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## Human resource development to facilitate experiential learning: the case of Yahoo Japan

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*Although work experiences are recognized as important mechanisms for developing leaders in organizations, existing research has focused primarily on work assignments rather than on human resource development (HRD) systems that promote experiential learning of managers. The primary goal of this study was to develop an HRD model for facilitating experiential learning by examining the case of Yahoo Japan, which has transformed its HRD system based on experiential learning theory. The results indicate that Yahoo Japan has promoted experiential learning at the individual level by introducing new HRD systems consisting of four elements: reflection support (one-on-one meeting and coaching training), assignment support (HRD meeting and job rotation), assessment support (360-degree appraisal and one-on-one meeting assessment) and visionary support (a vision and values). Although these elements are closely associated with each other, reflection support plays a key role in the HRD system. The proposed model is discussed from theoretical and practical viewpoints.*

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## **Introduction**

Work experiences are major sources of personal learning and development in the workplace (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2010; McCall *et al.*, 1988; Morrison & Brantner, 1992). In particular, it is important for managers to have ‘developmental challenges’ or challenging experiences (De Rue & Wellman, 2009; Dragoni *et al.*, 2009, 2011; McCauley *et al.*, 1994). However, such developmental experiences do not guarantee success (McCall, 1998) because not all people learn equally from the same kinds of experience. Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle model indicates the importance of reflecting on work experiences in promoting experiential learning.

Although prior research on experiential learning suggests that it is important for leadership development to assign challenging tasks to managers and to provide them with opportunities to reflect on their experiences (Kolb, 1984; McCauley *et al.*, 1994, 1998), there are few practical HRD models for promoting a manager’s experiential learning. This study focused on Yahoo Japan, one of the high-performing firms in Japan, because the firm has transformed its HRD system comprehensively so that experiential learning of employees is activated by reflection. The purpose of the present research was to develop an HRD model for experiential learning by examining the case of Yahoo Japan. Specifically, this study investigated how experiential learning should be facilitated by an HRD system in terms of an experiential learning cycle model including reflection.

The article is organized as follows. First, the literature on developmental experiences, reflection and leadership development is reviewed. Next, a research question is proposed, based on the literature review. Then, the case of Yahoo Japan is presented. Finally, the results are discussed from theoretical and practical viewpoints.

## **Conceptual background**

### **Experiential learning**

Work experience is the subset of life events that are most directly and immediately relevant to work attitudes, motivation and performance (Quinones *et al.*, 1995; Tesluk & Jacobs, 1998). Kolb (1984) proposed a four-stage cyclical model: (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) abstract conceptualization and (4) active experimentation. That is, immediate personal experience is the basis for observation and reflection, and these insights are assimilated into abstract hypotheses or concepts. Next, these hypotheses or concepts guide learners to create new experiences. This model was

developed based on Dewey's (1938) 'theory of experience' (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), and it is one of the most influential and pervasive models in management learning (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Kayes, 2002; Meyer, 2003; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2007). Yet, his model has been criticized because it fails to consider social factors, critical reflection and meta-learning process (Holman *et al.*, 1997; Reynolds, 2009; Vince, 1998).

Individuals need to experience all four stages of learning to gain maximum developmental benefit from work assignments (Ng *et al.*, 2009). Kolb's (1984) model suggests that learning is a process by which knowledge is created through reflective activities. Prior empirical studies have focused on the 'concrete experience' stage of Kolb's (1984) learning model, investigating the features of work experiences that promote a manager's development (e.g. McCall *et al.*, 1988). Drawing on previous studies, McCauley *et al.* (1994) developed the Developmental Challenge Profile scales that include five types of experience: job transitions, creating change, high level of responsibility, nonauthority relationships and obstacles. Empirical studies have reported that developmental challenge was associated with leadership skill development (De Rue & Wellman, 2009), managerial end-state competencies (Dragoni *et al.*, 2009) and cultural intelligence (Li *et al.*, 2013).

### **Reflection and reflexivity**

It may be somewhat simplistic to assume that assigning challenging jobs would automatically lead to development of employees. Challenging experiences do not always result in learning. As Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model suggests, reflection is necessary to gain lessons from the experience. Although reflection is a key component of learning, managers tend to place a higher value on actions than reflection (Daudelin, 1996). Mirvis (2008) insisted that programs of executive development should include 'consciousness-raising experiences', designed to open the minds and hearts of executives and stimulate reflection on their lives, their work and their companies.

Reflection has been described as the practice of periodically stepping back to ponder the meaning of what has recently transpired – in relation to ourselves and to others – in our immediate environment (Raelin, 2002). Gray (2007) suggested that reflection is an active and purposeful process of exploration and discovery, often leading to unexpected outcomes. These studies indicate that reflection is deemed important for 'experiential learning' because people extract knowledge and skills through reflecting on their daily events.

According to Schön (1983), there are two types of reflection: reflection-*on*-action

and reflection-*in-action*. The former refers to *ex-post-facto* reflection, in which one looks back and thinks about the day or the situation at hand, and the latter means reflection within the immediacy of practice (Yanow, 2009). Reflection-in-action includes on-the-spot surfacing, criticizing, restructuring and testing of intuitive understandings of experienced phenomena; often, it takes the form of a reflective conversation with the situation (Schön, 1983).

People reflect on experiences not only individually but also collectively. Collective reflection at the team level has been examined as team reflexivity. West (2000) defined team reflexivity as the extent to which group members overtly reflect on, and communicate about, the group's objectives, strategies and processes, and adapt these to current or anticipated circumstances. Past empirical studies found that team reflexivity is positively associated with new product success (Dayan & Basarir, 2010; Lee, 2008), team effectiveness (Hoegl & Parboteeah, 2006), team innovation (Somech, 2006) and team functioning (van Ginkel *et al.*, 2009). The results suggest that it is necessary for employees to reflect on work progress with their superiors, subordinates and colleagues in the workplace to learn from their work experiences.

### **Leadership development**

Significant investment in leadership development programs for mid-level and senior executives reflects a prevailing view in many Western societies that effective leadership is a key factor in organizational success (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014). Although there is a long-held assumption that experience plays an important role in developing effective leadership, simply correlating leaders' performance with their work experiences is inadequate for capturing the effects of experience (Day *et al.*, 2014). Reviewing past research on leadership development, Groves (2007) reported the following best practices were used as leadership development methods: 360-degree feedback, executive coaching, mentoring, networking, job assignments and action learning.

Based on research into the developmental experiences of managers, undertaken in the Centre for Creative Leadership (CCL), McCauley *et al.* (1998) proposed a model of leadership development consisting of three elements: assessment, challenge and support. It is assumed that leadership development is most effective when all three elements are present.

The following is an overview of this model. 'Assessment' data from oneself or other people, such as performance appraisals, 360-degree feedback and organizational surveys, gives employees an understanding of their strengths, weaknesses and development needs. 'Challenge' through job assignments forces employees out of their

comfort zone, and requires them to develop new capacities or ways of understanding. 'Support' from other people or organizational cultures and systems helps employees handle challenging experiences and maintain their motivation to learn and grow. Coaching, mentoring and networking can be effective tools for support. Whatever the leader development experience is, the more it contains these three elements, the more impact it has (McCauley *et al.*, 1998; Velsor *et al.*, 2010).

Although CCL's model is based on the concept of developmental experiences, it lacks a clear linkage with academic concepts or models such as the experiential learning cycle, reflection and reflexivity. To develop the HRD model for facilitating experiential learning in the workplace, CCL's model should be revised in terms of experiential learning theories.

### **Research question**

Previous studies have investigated the characteristics of developmental work experiences that promote a manager's learning and performance (e.g. De Rue & Wellman, 2009; Dragoni *et al.*, 2009; McCall *et al.*, 1988; McCauley *et al.*, 1994, 1998). Research on leadership development has largely studied formal HRD practices for succession planning (e.g. Groves, 2007). A problem is that few studies have examined HRD systems for facilitating experiential learning of employees from the perspectives of both developmental work research and leadership development research. One exception is CCL's developmental process model for leadership development. The model was developed on the basis of research on managers' experiences in CCL. However, the model fails to explicitly incorporate the role of reflection.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate how experiential learning can be facilitated formally by the HRD system, based on the case of Yahoo Japan. There are three reasons for choosing Yahoo Japan as a sample firm. First, the firm has transformed its HRD system intentionally based on research into experiential learning. Second, this transformation of the HRD system of the firm was comprehensive. Third, Yahoo Japan is a high-performing firm in Japan, in terms of profitability. By studying Yahoo Japan, it may be possible to gain insights on HRD systems for experiential learning. Thus, the following research question was posed:

RQ: How has Yahoo Japan developed its HRD system to facilitate the experiential learning of employees?

Unlike leadership development research, which deals mainly with selecting high-potential managers, the present research focused on the HRD system not only for managers but also for all employees in the organization. In this paper, experiential

learning refers to a process in which employees acquire knowledge or skills for dealing with their tasks appropriately, through their daily activities. By analyzing the effect of HRD systems on employees' experiential learning, it is possible to investigate social and organizational influence on experiential learning, which Kolb's (1984) model failed to acknowledge (Holman *et al.*, 1997; Reynolds, 2009; Vince, 1998).

## **Methodology**

### **Research design**

This study adopts a single case study approach (Yin, 1994). According to Cresswell (1994), a case study is a methodology in which the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon bounded by time and activity and collects detailed information, using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. Yin (1994) argued that the single case is an appropriate design when the case represents: (1) a critical case tested from a well-formulated theory, (2) an extreme or unique case and (3) a revelatory case. Of these three rationales, the case of Yahoo Japan can be regarded as a unique case because the firm is one of just a few organizations that have designed a comprehensive HRD system based on experiential learning theory.

### **Sample firm**

Yahoo Japan Corporation was founded in January 1996 as a joint venture between the American internet company Yahoo Inc. and the Japanese internet company SoftBank to provide information search services on the Internet. Yahoo Japan started an advertising and online shopping service in 1999, a mobile phone service in 2000, a paid search service in 2002 and net banking services in 2006 (Yahoo Japan, 2014). The daily page views topped 100 million in 2000, 200 million in 2001, 300 million in 2002, and 1 billion in 2004. Yahoo Japan was listed on the JASDAQ market in November 1997, and listed on the First Section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in October 2003. The number of employees is 4860 (as of June 30, 2014). The revenue was 386,284 million yen, and net income was 125,116 million yen in 2013.

Unlike Yahoo Inc., where profits have been falling, because of competition from Google, Facebook and other popular sites, Yahoo Japan, which is not majority-owned by Yahoo, has maintained good financial performance over recent years because no other website in Japan offers a complete package of content under a single portal (Matsutani, 2012).

### **Data collection**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the director, general manager and manager of the HRM department of Yahoo Japan. At the first interview, an HRM manager presented an overview of the transformation of the HRD system using a PowerPoint presentation. Then, the researcher asked questions about the details of how the HRD system had been transformed, and how the HRD system facilitated the experiential learning of employees. Three months later, the researcher interviewed the same three managers to collect complementary data on the HRD system and its effects on experiential learning in the workplace. To collect data on managers' perceptions of the HRD system, the researcher participated in a workshop that was held for all managers of Yahoo Japan to facilitate understanding of the HRD system. After the workshop, the HRM department collected managers' opinions regarding the HRD system with an open-ended questionnaire, which provided important data for this case. Additionally, internal documents prepared by the HRM department (Yahoo Japan, 2013) were also used to describe the case. The procedure for data collection described above is consistent with the concept of the triangulation of data sources and methods (Yin, 1994).

## **The case of Yahoo Japan**

### **Overview of the reforms**

Yahoo Japan began to reform its human resource development (HRD) systems after the management team was replaced in April 2012. The reform was based on the individual experiences of the incumbent director of HRM, who was a subordinate of the current CEO, Manabu Miyasaka. The director had initiated the transformation of the HRD system in his unit based on experiential learning theory in 2006. When Miyasaka was appointed as the CEO of Yahoo Japan in 2012, he ordered the director to incorporate the same systems within the corporation generally. Then, the transformation of the HRD system officially began in earnest.

Yahoo Japan's HRD systems are based not only on experiential learning theory but also on the philosophy of 'fostering the capabilities and passions of manpower' and its vision of 'becoming an engine (power generator) for solving every problem in society'. Figure 1 shows the framework of the HRD system for facilitating experiential learning.

A central part of the system is a one-on-one meeting between superiors and subordinates, implemented on a weekly basis. At the meeting, subordinates can reflect on their work experience and apply lessons learned in the next week. However, the meeting does not necessarily facilitate experiential learning.

There are five systems aimed at making the meeting functional in Yahoo Japan; first,



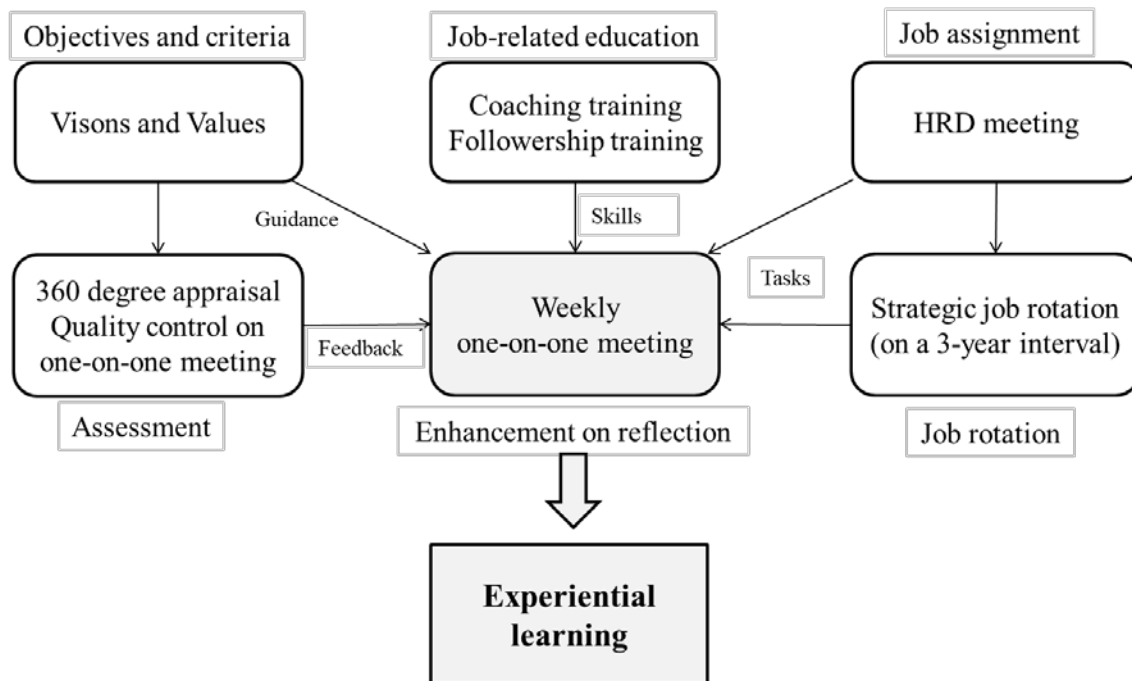
the Vision and Values of Yahoo Japan guide members in appropriate directions. Employees can clearly understand why and how they should do their jobs, according to the vision and values.

Second, the 360-degree appraisal (multi-lateral appraisal), through which employees are assessed by their superior, colleagues and subordinates, motivates employees to work based on the firm's vision and values. Employees receive feedback information on the assessment. The superior's interview skills are also assessed by their subordinates to enhance the quality of the one-on-one meeting.

Third, Coaching Programs are provided with superiors to improve interview skills in one-on-one meetings. Additionally, 'followership' programs in which appropriate follower's attitudes and behaviors are set out are provided for subordinates to facilitate proactive and spontaneous attitudes in the meeting.

Fourth, HRD meetings are held periodically in each workplace to discuss HRD policies and job assignment plans for all individual employees. In the meeting, not only the direct supervisor but also managers in related units, who can observe employees in the workplace, will discuss what kind of tasks should be assigned to them over a year.

The fifth system is Strategic Job Rotation, by which employees change their jobs on a 3-year interval. This prevents employees from being kept in any specific department, and encourages them to have further diverse work experiences. The details of the systems are described below.



*Figure 1: Human resource development systems for experiential learning at Yahoo Japan.*

### **Weekly one-on-one meeting**

A key part of the HRD system is the weekly one-on-one meeting between the superior and subordinate. The purpose of the meeting is to facilitate experiential learning by helping subordinates reflect on their work, and to support them in solving problems and achieving goals.

To ensure the quality and effectiveness of the meeting, a one-on-one assessment is implemented periodically. This is a system in which the subordinate evaluates the appropriateness of the superior's interview methods. Communication between them is improved based on such assessments. Such assessments could conceivably make superiors pander to their subordinates, or suffer from high stress. However, HRM managers at Yahoo Japan commented that such problems do not occur, for three reasons. First, the roles of the superior and subordinate are clearly defined, by coaching programs and followership programs. Second, the HRD policy of 'Fostering the capabilities and passions of manpower' is shared within the firm. Third, managers are assessed by their subordinates, but at the same time, they assess their superiors.

The one-on-one meeting is associated with other elements within the HRD system

and is highly acclaimed by employees at Yahoo Japan, mainly because superiors have become better listeners. Two years have passed since the series of reforms were introduced; thus far, they have reduced the number of employees with mental health issues.

### **Vision and value assessment**

Vision and values play important roles in guiding one-on-one meetings in the right direction. Yahoo Japan set out its vision of 'Becoming an engine (power generator) for solving every problem in society' in April 2012. This vision was developed by adding a concrete message to its previous, more abstract vision, of being a 'Life engine'.

Yahoo Japan has set out four values with which to achieve their vision of a becoming a 'problem solving engine (power generator)', and assesses the extent to which these values are shown in work behaviors by using a 360-degree appraisal system every half-year. A 360-degree appraisal refers to a system in which employees receive confidential, anonymous feedback from the people who work around them, not just their superiors.

The four values consist of: (1) problem solving (capabilities for problem identification and resolutions with a customer-oriented perspective), (2) quick decision making (speed for identification, decision making and implementation towards problem solving), (3) prioritizing goals (prioritizing the primary goal, focusing and committing to results) and (4) being venture minded (admitting failure without shame). These values play important roles for employees as criteria for actions or evaluations in reflecting on their work behaviors at one-on-one meetings.

The extent to which employees adopt the values of the workplace is assessed by about 10 fellow employees, including the employee him/herself, the employee's superior, subordinates and colleagues using a five-point scale (S, A, B, C, D) every half-year. Employees receive not only the scores of the assessment but also concrete comments on their strengths and weaknesses that should be praised and improved.

Before the reform, the appraisal system focused on so-called 'profit', or simply the employee's personal accomplishments. Following the reform, salary is determined, in the main, on the basis of a value assessment; the 'profit' assessment also plays a certain role within this determination.

The HRM department made elaborate preparations regarding the assessment methods before introducing value assessment. For example, they provided periodic orientation sessions and assessment training to all employees to disseminate and share the company's values and assessment methods. Additionally, ways to adjust assessment

inconsistencies were examined based on simulation data of 360-degree assessments. Furthermore, employees who might receive low scores in assessments were selected and encouraged to change their behavior by providing feedback. These preparations were intended to encourage employees to agree with the outcomes of assessments.

### **HRD meeting**

The purpose of HRD meetings is to design mid-term HRD policies and to plan for employees by means of open discussions among a direct supervisor and related managers. The meeting is initiated in each unit at half-year intervals. Subjects at the meeting are all employees ranked lower than general managers. The meetings for managers ranked above directors are held at board meetings of executive officers. HRD meetings play an important role in assigning jobs that promote employee growth.

The procedure in these meeting is as follows. First, subordinates set out their own strengths, weaknesses, ideal career goals over 3 years, and career design for 1 year aimed at achieving their ideal career goals in an HRD personal profile. Then, superiors add comments on the sheet, and discuss the plan with the subordinate.

Next, a superior who supervises the direct superior of the subject calls an HRD meeting as a facilitator. The facilitator selects five or six advisors who are ranked at the same level as the direct superior of the subject, and who know the behavior of the subject in the workplace. It is also recommended that employees in charge of HRD in the unit participate in the meeting to ensure impartial judgment.

In the meeting, the direct superior of the subject explains the HRD personal profile, and the advisors give complementary information on the subject. Then, participants discuss what kind of tasks should be assigned to the subject over a year to attain these career goals, based on the subject's capabilities and aptitude. The average length of time of a meeting is between 1½ and 2 h, because the career plans of five or six subjects are discussed in one meeting, and it is estimated to take about 15 min for each subject, although it may take up to 30–40 min for some employees. After the meeting, the direct superior gives feedback on the HRD policy discussed to the subject during a one-on-one meeting.

By conducting the HRD meeting, it is possible to identify the managerial capabilities of superiors because the meeting reveals how well superiors understand the abilities of their subordinate and whether or not the superior assigns appropriate tasks to them. Thus, the HRD meeting is a situation in which the *manager's* capabilities are assessed as well.

Additionally, a new rule for job rotation, allowing employees to change their jobs on

a 3-year interval, was introduced in 2013. The rule prevents excellent employees from being kept or locked into any specific department.

### **Job-related education**

To make weekly one-on-one meetings work, superiors need to acquire coaching skills to promote subordinates' autonomous behaviors, whereas subordinates need to develop effective followership skills by which they proactively implement their tasks. Yahoo Japan provides coaching and followership training at all levels in the organization to improve these capabilities.

In one-on-one meetings, it is important for subordinates to reflect on their activities at work, extract lessons and apply them to their next job, as suggested in Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model. Superiors are required to facilitate this reflection on the part of their subordinates. However, many superiors tend to reprimand and give orders to subordinates unilaterally at meetings. Managers can learn coaching skills such as being a good listener at the coaching training. Specifically, all managers participated in a 1-day training program on coaching, and about 60 internal coaches have been trained. Executive directors also take executive coaching.

To make the superior's coaching effective, subordinates have to be proactive in their work too. Thus, staff-level employees take training programs in which participants learn important points in implementing followership in the workplace. That is, both coaching and followership are necessary to make the one-on-one meeting work and enable subordinates to reflect appropriately on their work experiences.

### **Summary**

It has been demonstrated that work experiences influence the development of managers, yet there are few organizational transformations based on experiential learning theory. The case described here indicates that the new HRD system at Yahoo Japan facilitates the employees' experiential learning cycle (experience, reflection, extracting lessons and application) appropriately. Specifically, the system involves: (1) one-on-one meetings where employees can reflect on their experiences, (2) effective job assignments, secured by HRD meetings and strategic job rotations, (3) a company vision and values that guide employees in the proper direction, and (4) training programs and assessment systems to enhance the quality of reflection at the one-on-one meeting. These components are integrally linked with each other to promote the experiential learning of the employees.

## **Discussion and conclusions**

### **Findings**

The case of Yahoo Japan can be regarded as unique because the firm has comprehensively transformed its HRD system on the basis of experiential learning theory. The purpose of this study was to develop an HRD model that facilitates employees' experiential learning by examining the case of Yahoo Japan.

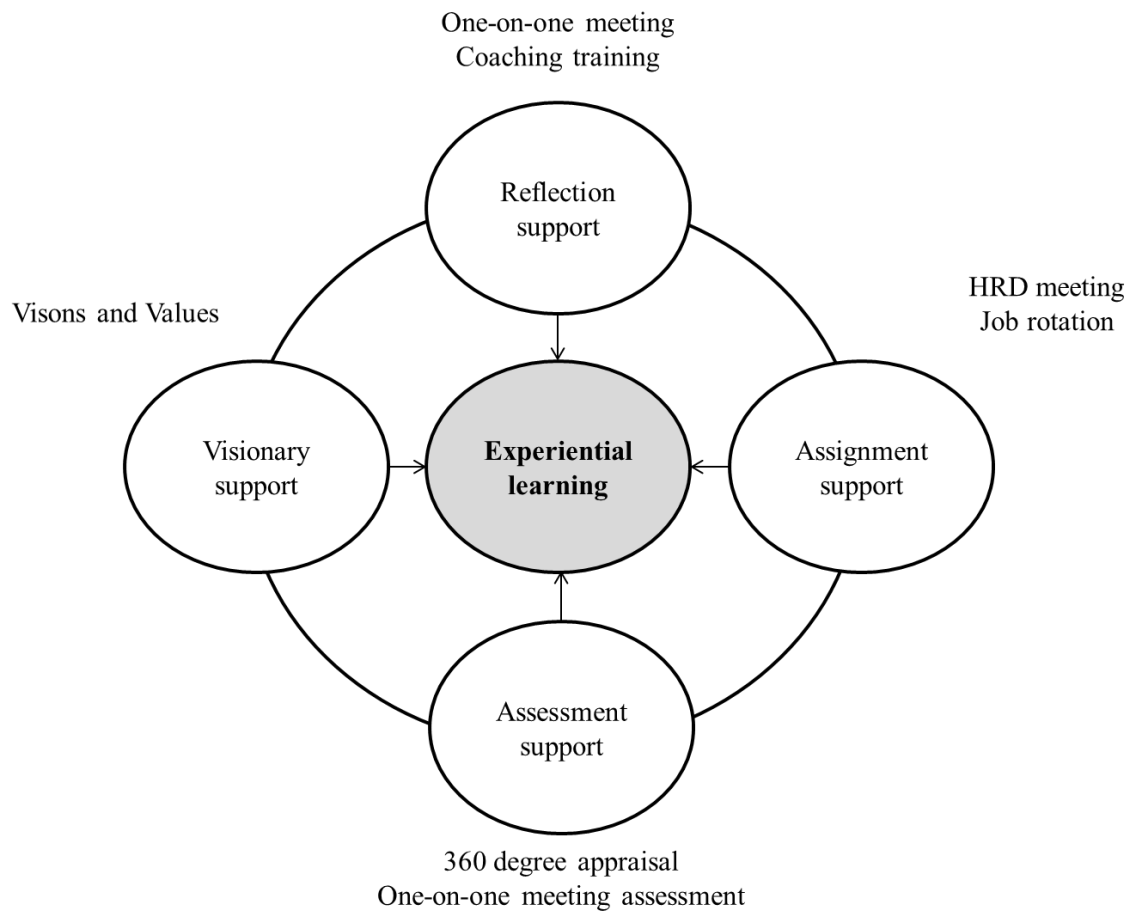
Figure 2 shows a conceptual model of an HRD system for experiential learning based on this case. The model indicates that experiential learning of employees is promoted by four types of organizational support: reflection support (one-on-one meetings and coaching training), assignment support (HRD meeting and job rotation), assessment support (360-degree appraisal and one-on-one meeting assessment) and visionary support (a vision and values). The lines among the elements suggest that the four types of support are closely linked with each other to facilitate the experiential learning of employees.

### **Theoretical implications**

This study contributes to the existing research by exploring the role of social and organizational factors in promoting experiential learning which Kolb's (1984) model fails to consider (Holman *et al.*, 1997; Reynolds, 2009; Vince, 1998).

The model has some features in common with CCL's model and the best practices of leadership development. Among the four elements, assignment and assessment support correspond to 'challenge' and 'assessment' in CCL's model (McCauley *et al.*, 1998; Velsor *et al.*, 2010), respectively. Additionally, job assignment, action learning and a 360-degree appraisal system, which are often used as leadership development practices (Groves, 2007), can be parts of assignment and assessment support.

One unique characteristic of this model is reflection support, which has been overlooked in previous research on leadership development and succession planning, although methods for facilitating reflection, such as coaching or mentoring, have been emphasized (Groves, 2007; McCauley *et al.*, 1998; Velsor *et al.*, 2010). As Kolb's (1984) model suggests, employees need to reflect on their work-related events and extract lessons to learn from their experiences. Furthermore, prior studies on reflection found that not only individual reflection but also collective reflection are necessary to promote learning in the workplace (Dayan & Basarir, 2010; Hoegl & Parboteeah, 2006; Lee, 2008; Somech, 2006; van Ginkel *et al.*, 2009). Reflection support in the model promotes collective reflection between employees and their superiors using one-on one meetings and coaching and followership training.



*Figure 2: A conceptual model of an HRD system for experiential learning based on the case of Yahoo Japan.*

Another unique element of this model is visionary support. The case indicates that the vision and values of Yahoo Japan play important roles in guiding superiors and subordinates to reflect on their work appropriately. This is consistent with previous research reporting that vision communication, or the act of motivating followers by communicating images of the future of the collective, is positively related to leadership effectiveness and firm growth (Baum *et al.*, 1998; Stam *et al.*, 2014). A vision can be an effective learning mechanism because it is a practical guide in navigating an uncertain environment and helps in understanding what is important from an organizational perspective (Schwarz *et al.*, 2006).

Reflection support is reinforced by the other support systems. Specifically, visionary support guides employees to appropriate reflection by providing the criteria for decision-making, whereas assessment support enhances the quality of one-on-one

meetings for reflection. Challenging tasks provided by assignment support may induce employees to reflect on the solutions to achieve the goals. A distinctive feature of the HRD model is the close interrelation among the support systems.

### **Practical implications**

The present research has managerial implications for HRM managers. First, HRM managers should design HRD systems based not only on methodological or technical practices, such as 360-degree feedback, coaching training, job assignments and action learning, but also on the conceptual model shown in Figure 2. In particular, it is necessary to incorporate reflection and visionary support in any HRD system.

Second, it is notable that the HRD system of Yahoo Japan was developed on the basis of the individual experiences of the director of HRM managers, as well as experiential learning theory. This suggests that both arts and science are needed for designing HRD systems. Additionally, there may be variations in the style of HRD systems to fit organizational traits or strategies.

Third, although the HRD system of Yahoo Japan was developed to enhance *all* employees of the organization, it can also be applied to leadership development because the elements of the system correspond to leadership development practices described in prior research (e.g. Groves, 2007). In developing leaders, reflection support may play a pivotal role in the HRD system; indeed, Gosling and Mintzberg (2004) have suggested that the key to managers' learning is thoughtful reflection.

### **Limitations and future research**

These findings should be considered in the light of their limitations. First, the model proposed in this study is hypothetical, based on a single case in a specific industry in Japan. More detailed analyses should be required to examine how the model facilitates experiential learning of employees in Yahoo Japan. It is also important to expand the model by conducting quantitative and qualitative studies in other countries and industries.

Second, this study argued that there are linkages among the four elements (reflection, assignment, assessment and visionary support systems). It is necessary to examine specifically how these support systems are interrelated with each other to facilitate experiential learning using quantitative studies.

Third, although the proposed model can be applied to employees at all levels in an



organization, there may be different HRD systems that fit each management level. It is possible to develop HRD systems for staff, junior managers, middle managers and senior managers.

Finally, as only three years have passed since the transformation at Yahoo Japan was implemented, it is important to pay attention to the evolution of Yahoo Japan's HRD system into the future.

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