



LEADERSHIP SENSEMAKING: HOW SHAPING AND ACTING IN LEADER'S MIND: A STORY OF VEGETARIAN & VEGAN RESTAURANT

Shou-Der Weng

Department of Tourism, Meiho University

23, Pingguang Rd., Neipu, Pingtung County 91202, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Department of Tourism Management, National Kaohsiung University of Science and
Technology

No. 415, Jiangong Rd., Sanmin Dist., Kaohsiung City 80778, Taiwan (R.O.C.);

x00010627@meiho.edu.tw

Ming-Yuan Wang

Department of Tourism Management, National Kaohsiung University of Science and
Technology

No. 415, Jiangong Rd., Sanmin Dist., Kaohsiung City 80778, Taiwan (R.O.C.);

dave@cc.kuas.edu.tw

*Wei-Shuo Lo

Department of Tourism, Meiho University

23, Pingguang Rd., Neipu, Pingtung County 91202, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

*Corresponding author: x2134@meiho.edu.tw

Abstract

What is hospitability? The answer would be satisfying for a guest's needs. In the hospitability industry, people are one of important factors at the input of the service system. People are employees who play a key role to deliver one or more services to satisfy customers' needs in the service-profit chain. However, how to deliver a satisfied service is one of the critical competences and skills in hospitability industry. Therefore, a leader must to prepare a skill that is how to train their employee can de-

390

liver the service with quality and successfully. In this paper is not to focus what is leadership, since the issues have been broadly discussed and some studies of leadership also have investigated how to apply in different industries. Therefore, the study aims to explore the mind of leader how to shape and why they act with leadership. Through the qualitative research method for a vegetarian & vegan restaurant, data collected by several interviews and observations with the key manager, who is Buddhism but not a Buddhist, and then we find the story of restaurant the mind of leader shaping by mindful and acting by sensemaking leadership

Keywords: Case study, Hospitality industry, Leadership, Mindful, Sensemaking

Introduction

What is hospitality? The answer would be the satisfaction for a customer's needs (Chon and Marier, 2010). The hospitality industry includes lodging, event planning, theme parks, transportations, cruise lines, and restaurants. Most of them belong to one kind of labor-intensive industries, their tasks are controlled by employee how to provide variety services for customers. And the customer's needs are difficult to forecast in hospitality industry especially that is a challenge for managers they do not know customers where they come and which religion they are belief, and then preparing foods or beverages before they arrive.

Slattery (2002) found the hospitality industry is diverse and complex in every country. If we look the hospitality is a demand-supply system at industrial and economic level, we can understand why hos-

pitality industry with characterizations of diverse and complex. At the industrial supply side, the services have to consider from different service providers. Each of them belongs to different business units, and difficult grouping together, especially employee their professional skills should be provided by different services. On the other hand, the demand side is the reason of complexity, because demand side is related to the customer's needs. Customer's needs are difficult to control and sometime are cannot be caught before the customers come. Moreover, the needs are meaning a service has to provide by someone or firms from an organizations of hospitality industry. However, the services are almost intangible and also cannot be storage; especially the service is an important bridge which connects the customers and organizations of hospitality industry.

If the service is an important bridge connects with customers and organizations,

and that has a question is: Who to deliver and how to maintain the quality of the service? Chi and Gursoy (2009) pointed out the employee's satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and financial performance have interconnected relationship been linked together. When service was building as bridge by organization, the employee plays a role of delivery between the customers and organization, and the financial performance will be thus reflected at customer satisfaction. Good service thus shown a higher customer's satisfaction. Contrary to lower customer's satisfaction that means service quality not well or fail, then customer's complaints come. So, the customer's satisfaction impacts the financial performance directly, and the customer's satisfaction therefore affected by employee how to maintain the quality of the service. That means employee plays another role between the customers and organization. Employee is not only to deliver different services, but also walking on the bridge to maintain and test the quality of service, through both two sides between customers and organization becoming the whole service-profit chain (Heskett et al., 1994).

Heskett et al. (1994) pointed out the service-profit chain establishes relationships between profitability, customer loyalty, and employee satisfaction, loyalty, and productively. The employee links a good relationship between customers and organization, and also makes the managerial tasks can "action" then work together. For long-term management can work

smoothly, a leader has to play a role of maintain and test the quality of service, then keep act of the managerial tasks efficiently, but also keep financial performances effectively and customer's satisfaction successfully.

Becoming a leader in the hospitality industry has five steps (Hinkin, 2011) can consideration. Those are including understand yourself, understand your organization, establish objectives and provide the direction, acknowledge good performance and correct poor performance, and be flexible and willing to adapt. This five-step concept explains leaders have to beginning a true heart from them (or called self-knowledge), and to lead others (employees) by organizational goal, then approach organizational profitability (financial and non-financial performances) and customer's satisfaction.

A leader is not only "push" others, but also "pull" others. In fact, although leader belongs to one kind of managerial tasks, but also has a bit different in some parts. As a manager has to control and make sure everything is going on, he or she can do it (task) best by individual, or sometime working with few others.

Walsh et al., (2011) thought leadership is a human capital capability that has to be learned and practiced, and managing is different from leading. If managers would like be a successful leader in hospi-

tality industry must do three crucial things in their jobs: sense making (or sensemaking), visioning, and being inventive. For example, tour manager is another kind of types in the hospitality and tourism industry, the manager no any product has to sale but only one thing she or he has to be done well it provides services well during the travel beginning and then to end. Especially, the manager has to bring tour members from their country fry (travel) to another country (or countries). It is a challenged task for manage if manager does not complete any learning and practical experience, he or she how can be doing well to manage and lead all stranger customers.

Another situation is happened at the kitchen. The executive chef has to lead a lot of members working together, and his / her work is making seamless by all of different culinary workers they cook each different order from customers. These works cover two-level task that is one belongs to technical skills in the cooking, and second one belongs to commanded skills in the management and including leadership. In the managerial for each culinary worker is to command they can do everything well by following all of orders, and then satisfying customer's favor correct. This part has a managed term called SOP (standard of process).

That means culinary workers can do it no problem if following cooking steps by SOP, but the foods cannot be said culinary

delights. Because the workers are only following the SOP, those foods are safety on the table for hungry customers, they do not put the true heart for cooking a culinary delight. So that is the reason why we would like to study this topic, to manage and to lead others is quite different skills, or called different terms, especially, sense-making that has been considered as a specific skill in hospitality industry (Walsh et al., 2011). However, the leader how to work (shaped and act) in mind within sensemaking is still rarely discussed

Therefore, in this paper aims to explore that sensemaking within leader's mind, that includes why and how to shape and act with a leadership capability. And this study through a qualitatively methodology which is case studied by a story of vegetarian & vegan restaurant. The brief of managers and members are all Buddhism, but they are not Buddhist (Nun). So, before the study we do not know why they open a vegetarian & vegan restaurant. Are they or manager shaped by Buddha? And other another question is how they can make the foods of vegetarian & vegan -- culinary delights. Because, most of vegetarian & vegan are not good impression in general customers whose brief are not Buddhism.

Literature Review - Sensemaking in Leadership

Becoming a Leader

In the hospitality industry, the manager needs a skill of creative thinking, knowing how to learning and seeing the mind's eye (Chon and Marier, 2010). This point has fitted above mentions and perspectives by Walsh et al., (2011), the role of leader and manager has a few different characteristics such as leadership has been looked as a human capital capability. The capability that expressed on the nature of how to pull followers (or called subordinates) but not shown as a push.

Based on this point “why and how to shape and act” with a leadership capability within sensemaking, therefore, this paper is not to argue what is leadership, because this issue has been broadly investigations (Northouse, 2012; Pye, 2005). However, we have to know what the natures within leadership first. Northouse (2012) mentioned about the natures of leadership include leadership is a trait, is an ability, is a skill, is a behavior, is a relationship, is an influence process.

In Northouse's (2012) studied, five of natures are quoted here such as ability, skill, behavior, relationship, and influence process. That all are necessary features and related to a leader whose personality. Especially, behaviors of leader will be seen as a meaning what a leader “action.” And the influence process is an important skill when employee been assigned to work with others. Especially, we see this ability represents what the thinking is leader wants

to do before leader working with others through communication. That means leader think is of “how I can lead you do by following my words.”

Those of words, becoming a leader, are explained the management learning by situated curriculum within a manager's legitimate participation influencing the development of situated leadership practice (Kempster and Stewart, 2010). That means becoming a leader has to through a process of practical learning, and then can influence others at the workplace where is situated participation. And especially, this situated learning is “shaping” by the leadership practice. That thus makes leader's behaviors more meaningful to influence others.

To discuss the reason why and how to shape and act within a leadership capability to be more important. Therefore, the following session will discuss this part of shaping and acting in a leader's mind as sensemaking.

Sensemaking in Leadership

A leader's behaviors most of seen as an extrinsic action. Results of action can be looked as managerial performances. Action is tangible at which situation they are for follower or employee; the reason is they can feel or see what's happen now. Moreover, when leadership seen as a capability

from leader's behaviors. And leader's behaviors will be directly affected to the capability of leadership, and then is to be shown as a sensemaking to enable insight into thinking process (Bartunek et al., 1999).

According to above literatures' mentions that we thought, the sensemaking may be considered within two-phase process in the leader's mind which are shaping and acting. Weick et al., (2005) provided they perspective thought sensemaking is about the interplay of action and interpretation rather than the influence of evaluation on choice. Which pointed out that direction of this study is correct, that is within two-phase process in the leader's mind which are shaping and acting.

However, the most of investigations in recent years have focused on second phase that is how acting then to influence the others. For example, Huemer (2012) thought that sensemaking plays an important role in what may become another's successful influence. That means sensemaking has shaped then becoming a form of thinking or idea, through a continuous process to influence the others. So, this is reason why leadership can be explained as a capability by some studies discussed (Chon and Marier, 2010; Walsh et al., 2011, Northouse, 2012).

When most of researches argue what is leadership and how to be shaping by a

leader, Parry and Kempster (2014) thought charismatic leadership is reflexed from followers more, but less from gift of God. This study explains the leadership is making sense of shaping by followers not by leaders themselves, even we know some characteristics of leader are argued by a gift of God. This perspective is quite different above literatures reviewed. Why we argue this point and compare with the shaping and acting what different in a leader's mind. We thought within two-phase process in the leader's mind which are shaping and acting, however, there are existed different features between shaping and acting in leader's mind.

Two-phase process in the leader's mind is shaping and acting. The acting is the first phase, why? Because of acting from leader is an external behavior, for example, the executive chef expresses his / her action (a command) at the moment when kitchen is chaotic, and customer complaints are such like a flood said to restaurant manager without any culinary delights. And therefore, these chaotic experiences which including some actions or any commanded results, even the experience has involved a fail result. And then the failed or successful results will thus be becoming leader's a real experience.

When more and more failed or successful experiences, the experiences are increasing and becoming a lived or useful information, which information thus trans-

formation as an insightful knowledge map (Ancona, 2012) into leader’s mind and shaping (reflex) the leader’s mind directly. Therefore, the shaping is the second phase, which is reflexed experience as a feedback cycle. When insightful knowledge map within leader’s mind, the shaping and acting thus make sense of what happen of leader knowing, doing, and being (Snook et al., 2012).

In sum, according to above literatures reviewed, leader’s mind is existed in in-

sightful knowledge map that but it is also within as a whole operational mechanism. Weber and Glynn (2006) supported this perspective, and explained institutional context affects sensemaking – priming, editing, triggering, which is underling the mechanisms relating institutional context (Macro) to sensemaking (Micro) as Figure 1. This is also made this study finds the correcting direction to explore the answer of studied question, which is “why and how to shape and act” as a sensemaking in leadership in leader’s mind.

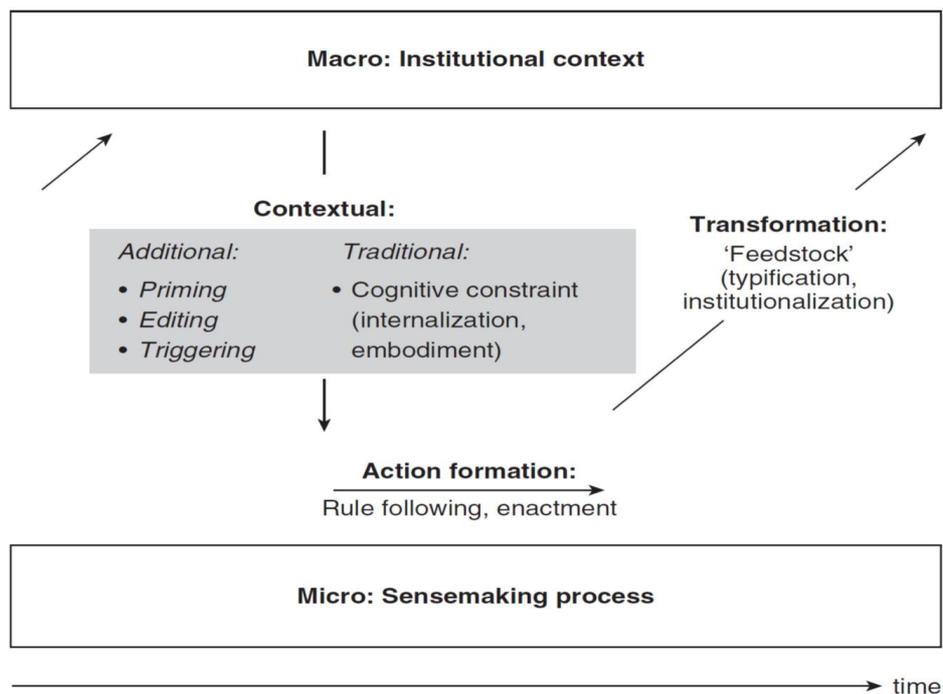


Figure 1. Mechanisms relating institutional context to sensemaking
 By Weber K. and Glynn M. A., (2006)

A Case Study of Vegetarian & Vegan
Restaurant

Methodology – Qualitative Research

Methods

For exploring the studied question, this paper considers qualitative research method. The reason is qualitative research method including observations, focus group, and interviews.

According to Arendt et al. (2012) their perspectives the qualitative research can be used for foodservice organization. And their study also pointed out qualitative research method in hospitality industry can be:

- Investigating complex phenomena that are different to measure quantitatively;
- Generating data necessary for a comprehensive understanding of a problem; and
- Studying outcome variables as well as process variables.

Therefore, this paper aims to explore a comprehensive understanding of a problem, two parts of qualitative research method -- observations and interviews, thus used to investigate an unknown story in hospitality industry of space and time background.

Data Collection - Observations & Interviews

Benedichte and Meyer (2001) thought observation produces rigor when it is combined with other methods, and used of no fully complete observational mode is limited time than extensive participant observation. Why we use observation as first step to gather data, the reason is we do not know each other before this research. The researchers do not any personal relationship with the restaurant manager.

We are through several touches then get the permission can beginning our study. That is also a limitation and challenge for doing field study. Another reason is limited by the business operational time. When peak season or busy time, we are difficult to progress our research, thus only observation can do when we are purely as customers. This phase of observation is from Dec. 2013 to March of 2014.

Arendt et al. (2012) thought individual interviews are used when one-on-one questioning is desired. Sensitive topics or certain interviewee characteristics lend themselves to individual interviews rather than focus group interviews. Why interview is the second step? The reason is our question is related to personally, which belongs to sensitive question, for example, when we asked leader's mind that means manager mindful questions. This phase is also

through several times and not continuously from March of 2014 to March of 2015.

*The Story of Vegetarian & Vegan
Restaurant*

This is an unexploded story which takes place space and time background in hospitality industry. The restaurant locates a famous place where is Wanluan Township in Ping Tung County. Wangluan trotter is always attraction tourists come and then taste. Most tourists thought Wangluan trotters are delicious, even the tourists they come from foreign country.

There are 14 villages distribute in whole Wanluan Township, one of village called Lu Liao, that means the place with clean water from the mountain all the time, most of deer will come and drink. But it is a long-time story for this Hakka's village. And here other places are not like Wangluan village so famous can attract tourists come. They are no more people come and quiet, some temples were built for Buddhism or Taoism. This is very interesting place for living and for slow travel here.

The vegan restaurant in Taiwan is universally, because most Taiwanese belong to Buddhism or Taoism at the same time, and some of older Taiwanese are also vegan. Vegan does not touched meat purely, but the vegetarian can eat egg.

A vegetarian & vegan restaurant locate at Lu Liao village, it is closely Wangluan Trotter Street where people or tourists come and taste Wangluan Trotter, it is strange, and make us interesting to want to know the reason why. When we visited the vegetarian & vegan restaurant, then we unfold the story of why this restaurant locates closely Wangluan Trotter Street and manager's story.

The vegetarian & vegan restaurant does not sale any food for others originally, only cook the food for Buddhist. However, the host of Buddhist temple wants to people can get the karmic reward (Buddhism), that means do not to be a killer, she said that we opened for others not only sale for ourselves. Therefore, the vegetarian & vegan restaurant built and opened for all of people come, they do not care customers who belong Buddhism or not, they just make foods delicious, and not making the foods like traditional vegan.

The manager and here followers are following the vision proposed by host of Buddhist temple. Their gender all belongs to female. They live together in the area of restaurant, they learn and doing the job in the restaurant, and definitely they are commanded by the manager. The manager does not marry now. She was working and learning cooking skills very early when she was a teenager student. She got some of useful concepts from her mother, these concepts such like do not do the wrong

ways – most of mother said the same words. But she thought her mother trained her in the kitchen, most of works was done by her mother herself, she saw and also learn by her mother what to do at the moment. And these lived experiences are a fruitful learning process when she was a teenager student became grown-up, until her mother was becoming a nun, and after some years her mother gone.

Her boss is the host of Buddhist temple, she also a nun. The manager said to us, if no any strong support from her boss, she cannot still work until now. Why? Her boss she said that: I have two vegetarian & vegan restaurants, but I hope that you do another type of vegetarian & vegan restaurant, do not make the foods taste same, and look like same.

It is a challenge goal for her. Only to design a menu which she thought is an easy task also becoming a heavy work. Why? Her boss she said that: we have to make the foods not only a simple way, but also make them difference when you taste as you like it. Two ways affect her from her mother and boss. She learned how to lead others as a leader. But it is not easy to said to others know what happen. Only she knows what happen in her mind. Because of her leadership makes the performance well when her restaurant wins a good reputation from her boss.

The story is constructed by many detailed things that were broken and without the same space and time background in hospitality industry. One is the manager herself grow-up experiences and another one is her boss of the host of Buddhist temple (nun). As an interviewee, she does not say how to lead her followers, and why? She just mentioned fewer things to explain what was happened at the moment when she did. Therefore, we did the very special interviews and observations from her and the restaurant. In sum, is all about Buddha? Thus, we raise this question in our mind when we leave restaurant.

Conclusions

In the end of this study we have something finds conclude about our question according to literature review, which is “why and how to shape and act” as a sensemaking in leadership in leader’s mind. Weber and Glynn, (2006) mentioned their point at the mechanisms relating institutional context to sensemaking (Figure 1.), we thus figure out some answers based on their mechanism follow as below:

Shaping by Contextual

Internalized cognitive constraint (internalization, embodiment) is existed in leader’s mind. For example, we knew the internalized cognitive constraint for the leader of restaurant – the manager, her

mind exists much remember and behavior by her mother's training, which is a past lived experiences. From she was a teenager to grown-up. And then she therefore was constrained by a form of original family.

After she working at vegetarian & vegan restaurant Lu Liao village of Wanluan Township, she shaping by her boss of the host of Buddhist temple (nun). She constrained by a form of original organizational context. This contextual behavior expresses are according to the past experiences as an insightful knowledge map (Ancona, 2012) into her mind to support her can sustain play an important role of leader.

Acting by Sensemaking Process

Priming, editing, triggering is the Sensemaking Process (Weber and Glynn, 2006). Based on the past lived experiences as an insightful knowledge map (Ancona, 2012) in leader's mind, the manager shown her managerial skills. She commands all of followers to approach the goal of vegetarian & vegan restaurant.

Priming, the vegetarian & vegan restaurant wants to restart. The manager prepares everything such as to assemble a special team for hospitality services in cooking, desk, and table when customers come.

Editing, the vegetarian & vegan restaurant wants to redesign heir menu. The manager searches her insightful knowledge map, and according to her boss's ordering, she has to complete an inventive menu more than before. And then asked her members whose tasks are culinary workers to try and finish the different foods.

Triggering, the vegetarian & vegan restaurant wants to receive performances well. This is a related to her self-reliance and mental toughness. Her boss only supports her by few words not full time at the restaurant, and working self-reliance by herself. That means everything she has to trigger her actions by herself. If she is only a manager that means she only can do one thing, she cannot lead others.

After the acting by sensemaking process, the manager thus fits the level of service-profit chain (Heskett et al., 1994) establishes relationships between profitability, customer loyalty, and employee satisfaction, loyalty, and productively.

Finally, in this paper that we through a qualitative research method explore the answer of why and how to shape and act as a sensemaking in leadership in leader's mind. Which examined the sensemaking leadership in leader's mind is shaping by organizational context, and acting by sensemaking process.

References

- Ancona D., (2012), Sensemaking: Framing and Acting in the Unknown, In Snook S.A., Khurana R., and Nohria N. (Eds.), *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership: Knowing, Doing, and Being*, SAGE Publications.
- Arendt S. W., Roberts K. R., Strohbehn C., Ellis J., Paez P., Meyer J., (2012), Use of qualitative research in foodservice organizations, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 24(6), 820-837.
- Bartunek J. M., Krim R. M., Necochea R., and Humphries M., (1999) Sensemaking, Sensegiving, and Leadership in Strategic Organizational Development, *Advances in Qualitative Organizational Research*, 2, 37-71.
- Benedicte C. and Meyer, 2001, a Case in Case Study Methodology, *Field Methods*, 13(4), 329-352.
- Chi C.G. and Gursoy D., (2009), Employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and financial performance: An empirical examination, *International journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(2), 245-253.
- Chon, K.S. and Marier T., (2010), *Welcome to hospitality: An Introduction*, Albany, Delmar, Canada.
- Haksever, C., Render, B., Russell, R. S., & Murdick, R. G., (2000), *Service management and Operations*, 2nd Edition, Prentice Hall, UK.
- Heskett J. L., Jones T.O., Loveman G.W., Sasser W.E. and Schlesinger L.A., (1994), Putting the Service-Profit Chain to Work, *Harvard Business Review*, March-April, 164-174.
- Hinkin, T. (2011), Becoming a leader in the hospitality industry, In M. C. Sturman, J. B. Corgel, & R. Verma (Eds.), *The Cornell School of Hotel Administration on hospitality: Cutting edge thinking and practice* (pp. 65-79). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Huemer, L. (2012), Organizational Identities in Networks: Sense-Giving and Sense-Making in the Salmon Farming Industry. *The IMP Journal*, 6(3), 240-253.
- Kempster S. and Stewart, J., (2010), Becoming a Leader: A co-Produced Autoethnographic Exploration of Situated Learning of Leadership Practice, *Management Learning*, 41(2), 205-219.
- Northouse P. G. (2012), *Introduction to Leadership: Concepts and Practice*, 2nd Edition, SAGE Publications.
- Parry K. and Kempster S., (2014), *Love and leadership: Constructing follower nar-*

rative identities of charismatic leadership, *Management Learning*, 45(1) 21-38.

Pye A., (2005), *Leadership and Organizing: Sensemaking in Action*, *Management Learning*, 1(1), 31-50.

Slattery P., (2002), *Finding the Hospitality Industry*, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, 1(1), 19-28.

Snook S.A., Khurana R., and Nohria N., (2012), *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership: Knowing, Doing, and Being*, SAGE Publications.

Walsh, K., Sturman, M. C., & Carroll, B., (2011), *Preparing for a successful career in the hospitality industry*. In M. C. Sturman, J. B. Corgel, & R. Verma (Eds.), *The Cornell School of Hotel Administration on hospitality: Cutting edge thinking and practice* (pp. 21-36). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Weber K. and Glynn M. A., (2006), *Making Sense with Institutions: Context, Thought and Action in Karl Weick's Theory*, *Organization Studies*, 27(11), 1639-1660.

Weick K. E., Sutcliffe K. M., and Obstfeld D., (2005), *Organization and the Process of Sensemaking*, *Organization Science*, 16(4), 409-421.