How to carry out organisational debriefing for team learning

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Abstract

Purpose – The debriefing is a procedure based on intra-team feedback, which has frequently been applied in university formation in health but has been less used in business. The aim of this research is to analyse best practices in the actual implementation of debriefing in organisations, based on criteria the guidelines for carrying out each stage established in the procedure.

Design/methodology/approach – To achieve these goals, working teams from different organisations carried out 19 group-debriefing sessions on an authentic work problem. These sessions were observed and analysed following a qualitative approach.

Findings – After observing a debriefing session in 19 organisations, four categories related to its implementation have been identified: Self-analysis, information, planning and orientation of the development of the team.

Research limitations/implications – It is important to mention some limitations to this work. The major limitation was the lack of published literature related to the debriefing in the area of organisational management. The qualitative and exploratory nature of the study limits the generalisation of the results.

Practical implications – The research has practical implications as the characterisation and description of each phase favours the transfer to implement the debriefing technique adequately in different types of organisations.

Social implications – It has been observed that all forms of debriefing have a common purpose in learning and, team and employee development, due to the powerful transferability and usefulness of debriefing in different contexts. Therefore, knowing the correct use of debriefing is a breakthrough in this area. In addition, including this type of practice will not just facilitate a better performance, it will also help teams to learn to work in a team from their own experiences.

Originality/value – It has been characterised by the process of debriefing from the correct implementation of each phase through the analysis of the narratives that arise in the debriefing sessions carried out.

Keywords Debriefing, Team learning, Reflection, Teamwork

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Organisations are adapting to changes in the economy constantly, and those that adapt best have the greatest possibilities to be sustainable (Bouncken *et al.*, 2022; Pascucci *et al.*, 2022; Bernal-Conesa *et al.*, 2016). Working teams contribute to speeding up processes and improving the performance of organisations (Hebles *et al.*, 2019). The efficacy of an organisation depends to a great extent on the efficacy of teams to give a fast, flexible and innovative answer to the challenges (Fernando and Wulansari, 2020), integrating a diversity of knowledge, experiences and abilities from its members. Likewise, working teams favour effectiveness as they allow for the sharing of the workload, integrating of different areas of

experience, mutual supervision and the finding of complex and innovative solutions to problems (Torrelles *et al.*, 2015).

However, the simple fact of bringing people to work together does not guarantee the efficacy of the team and for this reason, different academic and organisational practices have been encouraged for teams to learn to work as a team (Hebles *et al.*, 2019). Teamwork training carried out in an organisational context tends to be more effective but is costly and requires a lot of time (Salas *et al.*, 2008).

In definite terms, both learning to work in a team and learning as a team make up an important asset for organisations. Organisations seek to promote learning in the workplace, but research shows that the acquisition of competencies in organisations, following their own programs of training, is scarce, concluding that organisations should find ways of accelerating learning through the experience of teams (Eddy *et al.*, 2013).

Learning in teams positively influences individuals, teams and the organisation and is the result of the construction of shared knowledge that is developed in the team itself (Raes *et al.*, 2015). The exchange of information, the dialogue and the discussion are team processes for the generation of new, shared meanings and reflection facilitates this learning (Raes *et al.*, 2015).

In this sense, group debriefing is a reflection technique that is promising for learning about teamwork and for learning in the team about other relevant issues for effective performance in organisational processes. It consists of the members of the team holding a dialogue based on the reflection and analysis of the team dynamic, thus favouring group learning from experience (Eddy *et al.*, 2013). However, for the debriefing to contribute those benefits, it is necessary for the session to be directed by a moderator (Eddy *et al.*, 2013) and have a psychologically safe environment. Lack of psychological safety during a debriefing session may negatively affect learning (Turner and Harder, 2018). This aspect is one of the concerns of the facilitators of this technique, for example, research conducted by Kang and Min (2019) showed that students did not share their point of view during debriefing sessions because of the anxiety caused by the observation of their errors. In view of this, the need arises to contribute with the preparation to facilitate this technique. However, the scarcity of people prepared to correctly facilitate a debriefing dynamic has been shown (Reiter-Palmon *et al.*, 2020), in addition to studies that permit the identification of the characteristics of a good debriefing and the valuation of conducts that favour learning, through direct observation of the dynamic (Raes *et al.*, 2015). For this reason, the objective of this qualitative study is to better understand team members' experiences with group debriefing to identify how best practices of debriefing are developed. In order to achieve this, the verbal interactions between members of the team during the dynamic have been analysed.

2. Theoretical framework: debriefing: a tool that favours team learning

According to Marks *et al.* (2001), learning in a team is expressed through the processes of interaction between members of the team that allow it to integrate the interdependent contributions of each one, starting from cognitive, verbal and behavioural actions, to organise the teamwork and create a shared and valuable result for all.

For the shared cognitions generated by the team to result in better-perceived performance, the process of a team is emphasised (Boon *et al.*, 2013). Marks *et al.* (2001) highlight transition processes as important in the work of a team. These are produced when a team moves from one performance to another, and its members consider it retrospectively to reflect on how it has functioned. The reflection of the team facilitates the learning behaviour of the team (Raes *et al.*, 2015).

To facilitate a cycle of active learning, teams can carry out reflection meetings after a work experience or performance episode (Tannenbaum and Cerasoli, 2013). Debriefing, in this sense, is an effective tool for increasing organisational learning and performance. Its correct use allows for self-correction of team members in such a way as to not only improve their performance, but also their enthusiasm for working in the team (Lacerenza et al., 2015).

Tannenbaum et al. (2013) propose three relevant phases in the implementation of a debriefing: (1) Analysis and Reflection; (2) Verification of Information, Feedback and Information Exchange; and (3) Establishment of Objectives and Planning.

Each member of the team reflects on his or her own intervention and contribution to the team. *Reflection* consists of analysing the experience, comparing the results obtained with the desired results, analysing the process followed and evaluating the consequences of this process.

The objectives of the second *Information* phase are to verify the correction of the data being considered, correct erroneous personal beliefs, evaluate the process carried out more precisely and align the explanation of the situation, coordinating the comprehension of all the participants. This phase encourages the team to make well-founded decisions and adjust tasks to be carried out, improving their performance.

The third *Planning* phase is about establishing agreements about objectives or action plans. This is to say, the comprehension of the previous experience is integrated with the planning for the next activity. The establishing of goals allows for the improvement of the actions themselves, above all when these goals are shared with the team as, in this way, commitment is increased (Gardner et al., 2017).

The debriefing technique has been widely used in the formation of health professionals (Conoscenti et al., 2021; Mundt et al., 2020), frequently combined with a simulation methodology (Paige et al., 2021). Less frequent is the application of this technique in business management, be it for the evaluation of processes or for the improvement of the efficacy of the teams. However, it is considered an adequate resource to favour team learning and organisation development. Thus, the objective of this research is to analyse best practices in debriefing in different organisations in order to know how it is to be adequately applied in this type of organisation. This characterisation of best practices can be transferred to different types of organisations and teams to improve their functioning.

3. Methodology
To achieve the objective of this study, working teams from different organisations carried out 19 group-debriefing sessions on an authentic work problem. These sessions were observed and analysed following a qualitative approach.

3.1 Participants
In total, 25 teams were contacted for convenience, as one of their members was pursuing graduate training at the university with one of the researchers. Although 25 teams carried out their debriefing sessions, following a criterion of theoretical saturation (Draucker et al., 2007), 19 were selected for the analysis. A total of 84 working people participated in teams of between three and six members. The companies are in the Bio Bio region (Chile). Table 1 includes information about the workplace, team area, problem dealt with, session duration and year of realisation.

3.2 Instrument
Each session was observed by two independent observers. To guide the observation of both, an *ad hoc* observation scale was designed from the recommendations of Tannenbaum et al. (2013)

Organisations code	Organisations market	Area	Problem/issue to deal with[123]	Year/ Duration
E01	Auditing services	Auditing team	1	2018/50 min
E02	Producers of potable water	Department of general services and asset protection	1	2018/30 min
E03	Manufacture of paint for homes and industry	Sales team	2	2018/45 min
E04	Stationers and Photocopies	Administrative area	2	2018/30 min
E05	Education	Accounting department	1	2017/30 min
E06	Producers of potable water	Control of operational management department	1	2017/50 min
E07	Printing Service	Sales and purchasing team	2	2017/30 min
E08	Sporting and other Recreation Activities	Accounting section	2	2017/1 hour
E09	Paper manufacturer	Finance department	1–2	2017/50 min
E10	Health	Training department	1	2018/40 min
E11	Textile Manufacturing Company	Accounting department	1	2018/1 hour 30 min
E12	Accounting Consultancy	Tax operation team	1	2019/30 min
E13	Professional formation	Administration department	1	2019/30 min
E14	Education	Postgraduate management	3	2019/45 min
E15	Port Operations	Accounting department	1–2	2019/1 hour
E16	Commerce	Company Bank Team	3	2019/40 min
E17	Steel production	Accounting unit	2	2019/1 hour
E18	Legal	Department of prosecutions	2–3	2018/32 min
E19	Real Estate	Accounting department	1	2021/50 min

Note(s): 1 Failure to meet deadline
2 Errors of results
3 Failure to meet goals
Source(s): Table by authors

Table 1.
Characteristics of the participating teams and organisations

for the adequate development of the debriefing technique. The procedure had several phases in its elaboration. Firstly, the three researchers independently created a bank of items, proposing three items for each dimension. Then, by consensus, the items were selected, avoiding overlapping and in accord with the criteria of clarity and relevance in the dimension to configure the observation scale. Thirdly, the scale was applied in a debriefing session to test its adequateness and applicability.

The instrument is composed of three dimensions that coincide with the stages of the procedure: Analysis and reflection (ANAL) composed of 4 items, Information and feedback (INFO), formed with 3 items and Planning (PLAN) with 3 items. The options for the responses are 0 (Not done) 2 (Deficiently done) 4 (Done sufficiently well) and 6 (Done excellently). Table 2 gathers the content of the items for each dimension.

3.3 Procedure
Training in debriefing was carried out for students in a post-graduate program in business administration. This training had a duration of 5 h and consisted of a theoretical presentation of the debriefing technique and the carrying out of a practical activity to apply the knowledge. The activity consisted of the organisation of 30-min debriefing sessions in which a team applied the debriefing, and the other team evaluated the dynamic through the

Analysis and reflection: Reasons for one or several events or problems are analysed, contrasting implicit suppositions

1. Before beginning, meeting objectives are presented (information to prepare for a job or to analyse a specific performance)

2. The person, or people, that lead self-evaluate, generating an environment of trust to express opinions that are necessary to face different topics

3. Each member of the team self-evaluates, analysing even not evident aspects, which promotes a group reflection about why the team acted or acts in a certain way

4. A fluid and coordinated dialogue is formed, with each member expressing his or her opinions, enquiring or arguing

Information (Verification, feedback and information exchange): Information is contributed to contrast personal beliefs

5. Shared objectives are revised to establish team priorities

6. Information is exchanged and updated

7. Individual and team strengths are recognised, evaluating the individual contribution, etc.

Establishing of goals and planning: The participants share their goals with respect to their own improvement in terms of their contribution to the team and they commit to them

8. The role of each one in the team is agreed on, making their functions explicit to meet the objectives

9. Possible eventualities are discussed and strategies to face them are proposed

10. Agreements are established and confirmed about change in conduct and commitment of each one with the task

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 2.
Dimensions and items of the observation scale

observation scale. The roles of the teams rotated so that all the students had the opportunity to practice the debriefing technique and they could all develop skills for observation and evaluation.

Once the students were trained, 19 organisations were contacted and informed of the research, requesting their voluntary collaboration and permission to record the session. The debriefing session consisted of analysing a recently occurred team problem. One of the post-graduate students guided the session and the other observed. The subject teacher exercised the role of the second observer. The sessions were recorded and transcribed for later analysis (14 h of recording were registered). Afterwards, both observers completed the observation scale independently.

Data collection began in the year 2017 and ended in 2021 when the saturation point was reached because no new additional categories were found (Draucker *et al.*, 2007). The extended duration of data collection period was due to the participating students (and their teams) being from different academic years. The duration of the session, the year and the type of problem dealt with are specified in Table 1.

3.4 Data analysis

The data analysis was done in two stages: (1) the selection of best practices; and (2) the analysis of best practices.

3.4.1 Selection of best practices. For the selection of best practices, the two independent observers filled out the observation scale for the session transcribed. The inter-rater agreement was measured through Kappa. For the total of the scale, the agreement is moderate ($K = 0.537$; $p < 0.01$) as it is for the dimension REF ($K = 0.444$; $p < 0.01$) and for the dimension PLAN ($K = 0.483$; $p < 0.01$). The inter-rater agreement for the INFO dimension is high ($K = 0.707$; $p < 0.01$).

In each dimension, those teams with an average score of 5 or over were selected as best practices.

3.4.2 Analysis of best practices. In order to describe in detail how the teams apply each phase of the debriefing in selected cases, a qualitative approach was used to analyse the content of the interactions. For the data analysis, MAXQDA 12 software was used. A first inductive analysis was done based on the recommendations of Thomas (2006). In this phase, an open codification was carried out, establishing a first-order code matrix. Then, the common elements among the primary codes were identified and constant comparisons between them were done to elaborate the category tree (Figure 1). In the second phase, a deductive analysis was done to group the codes based on the previously reviewed literature. This gave significance to the narrative of the discourse of the teams, considering each stage of the debriefing. To reach a deeper level of analysis in relation to the correct use of the debriefing tool, the relationships between the categories were analysed in a third phase in order to define a conceptual and theoretical model for the phenomenon under study.

To improve the reliability of the data (Vallejo and Finol de Franco, 2009), methodological triangulation was carried out using two distinct analysis techniques: analysis of the narrative content of the debriefing and the application of the valuation scale of the implementation of the debriefing.

4. Results
The results of each of the stages of the analysis are presented.
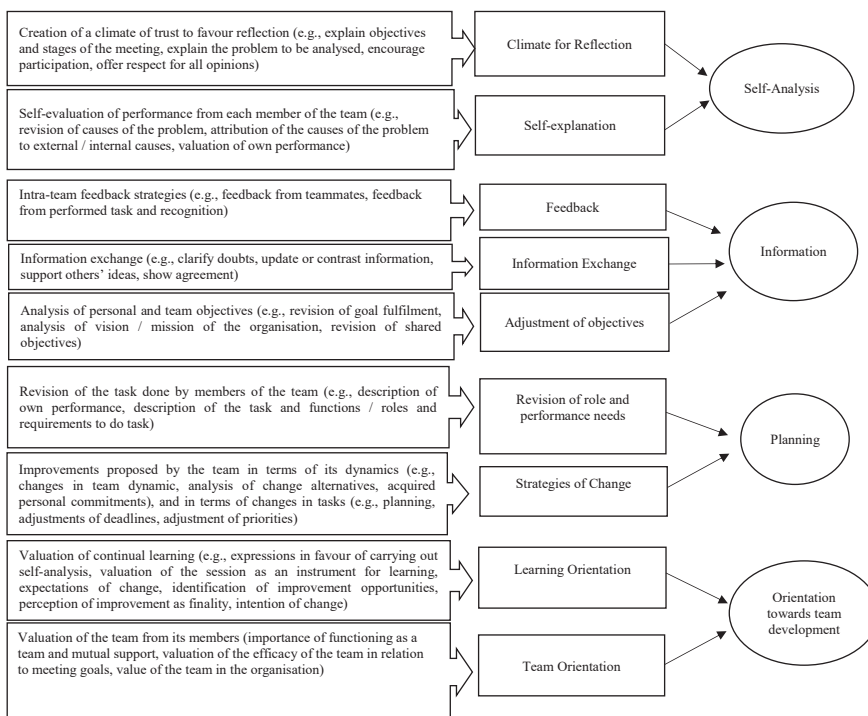
Source(s): Figure by authors

Figure 1.
Tree of codes

4.1 Selection of best practices

Table 3 includes the organisations whose team sessions were selected as best practices in each of the dimensions, as well as the average score obtained.

In total, 11 companies of the 19 have been considered best practices in some dimension. Only two companies, E06 and E11 have been selected as best practice in all the dimensions. In the Self-Analysis dimension, seven companies have met the criteria to be considered as best practices. In the Information dimension, there are five best practices, the same number as in Planning.

4.2 Analysis of best practice

The analysis of the interactions in debriefing sessions led to the identification of a set of codes that show the development of this technique in large stages: Self-analysis, Information and Planning. In addition, a set of codes describe members' attitudes towards the development of the team as a transversal line that favours the efficient attainment of this reflexive dynamic. Figure 1 collects the tree of the codes with their definitions.

Following this, the results of each of the categories identified are described, illustrating the content of the interactions with verbatim quotes from the participants. The letter E with a number indicates the code of the participant and the letter p indicates the number of the paragraph where the quote is located.

4.2.1 Self-analysis. In this first phase of the debriefing session, the participants reflect on both their individual and team performance. At this moment, two fundamental aspects arise: the generation of a safe climate that favours shared reflection and the development of individual self-evaluation. In most of the cases analysed as best practice, a moderator facilitated the dialogue. In some cases, that person was the group leader, and in others, it was a member of the team with the prior formation in debriefing: *"debriefing helps the performance of the teams, the idea is to talk, to have trust, to talk to each other and improve things" (E14, p11).*

The leader or facilitator of the session helps to generate a climate of trust. Firstly, it is important to explicitly differentiate a debriefing session from other types of planning or task-coordination meeting: *"The objective of this meeting is to identify . . . not only weaknesses and strengths of the process, but also there is an attempt to generate synergies . . . identify needs . . . anticipating future eventualities. Basically, it is about identifying opportunities to improve the next activity" (E06, p4).*

Year	Organisation	REF	INFO	PLAN
	E05	5,0	4,0	5,3
	E06	*6,0*	*5,3*	*5,3*
	E08	3,5	4,7	*6,0*
2018	E02	*5,0*	4,0	4,7
	E01	*6,0*	4,0	2,0
	E11	3,5	*5,3*	*5,3*
2019	E13	*5,0*	2,0	4,7
	E14	3,0	*5,3*	4,0
	E16	3,0	*5,3*	4,7
	E10	*5,0*	2,7	2,0
2021	E11	*5,0*	*6,0*	*5,3*

Note(s): The values of the best practices are shown in italics
Source(s): Table by authors

Then, the performance issue to be dealt with should be clearly presented: *"I have called you to this meeting because about a week ago we were informed that we had not reached the accounting closure for a second time"* (E05, p7).

The presentation of the problem allows the meeting to be channelled and encourages the team to focus on analysing its causes. Once the topic is presented, the moderator must maintain the conversation focussed on the topic and encourage the participation of all members of the team: *"María . . . I would like you to give us your point of view . . ."* (E05, p53).

In the following step, the explanation of each member of the team should be promoted, encouraging them to recognise their mistakes in the performance of the team's tasks. Starting with his/her own explanation, the leader offers an example encouraging other members to reflect on their own practice: *"I, as a leader, did not do adequate monitoring of this situation . . ."* (E13, p10).

After the leader's self-explanation, each member of the team explains the reasons for his or her behaviour and how this affected the teamwork, offering details about the performance aspects he or she wishes to improve: *"My mistake was not checking and controlling on time the documents . . ., . . . and on some occasions I did not give the correct instructions because . . . I was not sufficiently clear in explaining to them what they had to do"* (E01, p10).

The leader helps the realisation of the self-evaluation of the members by asking: *Why do you think you get behind? Is there something else you find difficult?* (E01, p12).

4.2.2 Information. This phase of the debriefing has three main objectives: to give and receive feedback between members, to exchange information and to adjust objectives.

The participants offer different forms of *feedback*, considering the point of view of the team as well as the task undertaken. The feedback is centred on recognising the contribution of each of the workmates in the team to the collaborative task, in addition to indicating the aspects that must be improved: *". . . in my opinion, you dedicate a lot of time to your clients and for that reason you lose focus"* (E16, p61).

The feedback referring to the task itself emerges from the experience of having done that task. Indeed, the task itself offers useful information for improving execution and analysing its requirements. *"I have 10 clients, and this is the weakest part because I can't focus on everything . . . Finally I review the issues that I know the leader in charge of the project is going to ask me about"* (E01, p34).

In turn, the proficient performance of each team member is recognized, highlighting the individual achievement to show the group the importance of individual performance for team performance: *"Lucia has several important individual characteristics, such as her manner with people, her kindness, her management of providers . . . these are strengths that we have to highlight as they contribute to the area functioning better"* (E13, p36).

On occasion, the feedback of the team members is focused on the recognition of the team's abilities to achieve the specific objectives or on the recognition of the team's value for the organisation: *". . . the control of operational management has to be the referent in the providing of information and we have done that very well"* (E06, p58).

Information exchange is transversal across the debriefing session. However, this second phase centres specifically on updating information and clarifying doubts about the performance or requirements of the task. Relevant information for achieving objectives is provided making sure that the whole team has the same information available: *"before, we were in operation, and now, being in finance, we have to see the company as a whole, in other words, Pedro, you have to see other issues that we didn't see before"* (E06, p 63).

Regarding the process of *adjusting objectives*, the members of the team have to confirm the agreement with a shared objective: *"we could share what I understand as the objective or the reason for these internal audits. I would say we do internal audits preparing ourselves for what is coming in March, that would be one of my answers. However, Pepe might have another, and*

so on. Maybe we all don't share the same objective or we don't understand in the same way . . ." (E11, p22).

Once individual beliefs relating to the objective are shared, the team leader should present the work objective, highlighting the importance of this being well-understood by every member. In this way, it is necessary to readjust considering each member's understanding and that which is laid out at an organisational level. "The objective of our internal audit was to validate our internal requirements and the normative requirements. So, maybe we are lacking transmitting this clearly to everybody . . ." (E11, p22).

4.2.3 Planning. This last phase of the debriefing session includes reviewing the role and performance needs of each member, predicting possible eventualities and planning strategies for change.

In order for the team to carry out a role review, it is necessary for the members to understand that the work is done interdependently. Therefore, it is essential that everyone knows the functions and roles of their teammates. "This is to confirm that you are clear what each of us does . . . Juan . . ., what does Juan do?" (E08, p69). "He makes the check deposits . . . So if I give him wrong information, he is wrong and it's a whole chain." (E08, p102).

During this part of the session, each member describes his or her function in the collective task and the specific requirements that his or her role implies for being performed effectively: ". . . I have to close the financial statements on the 10th of each month, and for that I require that we coordinate our efforts to achieve this goal." (E08, p129).

In this stage, possible *eventualities* are predicted anticipating the unexpected, for example, changes in the context or in the client or user profile. "We can have an eventuality in December, it is most likely that we will be overloaded with multiple tasks. As it is the end of the year, lots of requests arrive . . . and often we also have an audit in this month" (E13, p62).

In this prediction, the review of past and recurring eventualities can help: "The most recurring eventuality we have is the issue of the models, with button, without button, with zip, with collar, without collar . . ." (E13, p60).

In the final stages of the debriefing, when the team has already made an analysis of its performance, *strategies for change* are proposed. The teams lay out proposals for change linked to adjusting their dynamics of functioning. Among the most common actions are the review of roles and redistribution of tasks, the incorporation of follow-up meetings and monitoring of achievements, increased participation and improved communication among team members to better understand each other's roles and enable mutual support.

Although strategies to improve team dynamics are proposed, most of the strategies are aimed at improving task execution such as adjusting deadlines and prioritizing tasks and proposals to improve the service or product: ". . . I hadn't thought of that, when submitting the application, we should send it to all organizational levels because we send it specifically to managers, we could call the supervisors directly." (E06, p08).

As a complement to the change strategies proposed by the team, there are also behavioural commitments by each team member in his or her personal capacity. These commitments are aimed at modifying behaviour in favour of team or performance improvement. They are derived from the analysis carried out by the team, the strategies proposed and the demands of the collective task. "I am going to start organizing the activities in writing and, in this way, we are going to get the team to integrate all the processes. . . ." (E05, p 200).

4.2.4 Orientation towards team development. During the three stages of the briefing, attitudes such as learning orientation and team orientation were identified among the members. These attitudes favour the development of the team and the recognition of learning as a mechanism of permanent improvement.

The teams that show a correct development of these stages appreciate the opportunity to carry out a meeting of this type, emphasising the importance of communication between

members. Considering the advantages of this type of session, team members acknowledge the need for these sessions to be held systematically and periodically. *"This meeting has served to see the bad things and for us to realise things we can improve individually and as a group, because sometimes, day to day we can't see in what we are failing. We could do this more often" (E20, p256).*

Learning Orientation is an attitude that is transversally shown in the whole process of reflection. The team recognizes the need for continuous improvement and members show a proactive attitude to contribute to team development. Even while recognising the everyday nature of the error, the members focus on identifying opportunities for improvement:

> It is a tool that allows you to start from yourself, because in work teams there is a tendency to start from the error of the other, but the decision and management of change and of the high-performance teams is in each one of their members . . . The important thing is to generate synergy and generate opportunities for improvement, and that is already appreciated in this session (E06, p82).

In the same vein, the participants show a clear *team orientation.* Indeed, they tend to underline the need to focus on the team as a unit responsible for the tasks. They emphasise the need to support each other to solve problems based on shared responsibility.

> A very important strength is that we are collaborative, when it is necessary to resolve problems, the other is always available to take it on (E16, p58).

Another aspect that displays team orientation is the sense of shared effectiveness. In fact, participants value their team positively, recognising the effectiveness in meeting the proposed objectives and highlighting the role of the team in the organisation. "*We are a highly vital department for the company" (E06, p25). ". . . I have deposited one hundred percent of my trust in the team, that is very efficient . . ." (E14, p26).*

5. Discussion

This article moves forward in the characterisation of the process of the debriefing dynamic as a tool to favour learning in work teams in different organisations. A process of three, inter-related stages is identified that contributes to the team reflecting on their performance and proposing adjustments to improve their functioning and efficacy. In addition, important attitudes are distinguished that favour the implementation of this dynamic; learning orientation and team orientation, as part of the orientation the team has towards its permanent development. These attitudes influence the capacity of learning and reflection from the team and are, in turn, strengthened through a correct execution of the debriefing. Figure 2 integrates the propositions that will be discussed in what follows and summarises the theoretical model of the research.

> *P1.* Strengthening a climate for reflection is associated with a more specific self-explanation.

During a debriefing session, the members of a team reflect on a recent incident, and they talk about what happened and identify opportunities for improvement (Eddy *et al.*, 2013). For this, it is necessary that the members of the group give meaning to the experience, which can imply self-explanation. In this sense, to favour this process we have confirmed the need to develop an adequate climate for the team. According to Parker and du Plooy (2021), a psychologically safe environment is positively related to team learning. Psychological safety is an essential condition for properly conducting debriefs and can even be fostered through the debriefing process (Allen *et al.*, 2018).

Our results are coherent with those of Paige *et al.* (2021) and Gardner *et al.* (2017) about the fact that there are certain strategies to achieve this climate, such as the presentation of the problem to be dealt with and the objectives of the session, as well as the promotion of the
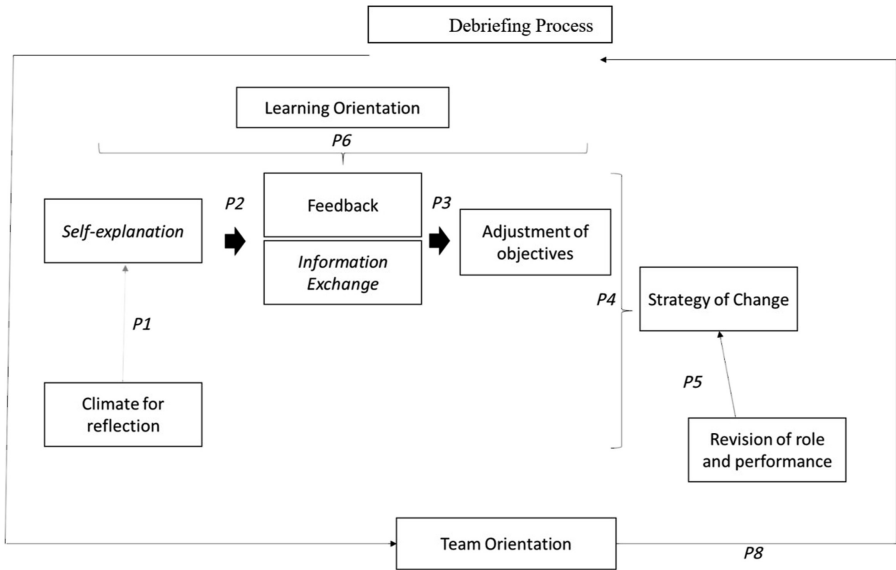
Figure 2.
Theoretical model

Source(s): Figure by authors

sincere and egalitarian participation of all the members, with respect for others' opinions as a principle. Therefore, it is important that the person who moderates the session keeps the elements that favour a climate of trust and respect in mind, promotes the participation of all the members, as well as self-explanation and reflection about the experience and performance themselves. The role of the moderator will be the key to ensuring that the team is able to provide feedback to reconfigure their experience and the information exchange and to allow them a better understanding of the situation to improve decision-making. The systematic review developed by Hall and Tori (2017) confirms the importance of safe surroundings to favour honest and open dialogue. In this sense, confidentiality must be guaranteed and the rules of conduct, such as constructive, honest and respectful feedback, must be made explicit.

> *P2.* A specific and profound self-explanation favours precise feedback and greater consensus in the exchange of information.

We have observed that when the self-correction carried out by the team is specific in relation to concrete performance, useful information for developing good feedback is shared with the team. This valuation from the workmates allows a readjustment of the person's own valuations as the feedback offers the members' information that encourages learning from experience (Johnston *et al.*, 2017). For its part, sharing information and opinions favours high-quality decision-making and, therefore, team performance. In this sense, Eddy *et al.* (2013) propose that all the members of the group participate giving their opinion both to promote the sense of belonging, as well as to have in mind all of the perspectives. This climate created in the debriefing favours the co-creation of the meaning of the experience or the problem dealt with.

> *P3.* A consensual co-reflection favours the adjustment of objectives.

> *P4.* A consensual co-reflection and the adjustment of objectives favour strategies for the concrete and relevant change.

Among the findings with respect to the phase of reflection, it is possible to highlight that when this reflection is profound, it promotes information inside the team that is significant for carrying out an adjustment to the common objectives. This is in accordance with that argued by Raes *et al.* (2015), which teams that practice reflectiveness are not only capable of questioning to what point they have achieved or are achieving their objectives, but also question their objectives, their focus to obtain them, the underlying conditions, and the established way of working together. In this sense, the members of the team talk about the common objectives to understand if there exists consensus or if it is necessary to go back and revise their meaning so they are shared by all. We have observed that by having redefined the objective, the members of the team identify new information that permits them to also adjust their operational strategies, and in this way, the new strategies are concrete for the achievement of these already-revised objectives. The shared reflection favours the adjustment and comprehension of the objectives, promoting, furthermore, an analysis of the internal processes of the team (communication, methods and strategies) (Widmann *et al.*, 2016).

> *P5.* Clarity and knowledge of distinct roles improve the knowledge of the performance in the strategy of change.

Regarding the proposed change strategies, we have found evidence that when teams inform their workmates of their roles, work tasks and function in the analysed incident, precise information is generated about what conduct to offer for a predetermined performance strategy. When the roles are clear, there exists greater knowledge about the requirements of the job and the procedures to meet them, which could be related to better performance (Karkkola *et al.*, 2019).

> *P6.* Learning Orientation is associated with the quality of reflection, information exchange and planning.

> *P7.* Team Orientation favours better quality in the debriefing, and a well-developed process of debriefing, in turn, improves team orientation.

During the three stages of the debriefing, attitudes of learning orientation were identified in the members of the team. These attitudes favour the development of the team and the recognition of learning as a mechanism of permanent improvement. On investigating how the coordination of different knowledge, an essential factor in team learning, is produced in teams. Haddad *et al.*, (2021) allude to the essential role of the processes of interaction for relevant knowledge to be produced. In this way, learning orientation affects performance through reflection (Wang and Lei, 2018). According to Lacerenza *et al.* (2015), learning orientation will encourage members of the team to be actively involved in the meeting, with a better disposition to the ideas and actions of others and will acquire greater shared comprehension.

Another relevant attitude that was observed during this dynamic was team orientation. Our results suggest that when the participants show a clear orientation towards the team, which is expressed in their consideration of the team as the unit responsible for the tasks, they show a greater involvement with the debriefing. They place emphasis on the need to support each other to resolve problems and difficulties, and in the shared responsibility to achieve objectives.

In turn, the experience of the debriefing itself favours a greater team orientation due to the feedback that is generated, in which being centred on the objectives and performance promotes a greater sense of self-efficacy. A positive valuation from the participants towards their team is observed, highlighting its efficacy to meet the proposed objectives and underlining the relevance the team has in the work unit or organisational area. According to

Bipp and Kleingeld (2018), debriefing could be a potent moderator in the development of self-efficacy.

In summary, correct use of debriefing is recommended in organisational surroundings as the debriefing is a technique that positively influences not only team efficacy, but also the formation of its members to work in a team. While we have identified that to carry out a quality debriefing, attitudes of orientation towards the team are necessary, the same act of applying this type of technique contributes to strengthening these attitudes and encourages the participation of members of a team in activities of reflection and analysis. These qualities favour the creation of a good climate for reflection, which is a necessary condition to evaluate oneself and interact with colleagues in a framework of trust and commitment. All of this impacts in a better fit of the objectives and a better adaptation of strategies of change, including role and performance revision, adequate for different eventualities.

6. Conclusion

This research contributes, in the first place, to characterising each phase of the debriefing from an analysis centred in the narratives themselves that arise in the sessions, which is a way to study the dynamic that has been little dealt with (Raes *et al.*, 2015). Secondly, we have determined relevant team attitudes that impact in the correct implementation of this technique and, in turn, we have discovered that the use of debriefing generates a recursive process in the learning, i.e., the teams that have certain favourable attitudes towards teamwork, such as learning orientation and team orientation, are more actively involved in this type of dynamics, but, in turn, the practice of them encourages these attitudes and thus the capacity of the team to learn to work as a team. This is relevant to the field of transfer of learning, which has been studied from academic disciplines such as management and training (Matthews *et al.*, 2020). Our study contributes to show how certain attitudes can be developed in favour of learning that may be related to the motivation to transfer learning to other performances.

6.1 Implications

Our results have practical implications both for the field of organisational performance as for the formation of teamwork, as they show certain processes that must be considered in each phase of the debriefing as well as actions that the moderator can do to facilitate an adequate climate for learning. It has been observed that all forms of debriefing have a common purpose in learning and team and employee development, due to the powerful transferability and usefulness of debriefing in different contexts. Therefore, knowing the correct use of debriefing is a breakthrough in this area, because it allows standardisation of practice. With this analysis of good practices, people interested in the technique have clues on how to implement them, both for their team and organisational development. In addition, including this type of practice will not just facilitate a better performance; it will also help teams to learn to work in a team from their own experiences. Regarding the theoretical implications of our study, our results complement the literature on debriefing methods, specifically on how to develop good practices in face-to-face facilitated group debriefs.

6.2 Limitations and future lines of research

It is important to mention some limitations to this work. The major limitation was the lack of published literature related to the debriefing in the area of organisational management. The qualitative and exploratory nature of the study limits the generalisation of the results. However, the results and conclusions of the study can be considered as an initial step towards the construction of a solid theoretical model that needs to be tested more in-depth through

quantitative focuses or the inclusion of other variables in the analysis with different qualitative techniques. While we have contributed by describing the correct development of the debriefing, it would be convenient to continue with studies to determine what the factors for success are in the use and application of this technique, including in the analysis of different variables such as type of organisation, work functions, the role of leadership in moderation, among others.

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