phases. During the definition phase an affirmative topic is chosen. The discovery phase explores the appreciation and identification of life-giving strengths of the system. The dream phase promotes imagining the future system. During the design phase, a preferred social architecture is co-constructed. The destiny phase invokes the system's unique approaches to 'sustain the design from the dream that is discovered' (Cooperrider *et al.* 2008:182). For the purposes of the present study, only phases one and two were applied, since only the essence of the work and life of Frankl had to be considered.

During the AI intervention, participants were paired and interviewed each other using a structured interview guide. The AI interview guide contained 13 open questions to ensure no unnecessary restriction to the participants' responses. All questions were worded in constructive language in order to stay true to the positive character of AI. The unconditional positive questions are in line with the 'guideposts to meaning' as set out by Fabry (1988:9). This was followed by a discussion involving the entire group, during which the participants extracted and refined themes related to the affirmative topic which was leadership with meaning. The AI process was facilitated by the second author, an expert in this field.

## Data analysis

A variation of framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer 1994) was used to investigate change, if any, on an extrinsic (explicit) level with regard to leadership with meaning or leadership role orientation. The extrinsic (explicit) level is the level where beliefs and values are perceived to be true when making decisions, but have not necessarily been internalised. Framework analysis is similar to thematic analysis (Lacey & Luff 2009), the key difference being that although the general approach in both instances is inductive, framework analysis allows 'themes identified a priori to be specified as coding categories' from the outset, in combination with 'other themes or concepts that emerge de novo by subjecting the data to inductive analysis' (Dixon-Woods 2011:39). Framework analysis was chosen for the following reasons: it is driven by the accounts of the participants, it is open to change, addition and amendment throughout, it allows for in-case and between-case analysis and the interpretations gained from the process can be reviewed and judged (Srivastava & Thomson 2009). Framework analysis also follows a systematic linear process that is repeatable and provides focus (Srivastava & Thomson 2009).

The specific process was executed in the following way: the work orientation theory (Wrzesniewski 2003; 2012; Wrzesniewski *et al.* 1997), reframed as leadership role orientations for the purpose of this study, was used as the framework for the data analysis. Each individual case was

systematically analysed according to this framework and the analyses from all cases were, thereafter, integrated into a general framework.

In order to ascertain change with regard to leadership with meaning or leadership role orientation on an intrinsic (implicit) level, if any, the numerical scores awarded to a specific role orientation pre-intervention were compared to the corresponding orientation scores post-intervention for each participant. The intrinsic (implicit) level is the level where beliefs and values are deeply rooted and ingrained, which are the actual rules that dictate life decisions. The individual results were integrated to present an overall view of change on the intrinsic (implicit) level. This was followed by taking into account the highest score on the Likert scale given to a specific role orientation by each participant, before and after the intervention. The following example with regard to rating is given: before the intervention, a participant may have allocated a value of 5 on the Likert scale for the statement 'As a leader, I regard a leadership position as one that mainly provides financial and material wealth'. If the score allocated to all the other statements was less than 5, this indicated that, pre-intervention, the success role orientation was dominant. The individual scores for each role orientation were added to provide a group score for these orientations. This allowed for the comparison of the pre-intervention group scores with post-intervention group scores to ascertain the extent to which change in role orientation occurred.

## Results

In reporting change on an extrinsic (explicit) level, a comparison of the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores was compiled for each of the 20 participants and then consolidated for the group.

Only three of the participants had some prior knowledge of Frankl and his works. Accordingly, the majority of the participants were exposed to Frankl's work and ideas for the first time during the intervention and it can be assumed that the possible influence of earlier exposure to such intervention was therefore reduced.

Overall, the data show a change from the dominant career orientation (45) pre-intervention to that of a calling orientation (51) post-intervention. Job and career orientations decreased after the intervention. These findings are reflected in Figure 2 and are summarised as follows: at pre-intervention six themes emerged relating to job orientation, 45 to a career orientation and 27 to a calling orientation. After the intervention only two themes related to a job orientation, 15 to a career orientation, and 51 to a calling orientation (see Figure 2).

The calling orientation was the only orientation to increase post-intervention suggesting that, at an extrinsic (explicit) level, the intervention was successful in that the participants revised their views regarding leadership from those of being self-centric (job and career orientations) to that of being other-centric (a calling orientation).

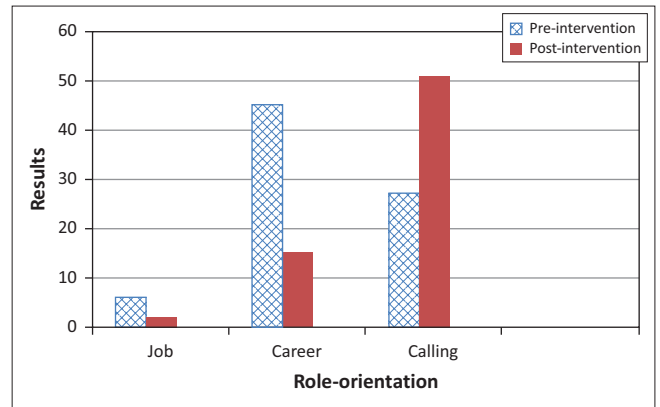


FIGURE 2: Extrinsic (explicit) level results.

To make sense of the scores relating to a leadership orientation on an intrinsic (implicit) level, the data were investigated to ascertain changes in ranking order of the three orientations pre-intervention and post-intervention. The orientation that each participant ranked most true was counted. If two or three orientations were ranked equally as highest, both or all three were counted. Table 2 indicates the change in scores on the intrinsic (implicit) level.

Figure 3 visually presents this change in orientation on the intrinsic (implicit) level.

TABLE 2: Change in scores on the intrinsic (implicit) level.

Participant	Orientation	Intrinsic (implicit) level		
		Pre	Post	Changes
1	Job-orientation	3	3	None across all three
	Career-orientation	4*	4*	
	Calling-orientation	2	2	
2	Job-orientation	5*	1*	Decrease
	Career-orientation	5*	1*	Decrease
	Calling-orientation	1	1*	None
3	Job-orientation	3	3	None across all three
	Career-orientation	4*	4*	
	Calling-orientation	4*	4*	
4	Job-orientation	3	3	None across all three
	Career-orientation	5*	5*	
	Calling-orientation	1	1	
5	Job-orientation	4*	4*	None across all three
	Career-orientation	4*	4*	
	Calling-orientation	2	2	
6	Job-orientation	4	3	Decrease
	Career-orientation	5*	4*	Decrease
	Calling-orientation	3	3	None
7	Job-orientation	3	2	Decrease
	Career-orientation	5*	4*	Decrease
	Calling-orientation	2	1	Decrease
8	Job-orientation	4*	3	Decrease
	Career-orientation	4*	5*	Increase
	Calling-orientation	3	3	None
9	Job-orientation	2	1	Decrease
	Career-orientation	5*	5*	None
	Calling-orientation	1	5*	Increase
10	Job-orientation	4*	3	Decrease
	Career-orientation	4*	3	Decrease
	Calling-orientation	3	4*	Increase
11	Job-orientation	3*	3*	None
	Career-orientation	3*	2	Decrease
	Calling-orientation	2	1	Decrease
12	Job-orientation	2	2	None across all three
	Career-orientation	4*	4*	
	Calling-orientation	1	1	
13	Job-orientation	4	3	Decrease
	Career-orientation	5*	5*	None
	Calling-orientation	2	4	Increase

\*, Highest ranking.

Table 2 continues on the next page →

TABLE 2 (Continues...): Change in scores on the intrinsic (implicit) level.

Participant	Orientation	Intrinsic (implicit) level		
		Pre	Post	Changes
14	Job-orientation	4*	3*	Decrease
	Career-orientation	4*	3*	Decrease
	Calling-orientation	4*	3*	Decrease
15	Job-orientation	1	1	None across all three
	Career-orientation	3*	2*	
	Calling-orientation	1	1	
16	Job-orientation	3	3	None
	Career-orientation	5*	5*	None
	Calling-orientation	2	1	Decrease
17	Job-orientation	2	2	None
	Career-orientation	4*	4*	None
	Calling-orientation	3	4*	Increase
18	Job-orientation	2	1	Decrease
	Career-orientation	5*	4*	Decrease
	Calling-orientation	2	2	None
19	Job-orientation	3	3	None across all three
	Career-orientation	5*	5*	
	Calling-orientation	5*	5*	
20	Job-orientation	3	3	None
	Career-orientation	3	3	None
	Calling-orientation	4*	5*	Increase

\*, Highest ranking.

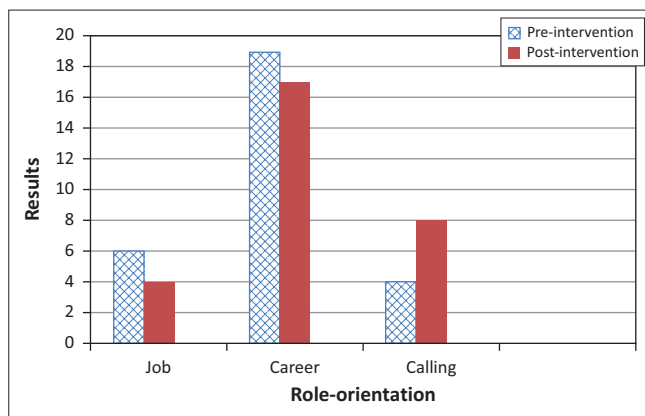


FIGURE 3: Intrinsic (implicit) level results.

At the intrinsic (implicit) level, the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores changed but the ranking order of role orientations remained unchanged. Career orientation remained the highest with calling orientation second highest, followed by job orientation. However, the job and career orientations decreased post-intervention whereas the calling-orientation increased. The data indicate that career orientation decreased from 19 at the pre-intervention stage to 17 at the post-intervention stage. Job orientation also decreased post-intervention from a score of 6 to one of 4. The only orientation that showed an increase was a calling orientation (from 4 at the pre-intervention stage to 8 at the post-intervention stage), suggesting that, at an intrinsic (implicit) level, the intervention brought about a slight change towards a calling orientation. It should be noted that 7 of the 20 participants did not change at all on an intrinsic (implicit) level.

## Ethical considerations

Permission to undertake the study was granted by the ethics committee of the University faculty within which the study was conducted. Students were invited to a presentation a month before the study during which there was a brief

discussion about the nature of the study, the amount of time and effort required, as well as the procedure that was to be followed. In this way students could make an informed decision about whether or not they wished to participate (Bryman 2004). The final invitation to participate included information about participant rights, including the fact that participation was voluntary, that participants could exit the study at any time without prejudice and that the information revealed during the study would be treated confidentially. Participants were informed that the questionnaires and interview schedules would be coded to enable the matching of pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires and that coding ensured that no participant would be individually identified. The data was captured and kept on the personal computer of the first author who instituted security measures to prevent access by third parties.

Due to the constructionist nature of AI and the process being facilitated by an expert in AI, the study exclusively used positive questions to ensure that participants experienced no emotional harm and that participants benefited from the study.

## Trustworthiness

The questionnaire items were based on each work orientation as described by Wrzesniewski (2003; 2012) and Wrzesniewski *et al.* (1997) and, accordingly, each question was theoretically grounded. Data were analysed by means of a structured process namely framework analysis. Code checking, the search for negative cases and prolonged engagement in the form of reading the text several times were all employed as strategies to increase credibility when using framework analysis (Manning 1997).

Strategies to promote dependability of the data (Lincoln & Guba 1985) included the verification of the questionnaire items by experts in the field as well as through the pilot study. A peer examination was conducted of the application of framework analysis by an expert in this particular method. To ensure quality in the first part of the intervention process, an expert, who completed his PhD on the contextualisation of Frankl's logotherapy for organisational developmental purposes (Burger 2007), presented an overview of the work and life of Frankl thus ensuring a trustworthy account. The second component of the intervention, the AI, was facilitated by the second author, an expert in AI.

With a qualitative design of this nature, the potential for the influence of participant response is always present. Only the second author was senior to the participants but he was not involved, in any way, with the instruction of the participants. The third author did not interact with the students at all; the first author was a contemporary of the participants but was a registered student in the class one year ahead. Accordingly, the potential for influence was minimised. However, as a limitation of the study, the potential did exist for participants to respond in a manner that they considered to be socially appropriate.

## Discussion

### Outline of findings

The primary aim of the study was to ascertain whether an intervention embedded in the life, works and teachings of Viktor Frankl, renowned logotherapy, affects the way aspiring leaders construct leadership in terms of meaning (logo-leadership) on intrinsic and extrinsic levels. Two main findings can be drawn from the data. Firstly, the majority of the participants (19) evidenced a change. Secondly, the change involved a decrease in career and job orientations and an increase in calling orientation post-intervention. Consequently, the findings suggest that participants were able to change on an extrinsic (explicit) level with regard to leadership with meaning or logo-leadership. Stated differently, they changed their views of the concept of leader role orientation from a career-dominant view to one of a calling orientation.

The scores regarding change on an intrinsic (implicit) level (i.e. personal orientation) evidenced less change. However, in terms of ranking order, some change was evident. It is noteworthy that, although both the job and career orientations first-place ranking orders decreased post-intervention, the career orientation remained the highest first-ranked orientation. Therefore, it is suggested that the intervention resulted in a positive change on an intrinsic (implicit) level with regard to leadership with meaning (logo-leadership), but that this change was not as noteworthy as the change that took place on an extrinsic (explicit) level.

For many participants (13) it seems that the intervention resulted in an inconsistency between what they viewed leadership should be (extrinsic or explicit level), namely that of a calling, and how they regarded themselves in relation to leadership (intrinsically), namely focused on career success. The intervention, therefore, had a greater effect on the participants' views of leadership, which is extrinsic (explicit), than on their personal intrinsic (implicit) orientation towards leadership. In line with Argyris's (1990:13) notion of espoused theory of action ('the set of beliefs and values people hold about how to manage their lives') and theory-in-use ('the actual rules they use to manage their beliefs'), one may argue that it appears that the intervention changed the aspiring leaders' espoused theories, but had little effect on their theories-in-use. In other words, the aspiring leaders changed their views from that of believing that leaders should lead for success to that of believing that leaders should lead because they experience their role of leadership as a calling. However, this espoused theory is not aligned to the theory-in-use as their personal leadership orientations merely changed marginally, supporting the view that often leaders are not aware that their espoused theory is not aligned to their theory-in-use (Argyris 1990; Argyris & Schön 1974).

These finding may appear to be contradictory. However, the complexity of internalising the intervention and acting accordingly are consistent with the loose coupling between

intentions and behaviour described by Weick (1976). According to Weick, an individual can have different implicit and explicit opinions or views simultaneously. The explicit view is the view of which the individual is aware whilst simultaneously being unaware of the implicit belief that actually dictates the individual's behaviour. Therefore, individuals can explicitly be of the view that leaders should be motivated to lead by a calling, but implicitly still regard their personal motivation to lead as being success-driven.

The theories of Weick (1976) and Argyris (1990) are based on the well-established fact in psychology and psychoanalysis that contradictory motives make up human personality (Freud 1922; Schafer 1983; Sullivan 1953). Therefore, preconscious and unconscious psychological defences or resistance to change need to be addressed before the extrinsic (explicit) view aligns with the intrinsic (implicit) view (Diamond 1986). According to Sullivan (1953), the tendency to protect the status quo is a defensive technique to avoid anxiety. Argyris and Schön (1974) explain that in order to overcome defensive reasoning and modify underlying assumptions, one should first examine current perceptions and then internalise new norms as presented in the intervention.

A manner to address unawareness of the inconsistency between espoused theory and theory-in-use with regard to leadership with meaning (logo-leadership) is by making this inconsistency explicit for those affected (Labroo & Nielsen 2010). In this vein, Argyris and Schön (1974) describe the gap between espoused theory and theory-in-use as an opportunity that creates a dynamic for reflection and dialogue.

Furthermore, it is suggested that the findings support Frankl's (1969) belief that the realisation of personal responsibility and vulnerability leads to people experiencing personal anxiety (Lantz 1998), which causes their resistance to reflection of personal meaning or meaning potentials. Lantz (1998) suggests that this personal anxiety can be resolved by enabling people to become consciously aware of their resistance in order to choose to relinquish such resistance.

## Conclusion

The main finding of this study suggests that a meaning-centred leadership development intervention, using the life works and teachings of Viktor Frankl, may have an impact on the leadership role orientation of aspiring leaders, changing from a predominantly career leadership role orientation to that of a calling leadership role orientation. Nevertheless, the indications are that this effect took place largely on an explicit level and less so on an implicit, internalised level. The change on the extrinsic (explicit) level will not necessarily lead to change in behaviour and actions; positive change may only take place once the desired positive leadership role-orientation of a calling is internalised on an intrinsic (implicit) level. How to bring about this change is a challenge that needs to be addressed by future research and leadership development on a practical level.

The findings must be understood with an appreciation of the complexity of leadership development and an individual's search for meaning, which is unlikely to be entirely addressed using a single intervention. However, this study indicates the potential value of a meaning-centred intervention using the life works and teachings of Frankl to develop logo-leadership. The realisation of the importance of individuals' search for meaning in business organisations and the ability to adapt this knowledge through, for example, the development of logo-leadership, could have an impact on competitive advantage in contemporary business environments.

A comprehensive theoretical model should be developed for leadership with meaning (logo-leadership) and then be empirically verified. A variety of research methodologies should be used in future studies to develop such a model. This study used a complex short-term intervention which meant exposing aspiring leaders to the ideas and life teachings of Frankl in a short period. Research that employs a longer-term approach that includes continuous and multiple leadership development interventions may yield greater success in determining the impact of meaning-centred interventions, more specifically of Frankl's life works and ideas, on leadership development.

Emanating from the findings it is suggested that aspiring leaders, and potential business leaders, would benefit from engaging with Frankl's ideas regarding meaning to encourage the discovery of calling in work. Possibly, his works and teachings can be explored by human resource learning and development practitioners as a helpful developmental tool for leadership development.

## Acknowledgements

### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

### Authors' contributions

F.S.'s (University of Johannesburg) master's research dissertation formed the basis for this article. This article was, in part, presented at the 26th Conference of the South African Institute of Management Scientists in September 2014. F.C. (University of Johannesburg) was the supervisor of the study and facilitated the intervention that comprised a component of the research process. A.T. (University of Johannesburg) was the co-supervisor of the study. All three authors contributed academic input to the study and in the writing of the article.

## References

- Argyris, C., 1990, *Overcoming organizational defenses: Facilitating organizational learning*, Prentice Hall, New York, NY.
- Argyris, C. & Schön, D.A., 1974, *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*, Jossey Bass Inc., San Francisco, CA.

- Bartone, P.T., Eid, J., Johnsen, B.H., Laberg, J.C. & Snook, S.A., 2009, 'Big five personality factors, hardiness, and social judgment as predictors of leader performance', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 30(6), 489–521. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01437730910981908>
- Bryman, A., 2004, *Social research methods*, 2nd edn., Oxford University Press, New York, NY.
- Bunderson, J.S. & Thompson, J.A., 2009, 'The call of the wild: Zookeepers, callings and the dual edges of deeply meaningful work', *Administrative Science Quarterly* 54, 32–57. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2009.54.1.32>
- Burger, D.H., 2007, 'The applicability of logotherapy as an organisation development intervention', PhD thesis, Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Cameron, K.S., 2008, *Positive leadership: Strategies for extraordinary performance*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA.
- Cartwright, S. & Holmes, N., 2006, 'The meaning of work: The challenge of regaining employee engagement and reducing cynicism', *Human Resource Management Review* 16(2), 199–208. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2006.03.012>
- Coetzer, P.H., 2003, *Viktor Frankl's avenues to meaning: A compendium of concepts, phrases & terms in logotherapy*, Viktor Frankl Foundation of South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Conger, J.A., 1998, 'Qualitative research as the cornerstone methodology for understanding leadership', *The Leadership Quarterly* 9(1), 107–121. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(98\)90044-3](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(98)90044-3)
- Cooperrider, D.L., Whitney, D. & Stavros, J.M., 2008, *Appreciative inquiry handbook: For leaders of change*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA.
- Crous, F., 2008, 'From action research to appreciative inquiry: A paradigm shift in organisation development and change', in C.L. Van Tonder & G. Roodt (eds.), *Organisation development: Theory and practice*, pp. 89–105, Van Schaik, Pretoria.
- Denzin, K.D. & Lincoln, Y.S., 2003, *The landscape of qualitative research*, 2nd edn., Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Diamond, M.A., 1986, 'Resistance to change: A psychoanalytic critique of Argyris and Schon's contributions to organization theory and intervention', *Journal of Management Studies* 23(5), 543–562. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.1986.tb00436.x>
- Dixon-Woods, M., 2011, 'Using framework-based synthesis for conducting reviews of qualitative studies', *BMC Medicine* 9, viewed 11 June 2012, from [www.biomedcentral.com](http://www.biomedcentral.com)
- Easterling, D.S. & Smith, K., 2008, 'A factor-analytic investigation of students' perceptions regarding purpose, choice of major and future work', *Journal of College and Character* 10(2), 1–19. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2202/1940-1639.1072>
- Ellingson, L.L., 2009, *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research: An introduction*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Fabry, J.B., 1988, *Guideposts to meaning: Discovering what really matters*, Institute of Logotherapy Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Fisher-Yoshida, B. & Geller, K., 2008, 'Developing transnational leaders: Five paradoxes for success', *Industrial and Commercial Training* 40(1), 42–50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00197850810841648>
- Frankl, V.E., 1969, *The will to meaning: Foundations and applications of logotherapy*, Souvenir Press, London.
- Frankl, V.E., 1973a, *Psychotherapy and existentialism: Selected papers on logotherapy*, Penguin Books, Middlesex.
- Frankl, V.E., 1973b, *The doctor and the soul*, rev. edn., Vintage Books, New York, NY.
- Frankl, V.E., 1984, *Man's search for meaning*, rev. edn., Beacon Press, New York, NY.
- Freud, S., 1922, *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*, W.W. Norton, New York, NY. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/11327-000>
- Gergen, K.J., 1985, 'The social constructionist movement in modern psychology', *American Psychologist* 40(3), 266–275. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.40.3.266>
- Greener, S., 2008, *Business research methods*, Ventus Publishing, Copenhagen, viewed n.d., from [www.bookboon.com](http://www.bookboon.com)
- Grint, K., 2000, *The art of leadership*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Hall, D.T. & Chandler, D.E., 2005, 'Psychological success: When the career is a calling', *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 26, 155–176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/job.301>
- Hood, R.W., Hill, P.C. & Williamson, W.P., 2005, *The psychology of religious fundamentalism*, Guilford, New York, NY.
- Krasko, G.L., 2004, *The unbearable boredom of being: The crisis of meaning in America*, iUniverse, New York, NY.
- Labroo, A.A. & Nielsen, J.H., 2010, 'Half the thrill is in the chase: Twisted inferences from embodied cognitions and brand evaluation', *Journal of Consumer Research* 37(1), 143–158. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/649908>
- Lacey, A. & Luff, D., 2009, *Qualitative data analysis*, *The NIHR RDS EM/YH*, viewed 20 August 2012, from [www.rds-eastmidlands.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.rds-eastmidlands.nihr.ac.uk)
- Lantz, J., 1998, 'Viktor Frankl and interactional group therapy', *Journal of Religion and Health* 37(2), 93–104. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1022922713843>
- Leskiw, S.L. & Singh, P., 2007, 'Leadership development: Learning from best practices', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 28(5), 444–464. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01437730710761742>
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G., 1985, *Naturalistic inquiry*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.



- Lord, R.G. & Hall, R.J., 2005, 'Identity, deep structure and the development of leadership skill', *The Leadership Quarterly* 16(4), 591–615. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.06.003>
- MacPherson, I., Brooker, R. & Ainsworth, P., 2000, 'Case study in the contemporary world of research: Using notions of purpose, place, process and product to develop some principles for practice', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 3(1), 49–61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/136455700294923>
- Manning, K., 1997, 'Authenticity in constructivist inquiry: Methodological considerations without prescription', *Qualitative Inquiry* 3(1), 93–115. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/107780049700300105>
- Marshall, M., 2009, *Life with meaning. Guide to the fundamental principles of Viktor E. Frankl's logotherapy*, Maritime Institute of Logotherapy, Halifax.
- Maxwell, J.C., 2006, *The difference maker*, Thomas Nelson Inc., Nashville, TN.
- Mayfield, M. & Mayfield, J., 2012, 'Logoleadership: Breathing life into loyalty and putting meaning back into work', *Development and Learning in Organizations* 28(2), 11–15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14777281211201178>
- Mostovitz, E.I., Kakabadse, N.K. & Kakabadse, A.P., 2009, 'A dynamic theory of leadership development', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 30(6), 567–576. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01437730910981935>
- Nastasi, B.K. & Schensul, S.L., 2005, 'Contributions of qualitative research to the validity of intervention research', *Journal of School Psychology* 43(3), 177–195. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2005.04.003>
- O'Leary, Z., 2006, *Researching real world problems: A guide to methods of inquiry*, Sage, London.
- Ospina, S. & Foldy, E., 2010, 'Building bridges from the margins: The work of leadership in social change organizations', *The Leadership Quarterly* 21(2), 292–307. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.01.008>
- Owen, J.P., 2004, *Cowboy ethics: What Wall Street can learn from the code of the west*, Stoecklein Publishing, Ketchum, ID.
- Pattakos, A.N., 2004, *Prisoners of our thoughts*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA.
- Ritchie, J. & Spencer, L., 1994, 'Qualitative data for applied policy research', in A. Bryman & R.G. Burgess (eds.), *Analyzing qualitative data*, pp. 173–194, Routledge, London. [http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203413081\\_chapter\\_9](http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203413081_chapter_9)
- Schafer, R., 1983, *The analytic attitude*, Basic Books, New York, NY.
- Schlechter, A.F. & Engelbrecht, A.S., 2006, 'The relationship between transformational leadership, meaning and organisational citizenship behaviour', *Management Dynamics* 15(4), 2–16.
- Shantall, T., 1997, 'What is meant by meaning?', in F. Crous, A.A. Havenga-Coetzer & G. van den Heever (eds.), *On the way to meaning: Essays in remembrance of Viktor Frankl*, pp. 57–72, Viktor Frankl Foundation of South Africa, Johannesburg.
- Srivastava, A. & Thomson, S.B., 2009, 'Framework analysis: A qualitative methodology for applied policy research', *Journal of Administration & Governance* 4(2), 72–79.
- Sullivan, H.S., 1953, *The interpersonal theory of psychiatry*, Free Press, New York, NY.
- Thompson, S.C. & Janigian, A.S., 1988, 'Life schemes: A framework for understanding the search for meaning', *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 7(2–3), 260–280. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1521/jscp.1988.7.2-3.260>
- Wasserman, N., Anand, B. & Nohria, N., 2010, 'When does leadership matter? The contingent opportunities view of CEO leadership', in N. Nohria & R. Khurana (eds.), *Leadership theory and practice: A Harvard Business School centennial colloquium*, pp. 27–64, Harvard Business School Publishing, Boston, MA.
- Weick, K.E., 1976, 'Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems', *Administrative Science Quarterly* 21(1), 1–19. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2391875>
- Whitney, D. & Trosten-Bloom, A., 2003, *The power of appreciative inquiry: A practical guide to positive change*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., San Francisco, CA.
- Wrzesniewski, A., 2003, 'Finding positive meaning in work', in K.S. Cameron, J.E. Dutton & R.E. Quinn (eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship*, pp. 296–308, Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., San Francisco, CA.
- Wrzesniewski, A., 2012, 'Callings', in K.S. Cameron & G.M. Spreitzer, *The Oxford Handbook of positive organizational scholarship*, pp. 45–55, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.
- Wrzesniewski, A., McCauley, C.R., Rozin, P. & Schwartz, B., 1997, 'Jobs, careers, and callings: People's relations to their work', *Journal of Research in Personality* 31, 21–33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/jrpe.1997.2162>
- Wrzesniewski, A., Tosti, J. & Landman, J., 2006, 'If I could turn back time: Calling orientation as a buffer against occupational regret', The Academy of Management Conference, Atlanta, GA, viewed 27 July 2012, from [www.conf.som.yale.edu](http://www.conf.som.yale.edu)
- Zikmund, W.G., Babin, B.J., Carr, J.C. & Griffin, M., 2010, *Business research methods*, 8th edn., South Western Cengage Learning, Manson, OH.