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Show and tell: Recontextualising knowledge through reflective vlogs

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Abstract

This article introduces reflective video blogs (vlogs) as a research method for organization studies. The rise of social media has made vlogging a mainstream way to communicate thoughts, feelings and document experiences. Drawing from this popular technology-facilitated communication medium, reflective vlogs ask participants to record themselves discussing their thoughts, feelings and experiences via video, prompted by themes sent to them by the researcher. This article explores ethico-methodological considerations for researchers through a discussion of performative storytelling, priming places and spaces and the multimodal discourse of reflective vlogs. Using real examples from an empirical research project on expatriate identity processes that employed reflective vlogs, we highlight the distinctiveness of reflective vlogs as a research method in organization studies, illuminating their unique advantages and limitations. In doing so, we contribute to the growing discourse on visual methodology and multimodality and offer considerations researchers wishing to employ reflective vlogs as a method in their own research.

Keywords:

Reflective vlogs, visual methods, video-based research, organization studies, multimodal.

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Introduction

Most people carry a video camera. Embedded within smartphones, computers and often used as security devices on cars, homes and in offices, videos create records of many aspects of working life. And yet, video-based research in organization studies remain relatively scarce. There is a burgeoning interest in visual and video-based research in organization studies (e.g. Toraldo, Islam, & Mangia, 2018; Zundel, MacIntosh, & Mackay, 2018), and whilst video blogs (vlogs) have been used extensively in health (e.g., Salzmann-Erikson & Hiçdurmaz, 2017) and cultural studies research (e.g., Andrews, 2021), little is known about the specific benefits and drawbacks of creating and analysing vlogs as a research method to investigate organizational life.

Popularized by YouTube, vlogs are a casual, direct-address form of communication, where content-creators record themselves candidly talking on camera (Burgess & Green, 2018). Most vlogs are a brief recording in a diary format and “these largely unrehearsed, unedited, and unorganized videos have nonetheless become one of the internet's most magnetic and beloved forms” (Werner, 2012: ii). Vlogs are often emotional and parasocial in nature and have been shown to be effective in imparting knowledge and as a method of communication (Rihl & Wegener, 2022). The distinct characteristics of vlogs reproduce the conversational feel of face-to-face communication (Tolson, 2010) and are intimate in nature. This makes vlogs uniquely situated to provide both access and insight into the thoughts, feelings and experiences of organizational actors.

In this article, we explore the use of vlogs as a research method and introduce the concept of reflective vlogs as a new way to create multimodal data for organizational research. We define reflective vlogs as an investigative process where the researcher provides participants with themes from the research project prompting participants to record themselves reflecting on how these themes relate to their own experiences. Reflective vlogs provide a means for organization researchers to access rich, real-time and participant-produced data and leverage the distinctiveness of vlogs as a technology-mediated form of candid communication (Wood, 2019).

Through the example of a longitudinal study of expatriate identity management processes that utilised reflective vlogs, we outline how reflective vlogs can be deployed to access unique data. Specifically, we show how reflective vlogs can provide rich empirical material for

organizational researchers studying individuals, particularly those which have been difficult to access. Drawing from video-based research in other fields, such as medicine and anthropology, as well as emerging research in organizations on multimodal research, this article advocates for reflective vlogs as one way to re-contextualise organizational research, where “the visual and the verbal...have become increasingly merged, so that complete messages can only be assessed by analysing the interaction between the modes, since neither can be understood separately” (Höllerer, Leeuwen, Jancsary, Meyer, Andersen, & Vaara, 2019: 19).

In doing so, we outline some of the ethico-methodological considerations in employing reflective vlogs in organizational research and explore the relationalities and reflexivities in the process of making and analysing reflective vlogs, including issues of authenticity and environmental and social justice. Woven throughout is a comparison of reflective vlogs with traditional vlogging, video-diaries and more established methodologies such as written journaling, interviews and ethnography. Applying a social constructivist lens, we unpack if and how the artefacts produced through reflective vlogs represent participants’ lived realities.

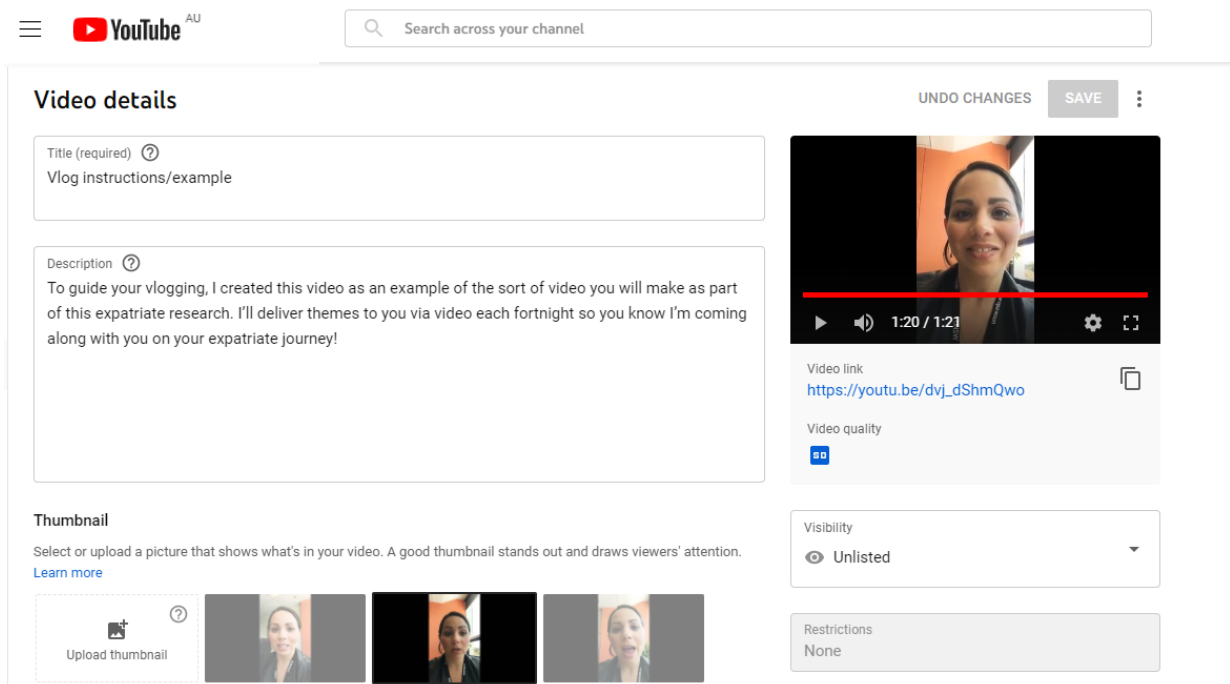
Case Study Background

The examples of reflective vlogs presented in this article are derived from a wider study on expatriate identity management strategies and the influence of these strategies on their adjustment. Across 2017 to 2019, we gathered data in a series of reflective vlogs, coupled with survey and interview data, which were recorded prior to departure and then followed participants over the first six months of their expatriate assignment. Participants (hereafter called ‘participant vloggers’) volunteered to participate in this research project and an initial interview established rapport before the assignment began. Once the expatriate relocated overseas, they completed a reflective vlog once approximately every two weeks, reflecting on different themes that were drawn from organization and international human resource management literatures. In total, across six participants we received 54 reflective vlogs ranging from 2.5 minutes to 10 minutes and 20 seconds. Participant vloggers recorded their vlogs via their computer or smart phone video cameras and then uploaded them to a private OneDrive file, which only they and the researchers could access.

Initially, research participant vloggers were provided with a written overview of the vlog format (Appendix 1), with an excerpt provided below:

Vlogs are a reflective tool where you record yourself talking about your experiences, thoughts and feelings. Think about your vlog like a diary that allows you to discuss any events of thoughts that are important to you in a candid way. Please provide examples wherever possible. To guide you, I will provide some questions for you to reflect on before you record your vlog.

This was accompanied by a vlog from the research team, in order to demonstrate the vlog technique and to build rapport with participant vloggers:



Approximately once every two weeks from the beginning of their expatriate assignment, each participant vlogger was sent a personalised email with a researcher-produced vlog that outlined general prompts in the form of themes to reflect on, alongside a written version. The researcher-produced vlogs were recorded in a conversational way, in one-take with regular speech patterns that included vocal disfluencies such as “umm”. These vlogs were used to highlight that the researchers were aware of the challenges of producing vlogs, such as being self-conscious, and to establish rapport building asynchronous two-way dialogue or conversation that is typical with vloggers who upload their content for the public to view (Werner, 2012).

In our research, vlogs were used as raw material where the different modes, such as the dialogue, visual, non-verbal and contextual, were analysed to add layers of understanding, and to capture the experience of participants in their own voice and context. This follows the recommendation of Toraldo et al. (2018) to deploy video research where knowledge is tacit and difficult to articulate or where interviews are likely to be censored. In addition to this, we highlight that the visual elements were crucial to understanding the voice of participants within context and longitudinally to show how processes unfolded over time.

The inductive, iterative analysis of the reflective vlogs in our research drew from both visual methodology and other multimodal methods in organization studies (e.g., Meyer et al., 2013). Throughout our vlog analysis, we moved iteratively between data, emerging themes and existing theory. Our analysis occurred in four stages. First, we viewed the reflective vlogs as a whole, along with a transcription, in order to understand the stories as told by the participants. Second, we constructed narratives with summaries of each vlog interspersed with direct quotes from the participants so as not to lose their voice. Third, narratives were coded into broad themes, looking between and within each expatriate's experience. Finally, recordings of the vlogs were replayed, and the non-verbal aspects were analysed in order to add detail through examining the visual, contextual and non-verbal cues within the vlogs. Once analysis of the reflective vlogs was complete, these reflective vlogs were then triangulated with other data collected, including surveys and interviews, which covered similar themes. Overall, the analysis of the reflective vlogs were found to be consistent with other data analysed.

Visual Research in Organization Research

There have been multiple calls to embrace methodological plurality and multimodal research methods in order to highlight new paths forward (Quattrone, Ronzani, Jancsary, & Höllerer, 2021). In some ways, organization research as a field has already 'embraced the visual' when reporting on quantitative data through visual artefacts such as statistical tables and PowerPoint presentations at conferences (Quattrone et al., 2021). Yet this conventional data and model visualisation reduces the complexity of organizational and individual contexts to flat, often 'prescribed' artefacts. There are hence increased possibilities for embracing interpretive approaches and richer sources of empirical material, for example through visual methodologies. To achieve this, organizational researchers should draw from the rich traditions of visual and video research in other fields, and emerging multimodal research traditions in organization studies.

There are five distinct approaches to multimodal research in organizations, each underpinned by their own assumptions and approaches, which are archaeological, practice, strategic, dialogical and documenting (Meyer et al., 2013). Reflective vlogs follow the ‘documenting’ approach where multimodal tools are used to approach research to develop theory, provide a more complete image of the subjects of inquiry and to make the interpretations of the data more transparent. As the least common multimodal approach in organization and management research, no elaborate methods or conceptual frameworks for the implementation and analysis of this type of research exist (Höllerer et al., 2019). In this article we provide an example of how reflective vlogs can be implemented in order to bridge the gap between researcher and participant (both figuratively and literally), and blend what is ‘said’ with what is ‘shown’. In this section, we examine the methodological considerations of reflective vlogs as a research method in organization studies. Specifically, we unpack the implications of the role of performative storytelling in organizations, priming of places and spaces and how multimodal discourse provides an authentic view of the experiences, thoughts and feelings of organizational actors through reflective vlogs.

Performative Storytelling

Much of organizational life is performative (Meyer et al., 2013). To *see* performances, the visual dimension of research is essential. Recognising this, reflective vlogs used in our study provided the “‘intimacy and immediacy” required to examine the performative nature of identity’ (Zundel et al., 2018: 396). The visual elements reinforced that these reflections were informal and in-the-moment, with many of these vlogs taking place at the end of a busy day or ‘on the go’. Reflective vlogs were recorded in one ‘take’, without any editing and then uploaded directly to a private drive that only the participant vlogger and researchers had access to. All participants and the organizations that they worked for were de-identified in the analysis. This design was purposeful, as the audience for any research content will inevitably shape the way in which responses are designed.

In line with a social constructivist approach, reflective vlogs could be seen as a multimodal way to self-narrate. In our research, reflective vlogs were used to explore identity management processes used by expatriates to adjust. Following the recommendations of previous identity research in organization studies, self-narratives were ideal for understanding how an individual engaged in identity management practices (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010).

Using reflective vlogs allowed us to see how these dynamic identity processes unfolded over time and to theorise the transition process (Langley, 2009) in diverse geographic and sociocultural spaces (Zundel et al., 2018). Additionally, this methodological approach gave us insight into the participants' thoughts and feelings in context and also allowed the individuals to represent their own identities in an active and reflexive way (Stanczak, 2007). In response, participants told stories about situations that they had experienced, how they felt and behaved in these situations and reflected on how they then felt about themselves and their adjustment to their new context (Czarniawska, 1997).

Reflective vlogs differ from other forms of vlog research because the data generated is fit for purpose, elicited by the researcher. This may be contrasted with vlogs produced by individuals who are self-motivated to post content publicly, such as on social media, as a commodity to 'sell' for likes, views or shares or to build social communities (Pauwels, 2006). Reflective vlogs have similarities to video journaling used in the medical field (e.g., Parikh et al., 2012) and draw from research on visual anthropology (e.g., Pink, 2011) and video diary research in organizations (e.g. Zundel et al., 2018). What is distinct about reflective vlogs are that they are researcher-driven, producing primary data for a specific study and it has been argued that in vlogs, "its 'freshness' and 'spontaneity' offers a new form of 'authenticity' in mediated communication" (Tolson, 2010: 277).

In order to capture the stories of individuals within organizational life, reflective vlogs move beyond ethnographic methodology because individuals speak directly about their own experiences, feelings and thoughts rather than the researcher passively ascribing meaning to what they observe. In this way, vlogs allow individuals to discursively construct their identity (Riboni, 2017). This also presents a limitation because vlogs are not collective, and do not record interactions between individuals. Outside of the immediate location of their video, reflective vlogs do not show the interaction between an individual and their surroundings, including artefacts in their workplace. Instead, reflective vlogs are primarily useful in understanding the thoughts and feelings of individuals within a particular snapshot or moment in time. In our study, we were interested in capturing individual-level data and employed reflective vlogs longitudinally in order to get an understanding of how the participant vloggers' thoughts and feelings changed over time.

Priming of Places and Spaces

Digital resources are pivotal to the way we organize almost all aspects of social life (Höllerer et al., 2019). Technology increasingly allows researchers to access multimodal data in context, and to give voice to participants and their perspective. Reflective vlogs provided access to rich and detailed information, including contextual and visual cues that were informative in the analysis process. Crucially for our study, data were collected in the expatriate's 'host' context and not in an artificial location such as an interview room, providing insight into the individual's *place*. This was important in accessing authentic data because identities are highly contextual and research in organization studies has found that identity is a "temporary, context-sensitive and evolving set of constructions, rather than a fixed and abiding essence" (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008: 6).

The creation of data in context is one of the primary strengths of reflective vlog research. It has been well documented that context primes different knowledge structures, or schemas, to become salient (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Therefore, the information that individuals unconsciously process from their context can cause them to think, feel and behave in different ways. It can also influence how individuals approach the research task (e.g. answering interview questions), with research demonstrating that an individual can have opposing responses to the same question posed within two different contexts (e.g., Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). Hence, in order to access the most authentic reflections from individuals, gathering data within their own 'natural' context is important (Tolson, 2010).

In our research, participant vloggers often discussed and showed their spaces in their videos, using phrases such as "let me show you..." or "you can see that I'm still at work". As well as being highlighted by our participant vloggers, previous research has also found that identity can only be understood within specific social contexts and identity management processes are constrained and influenced by social interactions and context (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Ybema et al., 2009). Reflective vlogs made it possible for us to gather data from participants in the places and spaces that were relevant to their experiences of expatriate life. Participants were also able to construct dialogue with the researcher without being influenced by any direct feedback from the research team. This may have helped cultivate an authentic narrative because the "performative validation of real feeling requires an imagined viewer-in-waiting who will share the sense of isolation. Real-world people intrude upon isolation and may feel burdened or bored" (Berryman & Kavka, 2018: 92).

Engaging in identity management involves projecting identities in a particular way and then adjusting behaviour based on the perceived reactions within a social space (Beech et al., 2008). Thus, the reflective vlog method allowed researchers to direct participant vloggers to ensure that first-hand, relevant data was produced, without participant vloggers receiving direct feedback from the research team on their vlogs. Instead, participant vloggers were instructed to reflect on the themes and then to talk as much or as little as they liked about anything that was important to them at this moment in their expatriate experience.

The candid and in-the-moment nature of vlogs is one of their defining characteristics and it is this quality that has spurred their use in medical research, where vlogs are increasingly used as a way to understand patient experiences or how individuals cope with long-term illness (Huh, Liu, Neogi, Inkpen, & Pratt, 2014). When it comes to *place* and *space*, online interactions allowed participant vloggers to choose a comfortable time and place, which has been found to encourage reluctant participants to disclose personal details and feelings (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). Many of our research participants expressed highly personal details and displayed a wide range of emotive responses, from excitement to tears. These emotions were used as one indicator of the level of adjustment that each expatriate was feeling, which was later confirmed through triangulation of survey data. Therefore, the online *space* and *place* enabled participant vloggers to produce an authentic view into their thoughts and feelings about their expatriate assignment.

Multimodal Discourse

Vlogs restrict the view of the individual and their surroundings, since this format often features a range of unusual camera viewpoints, recorded with the individuals in close proximity to the camera (Fouhey, Kuo, Efros, & Malik, 2018). This truncates them, reducing researchers' view of their bodies and surrounds. The flip side of this view of the individuals is that their facial expressions are at the forefront. This gives the researcher a unique view of the individuals' non-verbal communication and emotional displays throughout their discourse.

The multimodal nature of vlogs means that there are multiple layers of data that researchers can draw from in order to analyse the experiences being conveyed by participant vloggers. Ultimately, all research requires the researcher to ascribe meaning to the data. In the case of reflective vlogs, recordings provided the capacity to replay the data and add detail that may have previously been unnoticed or unclear, and to capture ambient elements that are difficult

to delineate in the analysis. Therefore, reflective vlogs provided dynamic audio and visual cues that assist in the interpretation of the data (Meyer et al., 2013; Zundel et al., 2018).

In conjunction with contextual cues, we were also able to observe participants vloggers' body language and tone of voice, seeing emotional responses such as being close to tears, through to seeing and hearing excitement when discussing some elements of their experience. These would not have been able to be obtained in non-visual or audio forms of reflection such as journaling or diaries. These cues were useful for a more nuanced interpretation of the information provided by participant vloggers (Margolis & Pauwels, 2011). Further, through reflective vlogs participant vloggers conveyed their multimodal discourse with "conversational mode of address...[and] their ability to relay emotion, especially emotion displayed bodily through facial, vocal, and gestural expression" (Werner, 2012: ii).

Reflective vlogs enable the researcher to approach the individuals' experiences more closely, while enabling participants to narrate their own experiences in a reflexive and individual manner. This, however, has two sides. The individual has the opportunity to express their experiences freely and authentically, but, on the other hand, they can also curate the data before giving it to the researcher. The persuasive potential of video mediums are commonly used in marketing, advertising and consumer research and, thus, could be appropriated for specific agendas (Quattrone et al., 2021) and result in the loss of some essential data. In interviews and other data collection methods participants can and do edit their answers to correspond with the image they want to convey, but this challenge is pronounced in studies employing participants autonomous data production (Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, 2020). To overcome this barrier in our research, in-depth and longitudinal case study data provided depth and breadth and the multi-layered analytical approach avoided forcing the data into predetermined categories and, as a result, uncovered the mechanisms underlying the identity management processes over time.

Crucially, in our research we found multiple examples where the visual elements of reflective vlogs added important details, which would have gone unnoticed or undocumented using other research methods. For example, seeing the emotion expressed by these individuals firsthand provided an indicator of their level of adjustment, as what was 'said' did not always align with what was 'shown' in their self-narratives. In this way, multimodal research can highlight contradictions and oppositions in the formation of discourse (Quattrone et al., 2021). In this participatory research practice, the perspectives and experiences of individuals as told

in their own voices was paramount, and this approach is increasingly being used to give voice to those in contexts that are transient, volatile or complex (e.g. migrant and refugee children, see Moskal, 2017).

Table 1: Methodological comparison of qualitative research methods

Methodological Area	Specific Considerations	Reflective vlogs	Traditional vlogs	Video-diaries	Interviews	Written journaling	Observation/ ethnography
<i>Performative storytelling</i>	<i>Whose voice is telling the story?</i>	Participant, guided by researcher themes	Participant	Participant, guided by researcher themes	Participant and researcher	Participant, guided by researcher themes	Participant, although research determines what is relevant to record
	<i>Data fit for purpose?</i>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	<i>Longitudinal?</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not typically	Yes	Yes
<i>Priming Places and Spaces</i>	<i>Asynchronous (between participant and researcher)?</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
	<i>Ability to access geographically dispersed and difficult to reach participants?</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly, through technology such as Zoom, Skype or Teams	Yes	No
<i>Multimodal discourse</i>	<i>Modes of data?</i>	Visual, verbal, emotional, in-context	Visual, verbal, emotional, in-context	Visual, verbal, emotional, in-context	Predominantly verbal, transcribed into text	Written	Visual, verbal, emotional, across contexts including interactions with other people and artefacts
	<i>Close to emotions?</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Possibly
	<i>Ability to replay or review the primary data?</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Only aspects that are recorded (e.g., voice)	Yes	Only if recorded

Discussion

In this article, we have examined some of the methodological considerations of reflective vlogs for organization studies research. Specifically, we unpacked the implications of the role of performative storytelling in organizations, priming of places and spaces and how multimodal discourse provides an authentic view of the experiences, thoughts and feelings of organizational actors through reflective vlogs which are summarized in Table 1. Applying the example of our own research on expatriate identity processes, we have also provided practical guidance on how to operationalize reflective vlogs following the ‘documenting’ multimodal approach (Höllerer et al., 2019) as well as an example of the process for analysing reflective vlogs. In this section, we will expand upon the ethico-methodological considerations of reflective vlogs.

Reflective vlogs provide researchers with multiple layers of data which combine to create a more complete sense of an individual’s experience within organizations. Researchers may choose to employ multiple analytical techniques across the context, non-verbal cues, emotions and affective cues, dialogue or narratives and other visual aspects such as the angle of the camera, lighting or visual artefacts in the frame. Building on social semiotics, researchers who pursue reflective vlog research need to recognize the different rules that apply in constructing and de-constructing visual and verbal meaning (Quattrone et al., 2021) and to be reflexive in analyzing the multiple layers of data captured. Reflective vlogs require both researchers and participant vloggers to have communicative competence and understand the “rules, norms, and conventions regarding what to say to whom, when, where and how” (Jones, 2012: 24). For example, Fouhey and colleagues (2018) present a detailed example of how lifestyle vlog data can be analysed including the use of computer programs used to annotate frame-by-frame data across elements such as scene classification, proxemics, human configurations, object identification and verbal data. This makes research more complex, however this also reflects the complexity of everyday life, with the potential to provide a more nuanced understanding of people in organizations, reconstruct ‘elusive’ knowledge (Toraldò et al., 2018) and generate new theoretical insights.

Entwined with ethico-methodological considerations, there are also practical considerations that influence how, when and why reflective vlogs are an appropriate research method. This includes the ability for researchers to have a broader reach to organization actors in geographically dispersed areas, across time-zones and that are difficult to access or in

dangerous locations. One of the reasons why reflective vlogs were chosen for our expatriate research study is the well-known difficulty in accessing expatriates for research purposes (Takeuchi, 2010). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, another consideration which may be heightened for researchers is the ability to employ reflective vlogs in order to access people without potential health risks of being in the same location. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has also led to increased comfort using technology-facilitated communication for both participants and researchers, which may speed up the adoption of technology-facilitated research methods and tools such as reflective vlogs.

Environmental and social governance issues of research practice must be considered. The use of technology-facilitated research methods comes with a ‘carbon price tag’ (Harvard, 2021), which should be recognized and offset where possible. However, reflective vlogs may not encourage additional technological use as both the participant vloggers and researchers are likely to use technology outside of the research process. As an advantage, technology can help to reduce unnecessary travel to participant locations potentially reducing the environment impacts of travel, particularly, frequent or international travel which may be required to access participants. Reducing the burden of travel also makes reflective vlogs accessible to researchers who do not have the budget or time to fly across the world, staying away from home for large periods of time. Unless the researcher is located in close proximity to their research participants, the demands of conducting in-person research disproportionately disadvantage those with caring responsibilities, for example adding to the ‘motherhood penalty’ (see Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007).

Participant-centred research where individuals share their stories have their own ethico-methodological considerations. We suggest that researchers follow the Transformational Ethical Story Telling approach (Our Race, 2022), which builds on Australian and Torres Strait Islander cultural concepts to enable Story Holders to be the co-creators and directors of their own stories. This sustainable, human-centred approach to research involves a recognition that stories are not instruments or commodities and that researchers should privilege Story Holders and their Communities’ right to data sovereignty and shaping how their stories are represented.

Future Research

The process of standardization of human research has been described as “empirical imperialism” and “methodological colonialism” (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018). Rather than presenting a fixed process for employing reflective vlogs, instead we have applied examples from our own research to examine the distinct methodological advantages and limitations of reflective vlogs, and ethico-methodological considerations. In this section, we will provide suggestions for fruitful areas for organization studies research.

As with any methodology, reflective vlogs should be used when it is appropriate for the research question being asked. In this article, we provide an example of individual-level research which successfully implemented reflective vlogs to produce a new and more fine-grained understanding of expatriate identity management and its influence on their adjustment to their next context. Reflective vlogs hold great promise as one way for organization studies scholars to engage in multimodal research that challenges conventional standards of knowledge creation and dissemination in the field. Building on the study presented in this article, there are many avenues for how this method could help researchers access previously untapped sources of knowledge, including the material, contextual and sensory. For example, researchers could analyse the materiality of the setting within reflective vlogs such as what items are present- in the background or foreground- of the vlog to further understand the setting and how this influences what is shown and said (Höllerer et al., 2019).

In future research, reflective vlogs may be used in conjunction with other research methods or approaches. For example, expanding on the dialogical approach, reflective vlogs could be used in combination with interviews in order to start conversations with field actors (Meyer et al., 2013). Another area for future research is in the invisibilities within the international business setting and the significance of what is absent or concealed, particularly in who participates in research as well as the topics studied, which symbolises what is meaningful to the field (Quattrone et al., 2021).

Conclusion

While there are multiple calls for researchers to use more diverse methods and multidisciplinary approaches to unpack and explore context and processes, there has been a relatively slow uptake of video-based research in organizations. This article introduces reflective vlogs as one multimodal research method with which organizational researchers can bridge the gap between

participants and researchers and facilitate the voice of individuals who are difficult to access or overlooked. This article explores methodological considerations for researchers through a discussion of performative storytelling, priming places and spaces and the multimodal discourse of reflective vlogs. Practically, reflective vlogs also provide access to geographically dispersed and asynchronous data in context and can be used longitudinally to understand individuals' experiences with events as they unfold, hence, to see the unnoticed and imperfect. With the example of the study of expatriate identity processes over the first six months of their assignment, this article has outlined how reflective vlogs can be utilised to re-contextualise identity research, as shown by the participants.

The use of visual media encourages the communication of knowledge and experience through 'showing' rather than 'telling' (Spencer, 2010) and has great potential to re-contextualise organizational research. Reflective vlogs allow participants to ascribe meaning to their own identities and experiences. It allows people to show and tell their own stories in new ways. Using real examples from an empirical research project on expatriate identity processes that employed reflective vlogs, we highlight the distinctiveness of reflective vlogs as a research method in organization studies, illuminating their unique advantages and limitations. In doing so, we contribute to the growing discourse on visual methodology and multimodality and offer considerations researchers wishing to employ reflective vlogs as a method in their own research.

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Appendix 1: Vlog Instructions to Participants



Expatriate Identity Study: Vlog (Video Blog) Overview

Vlogs are a reflective tool where you record yourself talking about your experiences, thoughts and feelings. Think about your vlog like a diary that allows you to discuss any events or thoughts that are important to you in a candid way. Please provide examples wherever possible. To guide you, I will provide some questions for you to reflect on before you record your vlog. For example:

“Please reflect on the following themes and relate them to your recent experiences as an expatriate, both in your work and home life. How have they influenced the way you think and feel about yourself and your identities? Your experiences may be positive, negative or a mixture of both.”

Please record a 5–10-minute vlog based on your reflection using your smart phone or webcam on your computer and then upload it to your private file on OneDrive (to be sent with your first vlog themes). You may like to write some dot points before commencing your vlog to trigger ideas, however you should record the response in one session (no editing!). I have recorded an example/introduction video to help demonstrate this:

https://youtu.be/dvj_dShmQwo.

What we do with your vlog:

I will send you the questions to reflect on in a video format (as well as in text in case you don't have time to watch the file). You will review the questions and then address them in a way that makes sense to you.

Once you upload it to Dropbox, only the research team will have access. We will analyse your vlog in terms of:

1. Context- For example, where are you filming this? Is this a proxy for where you are spending the most time or are the most comfortable?
2. Visually- For example, what emotions are you displaying? Does this add depth to what you are saying?
3. Words- We will transcribe what you say into text for further coding- this is where we identify commonalities between participants. In this stage, we may check with you that we are interpreting things in the way you intend them.
4. Matching with survey data. Is what you're saying reflected in the surveys you fill out? Each participant represents a case study showing us a detailed and holistic image of your experience. We expect to find some commonalities with other participants (patterns) as well as differences, which gives us an understanding of how we can personalise the support offered to expatriates who experience different journeys.
5. I will write up the findings for my thesis and journal publications. I will also send you an overview of the findings and, if you would like, some information about how you scored on the surveys such as personality and cultural intelligence.

What we don't care about:

1. How you look! (I know, I'm self-conscious too)- once these videos have been analysed, no one will ever see them (except you, if you choose to re-watch them).
2. Whether your experience is positive or negative- most expatriates experience a range of emotions and it's completely natural to feel optimistic about some aspects and find other parts really frustrating or challenging.
3. If you don't fully address my questions/themes- we are interested in your experiences and these themes have been developed to get you thinking about certain topics, but you don't need to cover each question. If you experience something that has had a big impact on you, then you should talk about that!
4. If you make mistakes- we are asking you to reflect and talk to the camera in a candid way. This means you might make a few mistakes, have awkward pauses or lose track of what you were talking about. This is all perfectly normal!

Final note:

This research is incredibly important for myself and for future expatriates who may benefit from what we learn.

Please take this research seriously and try to complete the tasks within 3 days from receiving your task. Your time is greatly appreciated!

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