



PhD thesis

**Employee learning for workplace training and national culture:
insights from Canada and Morocco**

Storti, G.

Full bibliographic citation: Storti, G. 2024. Employee learning for workplace training and national culture: insights from Canada and Morocco. PhD thesis Middlesex University

Year: 2024

Publisher: Middlesex University Research Repository

Available online: <https://repository.mdx.ac.uk/item/22z936>

Middlesex University Research Repository makes the University's research available electronically.

Copyright and moral rights to this work are retained by the author and/or other copyright owners unless otherwise stated. The work is supplied on the understanding that any use for commercial gain is strictly forbidden. A copy may be downloaded for personal, non-commercial, research or study without prior permission and without charge.

Works, including theses and research projects, may not be reproduced in any format or medium, or extensive quotations taken from them, or their content changed in any way, without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder(s). They may not be sold or exploited commercially in any format or medium without the prior written permission of the copyright holder(s).

Full bibliographic details must be given when referring to, or quoting from full items including the author's name, the title of the work, publication details where relevant

(place, publisher, date), pagination, and for theses or dissertations the awarding institution, the degree type awarded, and the date of the award.

If you believe that any material held in the repository infringes copyright law, please contact the Repository Team at Middlesex University via the following email address: repository@mdx.ac.uk

The item will be removed from the repository while any claim is being investigated.

See also repository copyright: re-use policy: <https://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/repository>



Employee learning for workplace training and national culture: Insights from Canada and Morocco

A Thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Giovanna Storti

M00690755

Institute for Work Based Learning

Middlesex University, London, UK

October 2024

Citation:

Storti, G. (2024). *Employee learning for workplace training and national culture: Insights from Canada and Morocco*. PhD Thesis, Middlesex University.

Abstract

Employee learning for workplace training and national culture: Insights from Canada and Morocco

This two-pronged cross-cultural comparative study investigates the influence of national culture on learning for work. The premise is that one's national culture has an influence on how employees learn. The purpose is two-fold; first, to present a comparative, exploratory and interpretative analysis of how national culture influences learning in a Canadian and Moroccan context; and second, to examine how complexities of culture such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power dynamics play a role in employee learning. The primary objective was to describe and explain the *what* and *how* of participants' insights from a cross-cultural management perspective; a secondary analysis focused on current debates about complexities of national culture to examine *why* such things may be happening.

This study contributes to bridging the gap in the literature and to understanding how culture influences learning because despite a century of research on the topic, the influence of national culture on learning for work has been virtually ignored. Research also indicates a dearth of comparative studies, particularly in the Canadian and Moroccan context. Understanding norms, beliefs, and diverse ways of doing things is due to influences inherent in one's national culture. Moreover, recognizing various perspectives to better grasp how complexities of culture may play a role in employee learning also inform the study.

This comparative study described, compared, and interpreted insights about how national culture influences learning from two diverse cultures. 46 semi-structured interviews were conducted between March and November 2020. Participants were selected from a cohort of employees on corporate training for both samples. The interviews were analysed by means of content analysis with cultural differences explained from a cross-cultural management perspective. Additionally, various approaches to understanding complexities contributed more insight to the research.

The findings illustrated that Canadian participant's learning practices aligned with a decentralized, flexible, individualistic, and an outcome-based learning approach. Conversely,

Moroccan respondents revealed that practices in this study were more centralized, rigid, collectivistic, and less outcome based. Furthermore, a deeper understanding of complexities related to varying issues also provided more understanding about employee learning.

The conclusion of the study is that norms, beliefs, and diverse ways of doing things are due to influences inherent in one's national culture. How complexities of culture may influence employee learning also require consideration in cross-cultural comparative studies. Various stakeholders working in diverse spaces need to understand differences in national culture and complexities of national culture to efficiently manage, design, and deliver well-structured learning programs. A practical implication is that custom designed corporate training programs fitting cross-cultural realities will be more efficient and effective. To better adapt in cross-cultural situations, cultural awareness of underlying complexities of culture needs thorough consideration and should be approached openly. Also, international organizations benefit from comparative insights when working on training and learning for employees in diverse cultural contexts. This study helps to understand what specific aspects require reflection based on their cultural appropriateness rather than just resorting to standardized approaches. Organizations ought to be aware of these cultural differences and to tailor their learning and training activities to meet the needs of their employees. This ensures that a training is helpful and that employees can apply what they have learned at work.

Keywords: national culture, learning, Canada, Morocco, complexities of culture

Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned declare that this PhD Thesis was conducted in accordance with the Regulations of Middlesex University. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other academic award.

Signature: Giovanna Storti

Date: October 8, 2024

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my supervisory team Professor Dr. Carol Costley and Dr. Lisa Schulte at the Institute for Work Based Learning and the Middlesex Business School. I could not have asked for a more exemplary team of advisors throughout this journey. I thank you for your advice, guidance, and expertise over these past years. A special thank you to Dr. Nico Pizzolato, Dr. Christine Eastman, Dr. Elda Nikolou-Walker, Dr. Alex Elwick, Dr. Liang Liu, and my external and internal viva examiners Dr. David Holified and Dr. Anthony Goodman for your valuable insights.

A genuine thank you to all the participants who contributed to this study in Canada and Morocco. This research would not have been possible without your trust, time and cooperation. I hope to have done justice to the insights you have shared with me.

Warm thanks to my loving family and dearest friends in Canada, Italy, and Morocco for all your support and encouragement. Every kind word and genuine gesture is always cherished and never forgotten. To all my amazing students who make teaching one of the most fulfilling endeavours in life.

I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to my beloved parents for their love and guidance. I am forever indebted to both my angelic forces. *Un abbraccio fortissimo* for passing on your profound and splendid Calabrese and Venetian cultural values. *Vi voglio un bene dell'anima!* To my husband and children for their unconditional love, inspiration, and emotional support. Life is beautiful because of you! This work is dedicated to you as a symbol of my affection and appreciation for all the love and joy you bring to my life and our family.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Author’s Declaration	3
Acknowledgements	4
List of Tables	10
List of Figures.....	11
List of acronyms.....	12
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	14
1.1 Overview	14
1.2 Purpose of the research	15
1.2.1 Motivation for the study	15
1.2.2 Main research question and sub-questions of comparative study	16
1.2.3 Research propositions.....	17
1.2.4 Rationale for meta-analysis on complexities of culture.....	18
1.2.5 Complexities of culture sub-questions	20
1.2.6 Objectives of the comparative study	20
1.2.7 Strategy and data collection.....	21
1.2.7.1 Rationale for use of comparative frameworks	21
1.2.7.2 Critique of comparative frameworks.....	25
1.2.7.3 Research design for the study	26
1.3 Contribution to knowledge.....	30
1.4 Research summary chart of comparative study	31
1.5 Structure of the thesis.....	32
Chapter 2 Literature Review	35
2.1 Introduction and research context	35
2.2 Comparative Study – Approaches to learning for work	35
2.2.1 Learning paradigms related to learning within organizations	39
2.2.2 Marquardt’s Comparative Learning Framework.....	40
2.2.3 Extant literature on influence of national culture on learning for work	44
2.2.4 Critique of the extant literature on national culture and learning	61
2.2.5 Comparative frameworks: Linking Hofstede to Marquardt.....	68
2.2.6 Sub-questions and research propositions	69
2.3 National culture.....	76

2.3.1 Introduction.....	76
2.3.2 Layers of culture	77
2.3.2.1 Organisational culture.....	77
2.3.2.2 National and organizational culture.....	77
2.4 Cultural models and learning for work	80
2.4.1 Hofstede’s dimensions and a critique of his framework	82
2.4.3 Selected cultural dimensions as explanatory factors	91
2.5 Complexities of national culture.....	92
2.5.1 Diverse approaches to examine complexities of national culture.....	94
2.5.2 Global perspectives of culture.....	97
2.5.2.1 Intra vs inter-cultural variations.....	97
2.5.2.2 Culture and globalisation	98
2.5.2.3 Homogenization view.....	99
2.5.2.4 Heterogenization perspective	100
2.5.2.5 Hybridization model	101
2.5.2.6 Polarization perspective	101
2.6 Agency, cultural structures, and gender.....	102
2.7 Power relations and national culture	103
2.8 Summary.....	105
Chapter 3 Research Design & Methodology	107
3.1 Introduction.....	107
3.2 Main research question and sub-questions of comparative study.....	107
3.3 Questions on complexities of national culture and other factors	108
3.4 Qualitative research approach.....	108
3.4.1 Critical perspectives of diverse paradigms.....	109
3.4.1.1 Nuances in qualitative research	110
3.4.1.2 Granularity.....	111
3.5 Design and methodology.....	114
3.5.1 Country selection	114
3.5.2 Participants.....	115
3.5.2.1 Criteria for selecting participants	117
3.5.2.2 Access to participants – Referral sampling	117
3.6 Data collection procedure: Semi-structured interviews.....	118
3.6.1 Data collection instrument: interview protocol.....	122
3.6.2 Interviewing technique	122

3.6.3 Cross-platform messaging and voice over internet protocol interviews.....	123
3.6.4 Face to face interviews.....	124
3.7 Data analysis technique	125
3.7.1 Pilot Study.....	125
3.7.2 Content analysis and categories.....	128
3.6.3 Saturation	131
3.6.4 Credibility, transferability, and dependability	131
3.7 Ethical Considerations	133
3.7.1 Researcher Reflexivity.....	133
3.7.2 Trustworthiness, confidentiality, and anonymity	137
Chapter 4 Learning across national culture.....	142
4.1 Introduction.....	142
4.2 Learning activities: Comparative insights and complexities of culture.....	144
4.2.1 Climate setting.....	144
4.2.2 The instructor-trainee rapport	147
4.2.2.1 Globalisation and climate setting	153
4.2.2.2 Agency and climate setting.....	155
4.2.2.3 Gender roles and climate setting	157
4.2.2.4 Power dynamics and climate setting	160
4.2.3 Planning learning activities for trainees	163
4.2.3.1 Globalisation and planning	167
4.2.3.2 Agency and planning	170
4.2.3.3 Gender roles and planning.....	172
4.2.3.4 Power dynamics and planning.....	174
4.2.4 Assessing learning needs.....	175
4.2.4.1 Globalisation and needs assessment	180
4.2.4.2 Agency and needs assessment	182
4.2.4.3 Gender roles and needs assessment.....	185
4.2.4.4 Power dynamics and needs assessment.....	187
4.2.5 Setting training objectives	188
4.2.5.1 Globalisation and learning objectives	194
4.2.5.2 Agency and learning objectives	196
4.2.5.3 Gender roles and learning objectives	199
4.2.5.4 Power dynamics and learning objectives	200
4.2.6 Designing activities for trainees	202

4.2.6.1 Globalisation and design	211
4.2.6.2 Agency and design	212
4.2.6.3 Gender roles and design	214
4.2.6.4 Power dynamics and design	216
4.2.7 Executing learning experiences	217
4.2.8 Learning techniques.....	225
4.2.8.1 Globalisation and learning techniques.....	228
4.2.8.2 Agency and learning techniques	230
4.2.8.3 Gender roles and learning techniques.....	232
4.2.8.4 Power dynamics and learning techniques	233
4.2.9 Evaluating learning outcomes.....	234
4.2.9.1 Globalisation and evaluation feedback	239
4.2.9.2 Agency and evaluation feedback	241
4.2.9.3 Gender and evaluation feedback	242
4.2.9.4 Power dynamics and evaluation feedback.....	243
4.3 Learning for the workplace across the lens of national culture	244
4.3.1 Learning and power distance.....	245
4.3.2 Learning and uncertainty avoidance	251
4.3.3 Learning and individualism vs collectivism	255
4.3.4 Learning and masculinity vs femininity	259
4.4 Summary of the cross-cultural comparative insights and meta-analysis	260
4.5 Complexities of national culture: A meta-analysis	262
4.5.1 Introduction.....	263
4.5.2 Different approaches to complexities	264
4.6 Nuances and granularity	268
4.7 Globalisation and national culture	269
4.7.1 Homogenization model	270
4.7.2 Heterogenization model.....	271
4.7.3 Hybridization model	273
4.7.4 Polarization perspective	274
4.7.5 Summary.....	276
4.8 Agency, change and development.....	277
4.9 Diverse cultures, agency, cultural structures, and gender	280
4.9.1 Agency and negotiation	280
4.9.2 Agency and resistance.....	282

4.9.3 Agency and adaptation	283
4.9.4 Agency and creativity	283
4.9.5 Agency and gender.....	285
4.9.6 Power relations and national culture	287
Chapter 5 Conclusions, implications, contributions, limitations, and future research.	291
5.1 Introduction.....	291
5.2 Summary of cross-cultural comparative study and key findings.....	292
5.3 Learning activities for work-related training.....	293
5.3.1 Planning	300
5.3.2 Learning needs	303
5.3.3 Design	306
5.3.4 Implementation	311
5.3.5 Learning techniques.....	312
5.3.6 Training evaluation.....	315
5.4 National culture in learning activities	318
5.5 Complexities of national culture.....	321
5.7 How research informs practice.....	322
5.8 Contribution to the body of knowledge	325
5.9 Limitations and directions for future research	327
5.10 Summary.....	330
References	331
Appendices.....	355

List of Tables

Table 1 Research Summary Chart	25
Table 2 Marquardt's Comparative Learning Activities Framework	34
Table 3 Characteristics of Hofstede's National Culture Model	81
Table 4 Research Overview	30
Table 5. Summary of Key Findings	189

List of Figures

Figure 1: Dimensions of Hofstede’s Model	76
Figure 2: Hofstede’s 6-D Model Comparison Chart (2021): Canada Morocco	89

List of acronyms

1. ADP – Aspiring Director Program
2. ADT – Authority Delegation Training
3. CA – Canada
4. CD – Confucian Dynamism
5. CO – Collectivism
6. CCM – Cross-Cultural Management
7. CCS - Cross-Cultural Studies
8. CPD – Continuing Professional Development
9. CSPC – Canada School of Public Service
10. DDP – Director Development Program
11. DG – Director General
12. FEM – Femininity
13. GC – Government of Canada
14. GEDS – Government Electronic Directory Services
15. GLOBE – Global Leadership and Organization Behaviour
16. HR – Human Resources
17. HRD – Human Resource Development
18. LBD – Learning by Doing
19. LDP – Leadership Development Program
20. LTO – Long-Term Orientation
21. IDV – Individualism
22. MA – Morocco
23. MAS – Masculinity
24. MDP – Manager Development Program
25. MENA – Middle East and North Africa
26. MT – Management Trainee
27. NDP – New Director’s Program
28. PCT – Post-Colonial Theory
29. PD – Power Distance
30. PM – Project Management
31. PSC – Public Service Commission
32. SDP – Supervisor Development Program
33. UA – Uncertainty Avoidance
34. WBL – Work-Based Learning

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

At present times, societies and organizations are globally connected and are no longer progressing within the confines of one single entity. As such, the current landscape is challenged with immense cultural differences leading international world economies to face this new reality as they operate in a more intensified global context (Rumbley, Altbach and Reisberg, 2012). The latter is marked by the transfer of managerial practices (Schober, 2016), the opening of new emerging markets (Luo and Zheng, 2016), and global workforce mobility (Baruch, Altman, and Tung, 2016). In the area of learning for employees, there is a surge in the exchanges of training programs across national borders (Bilecen and Van Mol, 2017). In fact, the current trend of globalization has amplified the need to understand the nature of work-related learning programs crossing national boundaries, as well as those responsible for developing international learning activities for professionals (Chang, 2004). It is worth noting that most learning theories and workplace practices have been developed in Western countries and have influenced learning within organisations worldwide (McLean, 2006).

This backdrop implies that cultural features influence the exchange of knowledge in adult learning practices as documented in the literature (see Chang, 2004; Flynn, Eddy, and Tannenbaum, 2006). In fact, studies indicate that national culture impacts specific areas of employee training and development in organizations (Garavan, McCarthy and Carbery, 2017). Furthermore, the context of a culture influences the development, implementation, and evaluation process of learning at work (Felstead, Gallie, Green and Zhou, 2010; Marquardt, Berger, and Loan, 2004).

Regarding learners' logical reasoning processes, Solano-Flores, and Nelson-Barber (2001) contend that culture collectively shapes people's mental workings leading societies to have

embedded predisposed concepts that navigate reasoning, how individuals process and interpret information, and how they respond to questions. Therefore, when nurturing learners that actively internalize new knowledge, cultural differences must be an integrated part of the production phases from the onset of any learning process (Neuliep, 2003; Nieto, 2002). In the same vein, Barmeyer (2004) argues that the ways professionals learn represent culture-bound cognitive patterns because of learners' cultural socialisation and mental programming.

On another note, the sources of employee learning in the workplace have been found to vary across cultures as illustrated in Flynn's et al. (2006) empirical study of the context of continuing education in China, Japan, Korea, and the USA. National culture was also found to shape training practices at work (Hassi, 2012). Nevertheless, existing studies fall short of providing a comprehensive and systematic portrait of employee learning practices across cultures (Hassi and Storti, 2011) as current studies seem to only provide us with glimpses into a particular learning activity for workplace training (Hassi, 2015).

1.2 Purpose of the research

1.2.1 Motivation for the study

This research intends to add to the existing body of literature on learning for work and national culture. The main purpose of this study is to present a comparative, explanatory and interpretative analysis of how national culture influences employee learning in diverse cultural contexts. The study sought insights on nine phases of the learning cycle from the initial step of climate setting to the last step of training evaluation as studies in the existing literature have yet to provide a comparative analysis using Canada and Morocco as samples. In effort to expand the body of literature, a holistic analysis of the findings has provided a landscape portrait of how things unfold in these two diverse cultures. In comparing the insights, similarities and differences were presented and analysed. Notable contributions of

cross-cultural management theorists explained influences of national culture. An overarching secondary analysis based on already seen critiques, as well as literature that investigates aspects of culture from different points of view has been included as a tool for additional analysis, interpretation and understanding interactions in more depth. Further analysis seeks a more critical interpretation of what may be embedded within study participants' shared insights. In this part, I focus on studies that have discussed notions of complexities of national culture as traditional cross-cultural management theories do not inherently concentrate on non-cultural issues such globalisation, agency, gender, and power dynamics. This section allows us to delve deeper into the insights described in the study.

1.2.2 Main research question and sub-questions of comparative study

The proposed research is intended to be a descriptive and interpretive study. The endeavour begins by asking the following main research question: *how do employee learning activities for workplace training vary across national culture in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts?* The main research question is followed-up by sub-questions designed to support and frame the study in a coherent manner. In doing so, Hofstede's (1980; 2001) national cultural dimensions of power distance (PD), uncertainty avoidance (UA), individualism/collectivism (IDV) and femininity/masculinity (MAS) were used to explain influences of a national culture on learning from the Canadian and Moroccan perspectives.

The sub-questions that framed and guided the primary research were:

- ❖ *SQ1: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the power distance cultural dimension?*
- ❖ *SQ2: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension?*

- ❖ *SQ3: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension?*
- ❖ *SQ4: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the masculinity/femininity cultural dimension?*

1.2.3 Research propositions

In qualitative studies, research propositions may be framed around sub-questions to further support and build on the research questions under study (Maxwell, 2013; Creswell, 2014). In the literature review, a descriptive account of what has been revealed in previous studies provides indication on predictions about what the expected outcomes may look like. In the following research, for instance, null research propositions would presume that there are no differences that emerge in both diverse contexts in relation to Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions and Marquardt's (1990) comparative learning framework which outlines the phases of the learning process.

A directional proposition is when the researcher makes predictions centring on prior studies and literature on the topic that suggests potential or expected outcomes (Creswell, 2014, p.189). For example, a prediction that may be made for the current research is that cultural influences associated with Marquardt's model of the American learning style (Approach A) would reflect perceptions, norms, and beliefs in a Canadian training context, whereas styles in other cultures such as Morocco (Approach B) will echo contrasting reflections of professional learning. It is worthwhile mentioning that the Anglophone Canadian sample will be used in the following study to mirror Approach A, as Hofstede's cultural indices for Anglophone Canada and the US are almost identical (Hofstede, 2018). Lastly, Creswell (2014) recommends using the same word-order pattern in the propositions by repeating key phrases related to both the explanatory and dependent variables to enable a

reader to easily identify the major variables (p.192). Considering the above, the research propositions for the following study include:

- ❖ **Research Proposition 1:** *In the Moroccan context, which is a high PD culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low PD culture, the process is more decentralized.*
- ❖ **Research Proposition 2:** *In the Moroccan context, which is a high UA culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is more rigid, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low UA culture, the process is less rigid.*
- ❖ **Research Proposition 3:** *In the Moroccan context, which is a collectivistic culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centred on the group of training participants, whereas in the Canadian context, which is an individualistic culture, the process is centred on the individual learner.*
- ❖ **Research Proposition 4:** *In both the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, which are slightly patriarchal cultures, the overall approach to employee learning activities is outcome-based.*

1.2.4 Rationale for the secondary analysis on complexities of culture

Qualitative analysis is an approach to documenting reality that relies on words and images as the primary data source (Ruane, 2015). The aim is to explore “meaning individuals ascribe to social or human problems” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p.3). Questions emerge rather than being prescribed. Researchers value complexity, nuances, and individual meaning with varied data sources collected from interviews, observations, documentation, existing critiques, and the extant literature. The researcher must be reflective of their background, culture, and experiences as influential of the research. Interviews and surveys, focus groups, grounded theory, case studies, ethnography, discourse analysis, phenomenology, and participatory action research are all examples of qualitative research. Methods involve collecting and

analysing data through various techniques such as interviews, observations, and document analysis.

To include a nuanced and detailed perspective in a qualitative analysis, we need to consider a variety of sources when collecting data to get a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon; secondly, conduct in-depth analysis of the primary data by examining it thoroughly identifying patterns, themes, categories, and relationships - avoid generalizing findings, and include insights about the nuances and complexities; third, consider explaining the phenomenon from multiple viewpoints and be conscious of your biases and assumptions as well as consider multiple perspectives to gain a more nuanced understanding relationships (Lester et al., 2020). This can involve seeking out diverse participants, points of views or considering alternative explanations based on complexities that may be resting under the surface of your findings. In this research, an analysis of complexities of culture allowed for a deeper examination of how national culture may influence other factors as globalisation, agency, gender, and power dynamics. Fourth, provide rich descriptions and use descriptive language to provide a detailed picture of the phenomena relationships (Lester et al., 2020). Include quotes and examples from participants to illustrate key themes and concepts. Detailed quotes were included in the primary study. Fifth, triangulate findings by using multiple methods or sources to confirm or challenge your findings, this can involve comparing different data sources or triangulating data with other sources of information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In brief, including a nuanced and detailed perspective in qualitative analysis requires careful attention to the data, an openness to multiple perspectives, and a commitment to providing rich and descriptive accounts of the phenomena being studied. In the following study, participants' insights were meticulously described and analysed to examine the influence of

national culture on learning for work. Additionally, a secondary analysis based on the extant literature delved into other issues underlying complexities of national culture and learning.

1.2.5 Complexities of culture sub-questions

Sub-questions on complexities of culture that developed from the comparative study were:

- ❖ *MAQ1: How can a qualitative analysis include a more nuanced detailed perspective and granularity to address complexities of national culture?*
- ❖ *MAQ2: How does globalisation influence national culture and learning for work?*
- ❖ *MAQ3: How do individuals in diverse cultures use agency to respond to cultural structures and how does agency influence learning activities for work?*
- ❖ *MAQ4: Do both samples reflect gender in employee learning?*
- ❖ *MAQ5: What are the factors that construct agency, change, and development in learning for work? How do advanced cultures affect people's actions in developing countries? How do they manifest in the study?*
- ❖ *MAQ6: How do power relations in diverse cultures impact national culture? What are the implications for learning and training for the workplace?*

1.2.6 Objectives of the comparative study

The objective of the study was to conduct a comparative and interpretative analysis of how national culture influences various phases of the learning process as reflected across diverse approaches. Although some studies in the literature have examined the influence of culture on a particular aspect of a learning activity, this study sought insights on the entire learning cycle from the initial stage of climate setting to the last step of training evaluation. In addition, studies in the existing literature have yet to provide a comparative analysis on the role that national culture plays in learning for work using Canada and Morocco as samples of divergent approaches. In efforts fill these gaps and expand the body of literature, a holistic

analysis of the findings provided a lucid portrait of perceptions, beliefs, and norms about learning for work in both diverse cultures. Thus, the purpose of this research is two-fold. First, to present a comparative, exploratory and interpretative analysis of how national culture influences learning for work in two diverse contexts. Second, to delve further into the extant literature discussing current debates about different approaches to examine national culture and the interplay of complexities such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power dynamics. The aim in this part was to provide a more nuanced view by seeking answers to sub-questions that emerged after the comparative analysis. Questions that focused on *why* such things may be happening as opposed to describing and explaining the *what* and *how* of participants' insights. Reflective observations from my teaching experience also inform the study. The meta-narrative complements the cross-cultural management perspective relied on in the comparative study by considering how various approaches to understanding culture's consequences on learning may also contribute insight. This critical viewpoint provides answers to newly emerged questions, circumstances, and positioning of the researcher.

1.2.7 Strategy and data collection

1.2.7.1 Rationale for use of comparative frameworks

In cross-cultural studies, the benefits of comparative frameworks to understanding and analysing cultural differences are many. Frameworks based on dualistic comparisons provide an ideal starting point for researchers to examine and analyse cultural differences in a lucid and effective manner. In this study, this strategy served as a jumpstart to generate the propositions, develop the main research question, and reflect on sub-questions for the comparative study. The dualistic approach initially helped identify areas for further exploration about the influence of national culture and learning for work. After the primary analysis, this strategy also guided and framed the secondary meta-narrative leading to a more

nuanced and granular analysis of complexities of national culture. An analysis based on dichotomies, such as collectivism versus individualism, or high-power distance versus low-power distance also assisted in examining cultural variations from a pragmatic stance. The practicality of relying on dualistic models is constructive in international business, education, health care, and diplomacy. Understanding differences in communication styles, for instance, can result in effective cross-cultural communication and negotiation strategies. The duality provides the organizational structure needed to facilitate understanding and generate discussions about cultural complexities.

Comparative analyses require comparing insights of participants in a systematic way; thus, by examining distinct cultural dimensions or culture-value orientations of diverse cultural groups, differences, and patterns between them can be identified allowing deeper insight into underlying cultural factors that influence social norms, attitudes, and behaviours. This raises awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences reminding people that individuals or learners from diverse cultures may perceive and approach the world in unique and diverse ways. Grasping the differences allows us to navigate the intercultural landscape and engage in interactions with more compliance, responsiveness, and acceptance of others.

The selection of Hofstede's framework for the cross-cultural analysis is based on the stability and longevity of the model over the years (Triandis, 2004; Yeganeh et al., 2009) and on the fact that the framework is one of the most cited works in cross-cultural comparative studies with over 237,000 citations across various disciplines (Google Scholar, 2023). Recently, Beugedijk, Maseland and Van Hoorn (2015) also found that the index scores of the countries of Hofstede's framework relative to the scores of other countries have not changed very much over the years, illustrating that cultural differences have remained stable.

Marquardt's (1990) comparative learning activities framework from his work in human resource development was used to focus on learning for work. In the latter, the

activities included climate setting, planning, need assessment, setting objectives, course design, implementation, and evaluation. This model is the only comparative framework on learning for the workplace that considers the importance of a national culture in an employee learning context. Despite the broad nature of concepts used that place cultural traits under dualistic categories, this comparative learning framework aided in highlighting differences in participant's insights in the primary analysis of this cross-cultural comparative study. Additionally, a secondary meta-narrative analysis examined complexities of national culture providing for a more comprehensive representation of cultural differences. This allowed a more in-depth look into nuances and granularity of the phenomena under study. In the present research, Hofstede's national cultural dimensions were the explanatory variables; the anticipated reasons behind what was revealed from the participants, whereas Marquardt's learning activities provided more insight about the explained concepts. The meta-narrative examined nuances and complexities of national culture such as globalisation, power relations, gender, agency, and cultural structures.

Marquardt and Engel (1993) proposed different approaches to learning activities by contrasting an American and a differing approach to better grasp learning for the workplace and argue that when collaborating with learners who are not from the United States, it is crucial to modify and tailor the design, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning programs. Approach A is based on American values and Approach B learning systems are based on a particular country's value system (Marquardt, 1990). It is important to note that cultural orientations from the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004) and Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001) rank the United States and Canada comparable. According to the literature, the United States and Canada were found to be culturally like each other fitting within the same cluster (see Hofstede, 1980; Inglehart, 1997; Selmer, 2007).

The work value surveys from Hofstede's study (1980) categorized 66 nations into eight cultural clusters based on four cultural value dimensions. Canada and the United States were aligned closely under the Anglo cluster. A distinct characteristic of Anglo nations is a high score on individualism and masculinity and a low to medium score on uncertainty avoidance and power distance. Hofstede's findings were later validated by Ronen and Shenkar (1985), Inglehart (1997), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour (GLOBE) project (House et al., 2004), and Zander (2005). The results of these studies indicate that individuals of Anglo cluster nations are similar in terms of language, ethnicity, economics, and religion. Therefore, it is plausible to infer from these studies that theories and practices in the world of business which are based on any one of the Anglo nations as for example the United States are transferable to other Anglo nations such as Canada. Consequently, it is feasible for international organizations and multinationals to generalize corporate business policies which touch on the employee selection process, compensation, performance appraisals, an organization's structure, hierarchical relations, ethics, and decision making, competitive and cooperative strategies, as well as training and development across nations of the same cultural cluster.

Bond et al. (2004) classified 41 nations into four quadrant clusters. The USA and Canada were placed in the same quadrant, supporting the notion of proximity between these two nations. Similarly, Sagiv et al., (2010) and Schwartz (1999; 2006) used seven cultural value dimensions to categorize 77 nations into seven cultural clusters. They classified Canada into two culture groups: Anglophone and Francophone. The United States was found to be culturally close to Anglophone Canada, while Francophone Canada clustered with Western European nations such as France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria. In another study that analysed variables impacted by culture such as cognition and individual behaviour, Adler et al. (1987) compared the negotiation behaviour of Anglophone Canadians and Anglophone

Americans and found the two groups to be similar. The assumptions of the primary study are that the insights from the Moroccan context will fall under Marquardt's Approach B expectations of employee learning for work while the studies looking into the influence of the Anglophone Canadian national culture will fit anticipations of the American approach.

1.2.7.2 Critique of comparative frameworks

A critical understanding of dualistic approaches acknowledging limitations aids to avoid the pitfalls of oversimplifying complex cultural phenomena, essentializing cultures, and reinforcing stereotypes. In cross-cultural studies, critiques of the use of dualistic comparisons raise concerns and limitations. Comparisons resting on duality tend to oversimplify complex phenomena by reducing them to binary oppositions. Cultures are often presented as mutually exclusive categories, falling short of capturing the rich diversity of each culture. The latter can lead to stereotypes and generalizations. By emphasizing dichotomies, such as individualism versus collectivism, or task-oriented versus relationship-oriented, dualistic frameworks may overlook the complexity and variation within a cultural group, maintaining distorted and simplistic views. Such frameworks may also perpetuate essentialist views by assuming that differences are innate and static. Critics argue that the dynamic nature of culture and other social, political, historical, and contextual factors are overlooked leading to essentializing cultures and reinforcing stereotypes, while inhibiting a nuanced and granular understanding of cultural variations.

The homogenization of diverse cultural groups may occur if researchers highlight the most salient and noticeable differences between the two groups; thus, ignoring internal variations within each cultural group as well as any subcultures or regional differences that may influence behaviours and attitudes in significant ways. Ethnocentric bias is another limitation of dualistic comparisons in cross-cultural studies, where one culture is explicitly or implicitly

positioned as inferior or superior to the other. This often leads to cultural imperialism, marginalization, and power imbalances in certain cultures. The influence of situational or contextual factors tends also to be overlooked when using dualistic approaches to comparative cross-cultural studies. It is important to keep in mind that culture is not the only determinant of individual's behaviours, as people are influenced by socio-economic conditions, globalisation, agency and cultural structures, gender, power relations, and individual experiences.

In the following study, these prominent issues have been addressed in several ways. First, by describing and analysing shared insights from the primary study from a cross-cultural management (CCM) perspective, and second, by considering a secondary meta-narrative analysis that presented more nuanced and multidimensional approaches to the study of national culture and learning for work considering complexities and interconnections between diverse cultures.

1.2.7.3 Research design for the study

The proposed research relied on qualitative methods by means of interviews for both the Moroccan and Canadian samples. The interview technique was used to collect data from training participants in Anglophone Canada and in Morocco about employee learning activities for work. Furthermore, given that culture is a sub-conscious phenomenon embedded within individuals' mental structures it would be impractical to circumvent manifestations of culture by relying only on questionnaires (Delobbe and Vandenberghe, 2004). In fact, culture is unique with specific features that would be more adequately examined by means of tools that are not completely defined a priori (Geertz, 1974), such as semi-structured interviews. Finally, culture is a social process, in which the researcher

participates, rather than being an objective reality that is not subject to the influence of the researcher (Romani, Sackmann and Primecz, 2011, p.4).

The data collection for the empirical study started with interviews from 15 professional learners working as public servants in Morocco to reflect the Approach B sample and 15 employee learning participants working as public servants in Canada to mirror the American approach. In this respect, qualitative researchers tend to select few participants who can shed light on the phenomenon under study rather than selecting a large sample of participants to generalize as indicated by Leedy and Ormrod (2001); the authors recommend that the number of participants in qualitative studies range between five and 25 and until saturation is reached. While validity and reliability are associated with the positivistic paradigm, scholars in qualitative research (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Marshall and Rossman, 1995; Maxwell, 2013; Robson, 2002) recommend the use of three specific concepts which they consider appropriate for qualitative research. These include credibility which is equivalent to internal validity, transferability as congruent with external validity and dependability as an equivalent of reliability.

In the primary study, the interview questions assisted in ensuring that the collected data corresponded to the participants' responses which enhanced credibility. Additionally, the adoption of a systemic approach to collecting and analysing data helped in enhancing the dependability of the study. Lastly, the research findings compared cultural features that surfaced in both contexts to further inform the study. In sum, the aims of the study were to conduct a rich comparative and descriptive analysis, to design a well-structured and carefully thought-out conceptual tool (e.g., interview protocol) that would allow us to descriptively answer the research questions, and to illustrate a chain of evidence that can pave the way for conducting similar qualitative studies in diverse cultural sites; this approach enhanced the reliability of the study.

Participants for the study were originally targeted from a directory of public service employees via email with an introduction to the research study requesting voluntary participation. The Government Electronic Directory Services (GEDS) provides a directory of the federal Public Service of Canada (PSC) for all the regions across the country. GEDS is accessible by the public and people can search for employees by surname, given name, telephone number, title, role, or organization. As the online directory is open to the public, gatekeeper permission was not required for the following research. The directory is a window into the hierarchical structure of the various organizations within the Canadian public service. Interviewees for the following research were originally planned to be recruited randomly via the directory by title, surname, or role. PSC employees holding managerial positions have access to extensive professional development opportunities to support them in honing skills required for their work, as well as significant access to corporate training over the span of their careers. However, due to access issues and because of the extraordinary circumstances of a global shutdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was compelled to resort to referral and snowball sampling for the Canadian sample. As a lecturer and training consultant, in the past, I provided extensive corporate training to professionals at various federal and municipal ministries as well as private sector companies in the National Capital Region (NCR) of Canada. Due to lockdown measures that began mid-March, responses to my initial introduction emails and direct phone contact via the GEDS portal received limited responses. As a recourse, I began to contact past trainees and former colleagues to seek participants suitable for the study. Referrals from my professional network proved efficient. I assured confidentiality by providing interviewees the option to initiate calls via Skype or WhatsApp using a private number code to mask any nominal data that could be transferred. Participants controlled the calls from their end and thus, could withdraw their participation

any time. At the onset, participants were provided with a description and rationale for the research, informed consent forms, and interview questions by request.

Moroccan participants were recruited from cohorts of trainees sent on corporate training by their departments or agencies with training modules delivered in English at an English-medium institution in Morocco. In the selection process for suitable participants, senior level trainees (manager, advisor, and above etc.) that were native Moroccans were approached to participate in the study. A balance between men and women, as well as senior managers and directors was considered during the selection process for both samples, respectively. Moroccan participants were consulted before or after their professional training sessions and were asked to voluntarily take part in the study. When recruiting target participants for the study, the criteria mentioned above was considered.

The interviews were conducted in English as the target participants had proficiency in the English language in both countries. To make sure that the respondents had the required information and knowledge related to learning activities, only training participants who had attended at least five training sessions offered by their employer were selected for the study. To identify suitable participants for the Canadian sample, I pursued target respondents that held senior roles within their departments such as managers, advisors, team leaders, analysts, directors, lawyers, and executives. Additionally, to control for the cultural background of the study participants in such a way to reflect the national culture of their respective country, only native trainees who were born and raised in their country of origin were eligible to participate in the current study.

A secondary analysis based on existing critiques and the extant literature about complexities such as globalisation, gender, agency and cultural structures, and power relations and their influence on national culture was added to the study after the comparative analysis to address questions that emerged about subtleties and interconnections between

cultures. This provided for a more comprehensive view of cultural differences while recognizing more nuanced, granular, and multidimensional perspectives to understanding the influence of national culture on learning from various perspectives.

1.3 Contribution to knowledge

From a practical viewpoint, in examining the role that national culture plays in learning for work, the findings can assist practitioners and organizations operating internationally to manage their educational and professional development programs. In so doing, practitioners can adapt training activities to the diverse cultural setting where they operate (Coget, 2011). The insights aid in understanding differences between two unique cultures and have many practical implications, for example, recognizing subtleties in communication styles can help in effective cross-cultural communication and negotiation strategies in international business contexts. Stakeholders in various fields such as management, education, and health care can also identify patterns and differences between groups in societies providing insight into underlying cultural factors and variations that shape behaviour, attitudes, and social norms. Particularly, insights from the study can assist international managers working in Canada, Morocco, and the MENA region to adequately design and deliver training programs that consider differences and complexities of cultural factors underlying learning for work. Furthermore, the present study responds to calls made by scholars (e.g., Kim and McLean, 2014) who suggest that professionals working in non-Western countries, ought to consider local national cultural factors when implementing theories or training programs in different countries.

From a theoretical stance, another goal of the study was to examine the influence of national culture on the learning process in a comprehensive and systematic manner. The latter required a focus on each phase of the learning cycle from the initial phase of setting objectives to the last step of evaluating learning outcomes. In the primary study, participants'

insights were described and explained from a comparative CCM perspective highlighting differences and similarities between two diverse cultural groups in a systematic way. Understanding broad differences help individuals better navigate intercultural interactions with more empathy, adaptability, and respect for cultural diversity in workplace learning settings. Insights about differences and similarities of learning for work and the influence of national culture can also advance cross-cultural collaboration, cross-cultural learning, and raise awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences. Cross-cultural comparative research prompts people from diverse cultures to perceive and approach the world in distinctive ways and understanding these differences enhances peoples' sense of mutual respect, openness to diversity, empathy for others, and adaptability.

At the societal level, though most professional learning programs are organized locally and subject to domestic practices and regulations, policy makers should be aware of diverse training and PD practices to observe trends and changes, as the latter, may influence shaping national educational practices and regulations related to higher education, continuing professional development, and life-long learning initiatives.

1.4 Research summary chart of comparative study

Research problem/rationale	Research Aim	Research Questions	Research objectives	Data	Research Propositions	Data sources	Methods for data collection	Data analysis process and techniques
<p>Organizations are connected and face many cultural differences as they operate in global contexts (Rambley et al., 2012).</p> <p>Trends have amplified need to grasp complexities of professional training and to examine emerging issues that arise at distinct stages of the learning process (Chang, 2004; Bassi, 2012; 2016).</p> <p>Most learning theories and practices have been developed in Western countries and impact learning and teaching globally (McLean, 2006).</p>	<p>Describe and compare how cultural factors influence employee learning activities in diverse workplace settings</p>	<p>Main research question</p> <p>MRQ: How do employee learning activities for workplace training vary across national culture in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts?</p> <p>Sub-questions</p> <p>Q1: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the PD cultural dimension?</p> <p>Q2: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the UA cultural dimension?</p> <p>Q3: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the IND cultural dimension?</p> <p>Q4: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the MAS cultural dimension?</p>	<p>To present a comparative, explanatory and interpretive analysis of how national culture influences employee learning for the workplace.</p> <p>To seek insights on training activities from the initial stages of learning to the last step of training evaluation.</p> <p>To provide a holistic and descriptive analysis of the role national culture plays in employee learning in two diverse contexts: Canada and Morocco</p> <p>To fill these gaps and further expand the body of literature on national culture and learning for work.</p>	<p>Identify cultural features that influence professional training for the workplace.</p> <p>Relate the data to Hofstede's dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and femininity/masculinity to explain and describe influences of national culture on learning in two different settings</p>	<p>RP1: In the Moroccan context, which is a high PD culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low PD culture, the process is more decentralized.</p> <p>RP2: In the Moroccan context, which is a high UA culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is more rigid, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low UA culture, the process is less rigid.</p> <p>RP3: In the Moroccan context, which is a collectivistic culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centered on the group of training participants, whereas in the Canadian context, which is an individualistic culture, the process is centered on the individual learner.</p> <p>RP4: In both the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, which are highly patriarchal cultures, the overall approach to employee learning activities is outcome-based.</p>	<p>Use findings to identify how national culture influences learning for work</p> <p>Understand challenges faced by employees learning in diverse workplaces</p> <p>Understand the need for more complex considerations by trainers regarding national culture and employee learning for work.</p> <p>Analyze interviews of professional trainees with experience in PD from two diverse cultures.</p> <p>Compare and contrast insights of two diverse workplace settings (Canada and Morocco) across the lens of national culture.</p>	<p>Review the related literature and link findings with the available data from Hofstede's National Cultural Dimensions (2003) and Marquardt's Comparative Learning Framework (1998)</p> <p>Collect and provide a descriptive analysis on empirical data gathered from Canada and Morocco.</p>	<p>Use content analysis to describe the cross-cultural comparative data to provide insights and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992)</p> <p>Explore how national culture influences learning in diverse workplace settings.</p> <p>Provide a comparative cross-cultural analysis to explain and describe insights on national culture and employee learning from two diverse settings.</p>

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the cross-cultural comparative study and secondary analysis about complexities of culture. The purpose, motivation, main questions, sub-questions, and propositions are outlined. The chapter includes the objectives, data collection, rationale for the use of cross-cultural management frameworks, the research design, and a brief mention about the research contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2 is the literature review. In this section definitions and diverse perspectives of national culture and learning approaches are discussed. Cross cultural views and selected cultural dimensions as explanatory factors and their critiques are presented. The chapter illustrates reasons for the use of Marquardt's Comparative Learning Framework from the HRM literature, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model, and other cross-cultural management influences as suitable frameworks for the analysis of the findings for this research. This chapter highlights the importance of national culture on employee learning for the workplace. Additionally, literature pertaining to issues such as globalisation, agency, cultural structures, gender, and power relations explained across diverse perspectives has been included for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how these matters may influence national culture and learning for work.

Chapter 3 is the research design and methodology chapter and begins with a discussion on the qualitative research approach used for the comparative study of the thesis. The section delves into the design, country selection, and criteria for selecting participants, and access to interviewees in both milieus. It also includes a discussion on the data collection procedure and semi-structured interviews. The data analysis technique of comparative content analysis categorized under themes derived from the literature are explained. The chapter also discusses credibility, transferability, dependability, researcher reflexivity, and

the ethical considerations of the study. Lastly, a rationale for the secondary analysis that complements the comparative study is discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and explains influences of national culture on employee learning for work. The first section presents a comparative and detailed description of the insights shared from both samples highlighting differences and similarities. The data is compared, contrasted, and presented under categories reflective of the nine learning phases. Complexities of national culture as globalisation, agency, gender, and power are discussed in relation to how they may also influence learning activities at each phase of training for work programs. Learning for work across the lens of national culture and other cross-cultural management (CCM) views are also discussed in-depth. This part provides plausible responses to the comparative study's research propositions and answers the main research question. Questions about cultural subtleties that emerged from the comparative content analysis were addressed by means of a secondary analysis that considered different perspectives used to grasp complexities as globalisation, agency, gender, and power dynamics.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, implications, contributions, limitations, and directions for future research. The chapter begins with a summary of the key findings, then draws our attention to the theoretical and practical implications of the study. It also mentions recommendations, contribution the study brings to existing knowledge, and directions for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and research context

Part 1 of the study investigates the influence of national culture on learning activities for work and begins with defining national culture and pertinent cultural frameworks used to study the phenomenon of culture. Next, I proceed with defining employee learning as the explained concept of the proposed research. Then, a thorough review of the existing literature that has discussed how national culture influences employee learning is presented. Relevant articles were systemically approached through the lens of Marquardt's (1990) learning components of climate setting, planning, needs assessment, setting objectives, design, implementation, and evaluation. Also, a reflective critique and implications in the extant literature are discussed regarding the primary study. Part II is a secondary meta-analysis allowed for an examination and more nuanced understanding of complexities of national culture and globalisation, gender, power relations, agency, and cultural structures. The literature relied on for the meta-narrative was based on the extant literature and existing critiques on the concepts as they relate to national culture. The secondary analysis allowed for a more comprehensive representation of differences and discussion about diverse perspectives in addressing complexities in the context of national culture and learning for work.

2.2 Comparative Study – Approaches to learning for work

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development (CPD) refers to learning practices intended for the professional development for employees beyond their initial training (Collin, van der Heijden, and Lewis, 2012); CPD is used in reference to a wide array of specialized training,

formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to assist administrators, instructors, and other working professionals to improve their professional knowledge, competency skills, and effectiveness. There is a wide degree of consensus that in practice, professional development includes: one-day conferences, weekly or monthly workshops or more advanced module or degree programs related to a participants' area of expertise and/or on subjects of interest that enhance effectiveness at work. CPD programs may be delivered in person, online, during or outside working hours, through one-to-one instruction or in group sessions. CPD may be facilitated by professional trainers or external consultants hired by organizations to deliver targeted trainings to their employees.

The main objectives of many continuing professional development initiatives include:

- a) furthering knowledge of an employee's subject area; for instance, by learning new and up-to-date scientific theories, expanding knowledge of different historical periods, or learning how to teach subject-area content and concepts more effectively;
- b) training or mentoring in specialized techniques that can be transferable to many other areas of study;
- c) earning certification in a particular program;
- d) developing technical and analytical skills to analyse data and then use findings to modify existing programs and techniques to make them more effective;
- d) learning new technologies in ways that can improve effectiveness at the workplace, and;
- f) acquiring leadership skills that can be used to develop and coordinate initiatives and programs.

Concisely, continuing professional development is considered as a primary mechanism with structured and well-thought-out objectives that helps employees continuously learn and improve their competency skills over time.

Work-based Learning (WBL)

By the end of the 20th century, a professional training approach that focused on training for post qualifying professionals at work surfaced as an offshoot of continuing professional development. The concept of work-based learning which dates to the

apprenticeship system of the medieval period was designed to train novices to become leaders in their areas of specialization at work. The term WBL does not seem to be clearly distinguished from other terms used to refer to practice-based learning in a work context; several interchangeable synonyms are found in the literature, including employment-based learning, on-the-job training, enterprise-based learning and, in some contexts, workplace learning. The simplest definition usually links learning to the work role, and identifies three strands; learning for, through and at work (Seagraves et al., 1996). Today, work-based learning has come to refer to every aspect of learning that is situated at the workplace or arises directly out of concerns related to work (Lester and Costley, 2010). WBL includes learning that occurs through problem-solving and continuous improvement as it responds to work-related issues. Despite some overlap with other approaches to adult development, WBL differs from experiential learning, continuing professional development, and informal learning in the sense that it is seldom planned, formal, and imminent albeit instances where it may be organised and planned by different stakeholders (Lester and Costley, 2010). Drawing on some of the employee learning theories (e.g., Knowles 1980) and humanistic theory (Rogers 1983), WBL also considers the concept of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and the context of learning, while considering work as the focus of learning activity rather than just a training experience or a placement activity. In the early 1990's, work-based learning explored the curriculum which found that learning was organised and built upon the activities and relationships at work (Costley, 2001).

On the other hand, the term workplace learning tends to embrace all types of learning related to the needs of the workplace, even learning that occurs away from the work process such as formal on-the-job training and off-the-job education and training, whereas work-based learning tends to be restricted more to learning through work. WBL suggests there is more emphasis on the actual work-process rather than on the learning site, whereas the term

workplace learning appears to focus more on the venue than on the process. In short, research indicates that various kinds of work-based learning activities are nevertheless effectively increasing the participation of adults and developing their capabilities within organisations (Lester and Costley, 2010).

Concepts in training and development

Life-long learning and self-directed learning

Both concepts developed from adult education with the premise being that learning is a life-long process that begins at birth and ends at death. At adulthood, learning is informal and self-directed with individuals deciding both how they will acquire new knowledge and what they want to learn. The choices of what one wants to learn and emphasis of what they want to focus on, is also reflected of the culture in which a person is raised, lives, and works. These adult learning concepts are influenced by the culture in which one lives and the values that have been developed during a person's lifetime.

Cross-cultural training

Jordan (2003) explained that cross-cultural training is about understanding group behaviour and culture. Cross-cultural comparisons allow for a wider understanding of human behaviour. Thus, we need to examine ways the customs and beliefs of a people are interrelated across comparisons of groups of people from diverse cultures to understand behaviour from the participants' point of view rather than from the lens of cultural relativism or our own personal views (Jordan, 2003). From a global view, it is easier for HRD practitioners to assist organizations working in multiple countries to understand the employees and consumers in their countries in a behavioural way (McLean, 2009). They can then impart this information to management and expat trainers who want to be more effective in such a cross-cultural context. Edward Hall's (1981) work was particularly important in cross-cultural human resource development. Hall's work focused on communication, emphasizing need for it to be

understood in a cultural context (Hall, 1981). He later wrote about the importance of time and space in understanding cultures. For instance, many cultures such as Thailand and Korea do not have past or future tenses in their languages. Consequently, this influences not only the language, but also how these cultures think about the past and the future (McLean, 2009).

2.2.1 Learning paradigms related to learning within organizations

The seminal works of key theorists such as Honey and Mumford (1986), Kolb (1984), Argyris and Schon (1976), Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996), Taylor et al., (1998; 2006). Pask (1975), Lave and Wenger (1991) have been important references regarding learning within organizations. Honey and Mumford (1986) examined the learning styles and found that optimal learning demands that learners receive instruction custom-designed to their learning styles. Kolb (1984) on experiential learning found that knowledge is continuously gained through both personal and environmental experiences and the learner must be able to: a) reflect on the experience; b) use analytical skills to conceptualize on the experience; and c) make decisions and solve problems to use the ideas derived from the experience. Argyris and Schon's work on double loop learning established the need to modify the goal of learning activities while considering learners' experiences or even reject the goal if necessary (1976). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996) found that adaptive organizations that are capable to sense changes from their external environments adapt accordingly in organizational learning.

Taylor's (1998) text and conversation theory found that an organization is created and defined by communication; communication 'is' the organization which exists because communication takes place. A scientific learning theory to explain how interactions within organizations lead to 'knowing' was presented by Pask (1975). From the scientific discipline of social anthropology, Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory brought to light learning as a social process where knowledge is co-constructed and is situated in a specific context and embedded within a particular social and physical environment. Additionally, the concept of community of practice describes learning as participatory action among groups of practitioners sharing identities, work-related tasks, and environment (Wenger et al., 2002). Several learning frameworks have been developed by scholars to capture learning activities for work-related training, one of these frameworks is Marquardt's comparative learning activities framework.

2.2.2 Marquardt's Comparative Learning Framework

For the following research study, Marquardt's comparative framework on learning activities in workplace contexts is the explained concept. This framework was selected because it is the only framework available in the existing literature that presents a learning cycle for workplace training from a comparative perspective. The assumptions of the study are that cultural characteristics that influence the Anglo-Saxon Canadian culture will fit the anticipations of the American/Western approach and the perceptions and beliefs shared from the Moroccan context will fall under a different approach, labelled Approach B.

Table 2 Marquardt’s Comparative Learning Activities Framework (1990)

Learning Activities	American A	Approach B
Climate setting	Especially important: includes environmental, interpersonal, and organizational climate; informal and relaxed	Less important: schoolroom setting; formal relationship with instructor
Planning	Done by instructor and learners; learners are responsible for their own learning	Done solely by instructor who is expert; accepted by learner
Needs assessment	Input sought from learner and other sources; important base for determining objectives	Needs determined by instructor; learners cannot be expected to know what they need to know
Setting objectives	Jointly determined by instructor and learner; negotiable and mutually acceptable	Set by instructor who should tell learners what they must know; clear-cut and non-negotiable
Design	Use variety of learning methodologies; learners and outside resource people used	Lecture methodology: learning is by listening and remembering
Implementation	Instructors and learners responsible for implementing learning experiences; learning by doing is considered most effective technique; occurs in various settings	By instructor only, instructor tells, models correct way; experimental learning is risky and may expose learner to looking foolish
Evaluation	Done by instructor and learner; includes evaluation of learning content, process, and instructor; variety of evaluation techniques utilized	Done solely by instructor; based upon retention of learning content and skills; written tests

Adapted from Marquardt, M.J. (1990), “Working Internationally”, in Nadler, L. (Ed.) *The Handbook of Human Resource Development*, New York, NY, pp. 23.1-23.30

An overview of Marquardt’s learning activities

Selection of learners for training

The selection of learners in the United States is a result of two main reasons: a need for learning and/ or because a candidate is the most qualified individual to further develop learning input. On the other hand, in other regions of the world, learners may have been selected for political reasons or due to affiliations and close relations to important individuals in their local settings (Marquardt, 1990). Thus, trainees may not even be interested to pursue further learning or may lack the qualifications needed for them to appropriately engage at that level of learning.

Climate setting

Foreigners working abroad are considered strangers or outsiders that lack the understanding and appreciation for the local customs and cultures. It is perceived that Americans carry with them their cultural baggage including preconceptions such as fast-paced, insensitive, and selfish, money-oriented, result-oriented, individualistic, capitalist, and egocentric (Marquardt, 1984; 1990). Sensitivity and openness towards the new culture and its people demonstrates an interest in the host country. Let them know that you are cognisant that you are working in their country, and you wish to learn just as much in return. Once mutual relationships are developed program learning objectives may be discussed (Marquardt, 1990).

Determining the needs of the learner

The learner plays a key role in determining their learning needs. In most cultures, local conventions and societal codes of conduct establish that politeness and behaviours supporting agreement despite belief in the contrary are paramount. An awareness of this cultural fact is vital for foreigners working in these foreign countries. For instance, a knowledgeable learner may agree with you simply out of politeness or not to offend their guest. Practitioners must be aware of the knowledge their learners possess (Marquardt, 1990). In attempts to establish a learner's need it is important to note that some individuals are not inclined to identify existent learning needs. They may not want to lose face as it would indicate a weakness or vulnerability on the part of the learner. Additionally, learners in some countries may find it inappropriate to discuss their learning needs with an instructor. In their mind, the practitioner is an expert, and it is their responsibility as instructors to know what learners need to successfully meet their objectives. Engaging the learner may be seen as a lack of ability on the part of the HRD professional (Marquardt, 1984; 1990). Thus, a balance is required between the processes of predetermining and deciphering which needs are

established. Information from external sources may be beneficial for confirming learning needs when presenting program objectives.

Setting objectives

The management culture in the USA is characterised by setting clearly defined and performance-oriented objectives, long-term planning, managing objective status, and attaining weekly targets. The idea of setting clearly defined objectives may be seen as presumptuous and threatening from individuals of other diverse cultures. Learners may question how the instructor knows beforehand what is required to meet objectives and fear failure if results are not attained. HRD professionals must find a balance between being considered the authority on the subject matter and the individual who respects the way things are accepted in that country (Marquardt, 1990).

Methodology of learning

Learning by doing is customary practice in the USA with experiential learning considered as an effective technique when acquiring new knowledge. Learners are actively engaged as they work on case studies, simulations, role-plays etc. However, individuals in foreign countries, believe that the task to transfer knowledge belongs to the instructor who serves as a model to emulate; experiential learning is perceived to make an individual look imprudent (Marquardt, 1984; 1990). In these cases, the role of the instructor is to demonstrate and teach the correct approaches. In the process of the teaching methods selection, trainers ought to ask the following questions: a) what methodological approach is the individual or group expecting to receive? b) According to the instructor, what methods best fit learners' needs? c) Which methods best compliment the learners? (Marquardt, 1990).

Evaluation

Professionals in the USA seek regular feedback from learners with the latter encouraged to identify ways to ameliorate the learning process through constructive

feedback. Changes or modifications are encouraged throughout the process to best meet learners' objectives. On the other hand, across other cultures suggestions and criticisms may be seen as a lack of respect and confidence in the instructor. They would be sceptical about how the information would be interpreted and would mostly provide positive feedback. (Marquardt, 1990)

Follow-up

Upon completion of a learning program, newly acquired knowledge or changes have been internally processed. The acquired information and learned experiences will now be transferred to the learners' native culture. New challenges and local adjustments are inevitable. Discussions on the new knowledge assist learners to implement what has been internalized.

2.2.3 Extant literature on influence of national culture on learning for work

The current section is a literature review pertaining to the impact of national culture on professional learning; it presents a synthesis and a reflective critique of the extant literature on the topic. The studies from the existing literature on the influence of national culture on employee learning activities in the workplace were subdivided following Marquardt's (1990) employee learning components which consist of the subsequent main headings: climate setting; planning; needs assessment; setting objectives; design; implementation; and evaluation. It is essential to note that a separate sub-section entitled training content has also been added to emphasize the importance of what instructors' transfer to participants during training sessions and the way the latter varies across cultures.

I. Climate setting

The literature on the importance of the setting indicates that mature adult learners acquire knowledge and learn if the climate promotes learning (Knowles, 1980). At the

international sphere, workplace learning milieus and the required needs for a conducive learning climate cannot be fully recognized without exploring the cultural viewpoints that are associated with the setting where the learning takes place (Felstead, Fuller, Jewson, and Unwin, 2009). For instance, systematic variations found in the way in which classrooms function in diverse parts of the world have been connected to cultural differences (Charlesworth, 2008). Hence, an increasing necessity for reflection of cultural influence in learning (Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, 2007).

In developed regions of the world, a conducive learning environment requires well-balanced and harmonious arrangements between learners and instructors from the onset (Marquardt, 1990); important aspects that are often considered at the start of any learning session include the environmental, interpersonal, and organizational facet of where the learning will unfold. On the other hand, these characteristics may be less important in regions where traditional classroom settings are the norm and formal relations between instructor and learner are customary (Marquardt, 1990).

In hierarchical cultures, in highlighting the informal and formal nature of the interpersonal setting between the instructor and learner, individual learners expect to acquire knowledge from the subject area expert or trainer (Weech, 2001); whereas, in more egalitarian cultures, which tend to curtail inequalities, as for instance in Scandinavian countries, learners are supposed to exchange ideas and actively learn from each other. Along the same line, Roberts, and Tuleja (2008) conclude that classroom participation in Eastern cultures requires that learners listen to show respect to the instructor.

Contingent on the degree of uncertainty avoidance, learners may display a varying level of anxiety about the self-restrained learning environment. In resilient uncertainty-avoidance cultures, more explicit and clear guidelines may be necessary for the learning

activities, while more self-sufficiency is conventional and, in some cases, even requested in low uncertainty-avoidance cultures (Kim and McLean 2014).

II. Planning

Ololube (2013) defines planning in training as a blueprint action plan which outlines activities required to best realize learning objectives and intended goals. Thus, planning refers to the act of preparing and deciding in advance what the objectives and learning outcomes of a training will be. This includes sketching out a) what the learning objectives are to be met; b) how and when the objectives will be achieved; and c) where and who will take part in the program delivery to best achieve the intended goals set out in the training plan.

Marquardt (1990) contends that in the US training approach, planning training activities is effectuated jointly by instructors and learners as the latter are considered responsible for their own learning, whereas in the non-US training approach, the planning is done solely by instructors as learners cannot be expected to know or grasp what their learning needs are for the acquisition of knowledge. Hence, the importance for considering diverse cultural perspectives at the planning phase of the learning process.

In low power distance cultures, during the planning phase, organizations provide training centred on learning as the efficacy and use of training is associated with more open communication channels between trainers and participants as well as among the peer-participants (Hassi, 2012); further, organizations tend to give more leeway to training participants during the planning process (Hassi, 2015). Conversely, in high power distance cultures, organizations tend to adopt a design approach to planning employee training that does not grant latitude to participants and once identified, planned components of the training activities could not be reconsidered (Hassi, 2015). More specifically, it has been documented (see Hassi, 2012) that in some high-power distance cultures, pseudo-consultations are piloted

as an integral part of the planning stage of training programs with organizational members; only ideas, thoughts, and opinions that are in line with upper management are considered. Finally, in cultures with strong control of uncertainty, trainers are regarded as experts of their subject areas (Hassi, 2012) and hence take charge of the planning.

Regarding specific examples pertaining to the planning phase of the learning process, Chang (2004) explored the significance of national culture in a training programme developed in the United States and implemented in Taiwan, China. The author studied the implementation of a holistic training programme, including the planning phase, with a case study analysis that aimed at determining the way training experts in both countries designed and considered standard training outcomes in distinct cultural environments. The findings indicated that in international program development, leaving room in the planning of the course upsurges the cultural adaptability of a multinational program. Accordingly, the teaching techniques used in the selected training program provide instructors with the flexibility to integrate the context of local culture into the training plan. Learners have opportunities to incorporate the context of their life experiences into the learning process by applying course content material to their own actual experiences.

From another standpoint, Kamis, Caffarella, Muhamad and Othmane (2006) explored how course planners side-stepped the cultural intricacies in planning a collaborative international program in the United States and Malaysia. The authors ascertained that Western approaches are objective and result-oriented, whereas the Malayan approach to program planning highlighted the notion of “with age, comes wisdom” which implies that decision making, among other things, is limited to the realm of the older and wiser program planners as knowledge is nestled in wisdom.

III. Needs assessment

Across national borders, adult learners play a vital role in determining their learning needs. In most cultures, local conventions and societal codes of conduct establish that behaviours supporting agreement despite belief in the contrary are paramount (Marquardt, 1990). Nonetheless, when establishing a learner's need it is important to understand that some individuals are not inclined to identify existent learning needs and expect needs to be determined by their professional trainers. Learners in some countries may find it inappropriate to discuss their learning needs with an instructor (Marquardt, 1990); in their mind, the practitioner is an expert, and it is their responsibility as instructors to know what learners need to successfully meet their objectives. Engaging learners in this part of the learning process may be perceived as a lack of ability on the part of the training professional. Thus, a balance is required between the processes of predetermining and deciding which objectives or needs are established. Information from external sources may be beneficial when validating learning needs and to establish program objectives. When working on the training needs' analysis, the effectiveness of the training is regarded as a product of the professional trainers' knowledge, expertise, and know-how (Weech, 2001; Hassi 2012). Is it in general or in some specific cultural context? In collectivistic cultures, a prominent level of importance is placed on the status of the individual and hierarchy while conducting employee training needs' analysis as documented by Deal (2004) in samples from China, India, and Mexico.

IV Setting objectives

In the learning process, the objectives refer to what is expected from a training (Marquardt, 1990). Several authors (e.g., Hoff, 2002) found that national culture influences objectives in employee training activities. In this regard, in a training program within a joint

venture of four multinational firms destined for participants from Russia, the USA, Norway, Ukraine and the Philippines, Gayeski et al. (2002) found it beneficial to pose multiple questions related to training objectives at the beginning of the design stage to avoid falling into the ethnocentrism trap.

In his comparative learning framework, Marquardt (1990) stresses that negotiable and mutually acceptable training objectives are usually set in cooperation with the instructor and learner in the United States, whereas in diverse settings, training approaches including objectives are solely decided by the instructor who communicates to the participants what the aim, objectives and outcomes will be throughout the course. From this perspective, trainers tell learners what they need to know with a clear and non-negotiable roadmap to follow.

The consultation of the extant literature allows noting how various dimensions of national culture influence how training objectives and aims of modules or courses are set for training participants. In the high-power distance cultures of Morocco and Singapore, Hassi (2015) found that respondents from organizations resort to authority and do not accord latitude to participants when planning training objectives; on the other hand, organizations from low power distance cultures such as Canada and Germany, a learning participant has an inclusive and participative role when setting objectives for their training.

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures such as Germany and Morocco, organizations show a high level of rigidity during the planning phase of a training as reflected in training objectives often determined before the training session; whereas, with Singaporean organizations which display features of low uncertainty avoidance, the planning is less restrictive, and programs are designed in a way that non-planned objectives could emerge during the training session (Hassi, 2015). Similarly, cultures with tight structures are known to be intolerant of ambiguity with learners expecting to receive precise objectives as part of

their training sessions; in contrast, in cultures with loose structures, learners are comfortable with general training goals set by the training expert (Weech, 2001).

In collectivistic cultures such as Morocco and Singapore, organizations consider employee collective needs in planning training objectives; on the other hand, in individualistic cultures, such as Canada and Germany, trainers tend to plan training objectives based on individual needs and on learning objectives identified by the participants (Hassi, 2015).

For cultures identified to have a long-term orientation outlook, learning goals are in many cases set for future success or change; however, people from short-term orientation cultures are likely to find the reasons for wanting to learn and acquire new knowledge in a particular subject area considering current problems or imminent work performance objectives to attain rather than in pursuit for self-development. (Kim and McLean 2014).

V. Content

From the onset, it is worthwhile noting that national culture impacts the selection of training content as well as the sequences and modularisation of training at the design phase (Hoff, 2002). In high power distance cultures, the training expert is the main, if not the only source of information for training participants as the latter accept what is transferred to them by the subject area expert at face value without questioning the instructors' "power" (Joy and Kolb, 2009). Thus, the need for students to form their own points of view through concrete experience is low, while the need to structure and make sense of material provided by the instructor is high, leading to a preference of students in high power distance cultures towards vague and intangible conceptualization (Joy and Kolb, 2009). Along the same lines, organizations from high power distances cultures such as Morocco and Singapore have been found to resort to authority and do not accord latitude to participants during the planning of

training content stage; in contrast, organizations from Canada and Germany, which are low power distance cultures, trainers adopt an inclusive approach to planning content encouraging participants to engage and be part of the process (Hassi, 2015).

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, learners have been found to be more comfortable with structured learning situations and concerned with concrete and right answers because these cultures value the information and knowledge delivered by the instructor and consider it as the best explanation to the problem (Jaju et al., 2002). Hence, individuals with a strong tendency to avoid uncertainty are more likely to prefer abstract concepts with one correct answer and reward for accuracy (Joy and Kolb, 2009) rather than appreciate concrete experience with a wide variety of potential outcomes and interpretations. On another note, organizations belonging to high uncertainty avoidance cultures such as Germany and Morocco, a high level of rigidity during the planning of the content phase is common; whereas, Singaporean organizations, which have features of low uncertainty avoidance cultures, studies showed a low level of rigidity with less restrictions imposed when planning content design (Hassi, 2015). Lastly, Canadian, and German organizations, as individualistic cultures, have been found to emphasize individual needs and objectives during the planning stage of employee training content (Hassi, 2015).

VI Design

The design phase of a professional learning process is defined as the instructional methods or techniques used to best meet target learning objectives customised for participants in a particular context and on a specialized subject area. The design phase identifies the teaching and learning process and lays down the conditions and activities performed by the trainers and learners to achieve the required learning outcomes (Conole and Fill, 2005).

Marquardt (1990) states that for the process of the teaching methods selection, professionals should question three main points: 1) what methodological approach is the individual or group expecting to receive? 2) According to the instructor, what methods would best fit the learners' needs? 3) Which methods would best compliment the learners? (Marquardt, p. 23.14)

A variety of learning methods characterise the western approach to knowledge acquisition. Learning by doing is widespread practice in the US with experiential learning considered as an effective technique when seeking and acquiring knowledge; learners are actively engaged as they work on case studies, simulations, role-plays, etc. (Marquardt and Waddill, 2004; Waddill, Banks, and Marsh, 2010). On the other hand, individuals in diverse cultures may believe that the task to transfer knowledge belongs to the instructor who serves as a model to emulate. Experiential learning is perceived to make an individual look imprudent; in these cases, the role of a trainer is to demonstrate and teach correct approaches while the participant listens and remembers the most important points (Marquardt and Waddill, 2004; Waddill, 2010).

In cultures characterized with a high degree of power distance, individuals tend to learn better from passive methods rather than active methods (Rodrigues, 2005) and to be at ease working with approaches they are accustomed and familiar with than more inclined to delve into new and innovative methods (Hassi, 2012). Empirically, organizations in Morocco and Singapore, which are both high power distance cultures, were found to resort to authority and do not accord latitude to participants during the planning of methods; but, with organizations from low power distance cultures such as Canada and Germany, it is common practice to adopt an inclusive approach when selecting training methods; a process that includes the input of the learning participant (Hassi, 2015). Similarly, in tight structure cultures, training participants expect lucid and clear structured programmes that focus on the

most effective ways to solving problems; by contrast, in cultures with loose structures where weak social norms and a high tolerance of deviant behaviour (Gelfand et al., 2011) are present, there are numerous ways to approach problem-solving issues as learning participants see innovative and original responses as a significant part of the learning process. In these situations, learners are more comfortable with training programmes that unfold in a fluid and flexible manner.

Learners from cultures marked by strong degree of uncertainty avoidance tend to learn better from passive methods, whereas trainees from cultures with weak uncertainty avoidance learn better through active teaching techniques such as the business case study method (Rodrigues, 2005); for instance, open-ended training strategies targeting a good solution rather than a precise and exact response can be perceived as renunciation of trainers' responsibility by learning participants' whose need for uncertainty avoidance is strong (Hassi, 2012). In designing training methods, organizations in high uncertainty avoidance cultures (i.e., Germany and Morocco) show high level of rigidity with training methods selected before the training delivery and no non-planned training methods could be used during the training session; whereas Singaporean organizations, which belong to a low uncertainty avoidance culture, do not seek rigidity as it was decided that some training methods would be selected progressively during the training (Hassi, 2015).

In individualistic cultures such as Northern European countries, participants' value independence and self-sufficiency and are comfortable working individually by themselves; whereas in collectivistic cultures, learners tend to focus on group-oriented, collaborative, and harmonious accord even if one may disagree on something, as with many cases in Africa (Weech, 2001). In this regard, Ndoye (2003) notes that discussions with other mature adult farmers are the most effective forms of learning in rural Senegal. In an empirical investigation, Hassi (2015) found that organizations, in collectivistic cultures such as

Morocco and Singapore, emphasized collective needs, selected training methods that aimed at favouring collaboration among the participants and progression as a group despite the risk of slowing down some learners during the planning of methods (Hassi, 2015).

In the design phase of the learning process and in respect to power distance, approaches to feedback, participation, and contribution in the sharing of knowledge, self-directed sufficiency, and sources of learning preferences may differ by the degree of compassion and understanding in the relations with those who have power. Individuals from collectivistic cultures are more inclined towards group activities rather than gravitate towards independent-oriented activities that focus on individual values and goals (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009)

VI Implementation

The notion of implementation in learning encompasses the role of the trainers and participants involved in the learning, and effective techniques used in the process (Marquardt and Reynolds, 1994). In the United States, both trainers and learning participants play an active role in the implementation of the learning process with learning by doing as the most effective and dominant technique. In non-Western cultures, the implementation of the learning rests with the trainers or subject area experts; instructors elicit and model the way to do things for training participants to emulate. Experiential learning is risky and exposes learners to vulnerabilities that may make them feel foolish as adults (Marquardt and Reynolds, 1994).

It is worth noting that learning styles include culture-bound cognitive schemes because of cultural socialisation and mental programming (Barmeyer, 2004). Short-term oriented cultures are motivated by the immediate application of the learning outcome (Dimitrov, 2006), favour pragmatic, experiential and practical forms of instruction rather than

abstract, notional, and theoretical ones (Hassi, 2013). In feminine cultures, social approval in the form of expectations, and harmonious team relations with the learning group, or organization are essential, whereas, in masculine cultures, they are usually goal oriented with an emphasis on learning outcomes (Kim and McLean, 2014). The cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance exerts influences on reflective observation (Kayes, 2005); with low uncertainty avoidance cultures, as in Nordic countries, the opportunity for reflection and innovative ideas are encouraged and recommended to discover new differences among participants (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Whereas in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, such as those in the Middle East, training experts provide detailed plans and formally elicit ideas to the learning participants taking part in the training (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Similarly, in cultures with low uncertainty avoidance, participants are at ease with problem questions without necessarily looking for exact answers; the idea of this style of acquiring new insights on issues is to encourage participants to seek innovative approaches to solving problems with intellectual disagreement regarded as a stimulant to the process (Hassi, 2013). In the same line of thought, Barmeyer (2000) suggests that learning participants who are inclined towards reflective observation illustrate a vigilant and meditative approach towards new insights, which is more in line with behaviours exhibited among cultures with high uncertainty avoidance.

Instructive and didactical trainer-centred techniques are developed in high power distance cultures, as in Middle Eastern countries, and in contexts with strong control of uncertainty (Deal, 2004). Whereas participant-centred and experiential techniques are adopted in cultures with a low power distance and low uncertainty avoidance such the USA, Canada, UK, and Nordic countries (Hassi, 2012). Weech (2001) postulates that in cultures characterised as individualistic and that value independence, as in Northern Europe, learning is autonomous with learners encouraged to engage in active debate and expression of

individual ideas (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009); whereas in collectivistic cultures, employee learning participants embrace unity and concord among the communal group as with many cases in Africa. In this regard, Ndoye (2003) asserts that consultations and dialogue with other adult farmers are the most effective forms of learning and acquiring new insights for farmers in rural Senegal.

Concerning the source of learning, based on Flynn and Tannenbaum's (2006) empirical research of the continuing education context in China, Japan, Korea, and the USA, it was found that the training participants' most current ranking superior was an important source of learning for employees in all four countries; this even though formal education has more importance in the United States and China compared to Japan and on the Korean peninsula. Individual trajectories enriched the Japanese learning experience based on the principles of trial and error and due to habitual extensive reading on diverse subjects by learners. Along the same line, Ndoye (2003) found that Senegalese adult farmers prefer learning and acquiring knowledge from individuals within their local communal circles rather than external trainers because the knowledge of their own people is more understandable as its roots are embedded within the same cultural collective farm. Further, in cultures with high power distance, training participants are not actively and openly expected to seek knowledge from their own firsthand experiences, while students in low power distance cultures would be expected to find their own "intellectual paths" (Jaju et al., 2002). Lastly, cultures leaning towards experiential learning, as many Nordic countries, are characterised with learning participants actively seeking information while drawing learner experiences; the latter stemming from Protestantism which advances a more realistic pedagogy that aims at granting individuals with an active role conducive to the influence of their destinies (Géhin and Jobert, 2001). On the other hand, in various parts of the world, learning from each other and favouring equal contributions of each member could be traced to the egalitarian character of

their national culture which minimises inequalities (Weech, 2001) and plays down individual status.

As for the role played by the instructor, cultures with low power distance provide training focussed on learning as training effectiveness is linked to communicative exchanges between trainers and participants and between participants and their peers (Hassi, 2012). Conversely, cultures with strong control of uncertainty expect professional training experts to have prompt and accurate responses to their questions. Trainers are regarded as experts with forms of intellectual disagreements perceived as disrespectful and impolite (Hassi, 2012). In a specific example of business case-based employee training, Hassi (2013) found that the ideal roles of a professional training instructor that Canadian learners appreciate are those of a facilitator, consultant, and organiser. However, in the Moroccan context, the instructor plays a leading role in the learning process as seen in their role of introducer of new insights by training participants (Hassi, 2013). Further, Moroccan learners expect trainers to know a lot about their area of expertise and must have intelligent responses to any question that is asked during a training.

This quality, however, stems from the instructor's wisdom which represents the application of knowledge to obtain the most appropriate desired outcomes (Hassi, et al., 2011). Professional trainers are perceived as role models to emulate, similar to the perceptions people have about leaders (Hassi et al., 2011), which could aspire participants to acquire more knowledge from the expert; the latter a common attribute of cultures with a high-power distance which assumes that wisdom resides in hierarchy and age and training heavily depends on the knowledge and expertise of senior trainers (Hassi and Storti, 2011). In the Turkish context, training instructors are anticipated to tell learning participants in a training programme what the problems or issues are in the cases that will be used from the onset, rather than have learners attempt to draw, identify, and conclude them independently

themselves (Apaydin, 2008). In short, in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, such as those in the Middle East, instructors elicit ideas to the learners taking part in the training sessions (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009).

Concerning the role of learners, North American instructors have found that Chinese learners tend to make decisions based on what is in the best interest of the team they are working with, as opposed to express individual likings and preferences in efforts sustain their group's harmony (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008). Chinese learning participants, commonly referred to as passive learners, are also very reluctant to engage in reviewing material from peers within their teams as they shy away from giving what may be perceived as negative feedback, even if it may be helpful and constructive. They also limit discussions with their instructors on topics related to their classmates (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008). Similarly, since there has not been a tradition of participative learning, Turkish learners' express uneasiness when asked to challenge their instructors or other peers (Apaydin, 2008). Hassi (2013) found that Moroccan learners tend to prefer the right answer and show frustration with the absence of a 'correct solution'; they enjoy learning in teams directed by a subject area expert who is perceived as the role model that follows a concise, clear, and structured plan regarding case-based training. Cultures with a high-power distance in designing training tend to be more instructor-centred with effectiveness regarded as a product of the trainer's knowledge and expertise (Weech, 2001), which automatically places the learner in a position of knowledge receiver. Moroccan adult learners perceive themselves as apprentices working under the direction and supervision of the 'master' until they become fully skilled in the subject area themselves (Hassi, 2013). In this context, learners are good team players working collaboratively rather than individually, confirming the idea that learning constitutes a collective experience rather than an individual activity; this can be explained by the fact that the Moroccan culture is characterised as collectivistic; on the other hand, Canadian learners

claim to play a pro-active role in the learning process, learning participants favour experiential learning techniques and prefer an instructor in the role of training facilitator (Hassi, 2013). In training sessions, Canadian professional learners enjoyed working independently, were at ease with carrying out activities by themselves, and frequently made independent decisions (Hassi, 2013); cultural features that may be due to the individualistic nature of their national culture which values autonomy (Weech, 2001).

In sum, cultures with high power distance, like Morocco, favour instructor-centred and learning guided by the educator who is considered a subject area expert. By contrast, the ideal role of professional trainers that Canadian learning participants value most are those of a facilitator, consultant, and training coordinator (Hassi, 2013). Accordingly, cultures associated with the low power distance dimension, such as Canada and Nordic European countries, prefer peer learning and team-oriented approaches (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). On another front, cultures characterized by the degree of anxiety exhibited when placed in uncertain situations (low uncertainty avoidance), such as for instance Canada, the informal business approach to learning encourages participants to reflect and seek opportunities for new ideas individually outside typical formal assignments to effectively find solutions to problems and issues (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). However, didactic trainer-centred techniques that formally elicit ideas are preferred in cultures with a strong control of uncertainty and high-power distance (Deal, 2004). From another point of view, in individualistic cultures, training participants are comfortable with self-sufficiency and prefer independent work (Weech, 2001), whereas in collectivistic group-oriented cultures, training participants lean more towards the concept of peaceful accord among the group (Hassi, 2012).

VII Evaluation

According to Marquardt's (1990) comparative framework on employee learning activities, learning professionals in the US seek regular feedback from learning participants with the latter encouraged to identify ways to ameliorate the learning process by evaluating the content and providing constructive feedback. Changes or modifications are encouraged throughout the process to best meet learners' objectives. On the other hand, across other cultures suggestions and criticisms may be seen as a lack of respect and confidence in the instructor. Learning participants would be sceptical about how the information would be interpreted and would mostly provide positive feedback. Hence, evaluation is conducted from the instructor or training professional base on retention of learning content, skills, and written tests (Marquardt and Reynolds, 1994).

In regard to the evaluation phase of employee training, Moroccan and Singaporean organizations, which belong to a high power distance cultures, tend to depend on authority within the organisation with minimal expected input from participants during the planning stage of training evaluation; while Canadian and German organizations, which are part of cultures with low power distance, resort to a more comprehensive and wide-ranging approach towards training evaluation with ample leeway for participants to participate in the process (Hassi, 2015).

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures such as Germany and Morocco, organizations showed a higher level of rigidity as compared to organizations from a low uncertainty avoidance culture (i.e., Singapore) during the planning of employee training evaluation (Hassi, 2015). In the former, predetermined methods and criteria were identified to evaluate the training session. In the latter, the intended evaluation methods and/or criteria were to be

selected progressively during the training delivery and training session was planned in favour of resorting to ad hoc evaluation methods.

Finally, Canadian, and German organizations, which belong to individualistic cultures, were found to emphasize individual needs during the planning of training evaluation and did not consider the progression of the entire group or the collaboration among all the participants as criterion to evaluate the training session (Hassi, 2015).

2.2.4 Critique of the extant literature on national culture and learning

The extant literature on the impact of culture on employee learning activities indicates that a fair number of studies have investigated different learning phases such as planning, setting objectives, designing content material, and implementation. However, the literature contains limited contributions pertaining to the impact of national culture on climate setting, needs assessment of participants and evaluation of training outcomes. Also, a lack of specific content to each culture minimises the efficacy of some of the studies in this respect. Although studies covered how culture influences what Marquardt (1990) calls learning activities or components of the learning process, there appear to be limited studies that have attempted to shed light in a more comprehensive way as to include how culture influences the ways adults learn at work from the initial stage of setting learning objectives to the evaluation of expected learning outcomes. Moreover, although there are a few studies that have discussed effects of national culture on employee training, there seems to be a dearth of studies that provide a detailed, systematic, and comprehensive overview of what unfolds at each step of the learning process (Hassi, 2015).

The contributions of the extant literature covered selective steps of the learning process in diverse cultural contexts, albeit the variations in scope and number of cultures examined. For instance, Roberts and Tuleja (2008) looked into Chinese learners in Hong

Kong; Hassi (2015) examined the role of national culture in planning training activities in Canada, Germany, Morocco and Singapore, Chang (2004) explored the significance of national culture in a training programme developed in the USA and implemented in Taiwan, China; Kamis, Caffarella, Muhamad and Othmane (2006) examined how course planners side-stepped cultural complexities in planning a collaborative international program in the United States and Malaysia; Deal (2004) discussed the place of the individual and hierarchy while conducting employee training needs analysis in samples from China, India and Mexico. Gayeski et al. (2002) worked on a study about designing training for employees from Russia, the USA, Norway, Ukraine, and the Philippines. Experiential learning and the role of the instructor in the USA was examined by Marquardt and Waddill (2010). Flynn and his colleagues' (2006) examined culture and training in China, Japan, Korea, and the USA. Hassi, Storti and Azennoud (2011) studied corporate trainers' credibility of corporate instructors and cultural values in a comparative study from Canada and Morocco. Finally, Hassi's (2013) study on the use of case study method in employee training discussed and contrasted the role of Moroccan learners with Canadian training participants.

In the repository of studies mentioned above, the works all appear to confer a range of practices touching on separate phases of the training process and present a wide-ranging portrait of what has surfaced in various countries across the different continents. From a theoretical perspective, many authors relied on relevant and validated conceptual frameworks such as Hofstede's dimensions to examine how national culture influences aspects of employee training.

On the methodological end, different authors collected diverse types of data from many sources, for example: from trainers, participants, program leads and so forth, in efforts to capture the richness of an actual real-life context. Further, Roberts and Tuleja (2008) and Hassi (2015) resorted to a combination of both qualitative and quantitative analyses in their

research design, which contributed to strengthening the validity of their findings. However, despite all these notable contributions, shortcomings were also noted in the review of the extant literature.

The lexis used to capture a lucid and defining meaning of culture described in the numerous studies was at times confusing, understandably so given the fact that the word culture has been attributed over 150 definitions (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1963). There was overlap when defining terms such as national culture, organizational culture, and professional culture. Many of the studies used Hofstede's definition of culture to mean a country's national culture. Other terms that were used as synonyms were the references to dimensions and orientations as noted in the seminal study of Trompenaars (1997). This may be because the Trompenaars' framework (1997) is a close replica of Hofstede's work with a few more added dimensions to differentiate. Several studies in the literature did however illustrate a reliance on Hofstede's definition of the concept of national culture which is "collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of the group or category of people from another" (Hofstede, 2001, p.9). Employee learning has also been described in various forms such as professional development, adult training, workplace learning, continuous learning, and so forth. In sum, inconsistencies in how some of terms are used in the studies poses some confusion.

As for the use of conceptual frameworks, Phillips, and Vaughn, (2009) quote the model of Hofstede and although the authors sufficiently outline the distinctive characteristics of Hofstede's dimensions in their paper, they include educator propositions and suggestions that highlight some preconceptions and fixed ideas in their assumptions. In the same vein, Chang (2004) mentioned Hofstede's model within his framework without making use of it to explain observed outcomes of the study in the data analysis section. Similarly, Weech (2001)

adopts the foundational elements of Hofstede's (1980) model while changing only the names of the dimensions without even mentioning the original author.

In some studies that compared the United States with other countries, an ethnocentric undertone could be inferred from how the findings were presented and explained. For instance, as noted in Marquardt's (1990) American versus Non-American approach, the author compares the methods of learning under the design category and mentions that Americans have what he calls the brain use preference, meaning that Americans tend to rely on logical, inductive, left-brain learning, whereas in other countries, the focus is placed on deductive learning with a preference for right brain learning (Marquardt, 1990, p. 23.14). Further, Marquardt continues stating that the thinking process of Americans is more practical and specific in nature as opposed to the more philosophical and generic thought process in other countries (Marquardt, 1990, p. 23.15). Tones of ethnocentrism can be noted when Marquardt (1990) compares the American and other approaches to employee learning. This is specifically noticeable with the selection of words and terms used to describe both approaches in question as the author falls into a parochial trap that demonstrates an inability to transcend his own American cultural perspective. Nevertheless, and despite these shortcomings, Marquardt's (1990) framework is the only available model that proposes a comparative conceptual framework for employee learning activities for the workplace. Furthermore, Phillips and Vaughn (2009) resort to stereotypes and clichés when they advise to “express your emotions through hand gestures and raised voices” (p.51) when working in high uncertainty avoidance cultures.

Preconceptions based on the standards and customs of one's own culture also surfaced in the Kamis et al. (2006) study. The authors ascertained that Western approaches are objective and result-oriented, whereas the Malayan approach to program planning comes only with age and wisdom. Another illustrative example was noted particularly with certain words

prevalent in assorted studies as a fair number of authors refer to “authoritative” ways of doing things. The prevalent use of words such as “authoritative” which are pejorative and derogatory rhetorical terms were particularly evident in the works of Weech (2001) and Gayeski et al (2002). Along a similar line of thought, Roberts, and Tuleja (2008) state that: “the more individualistic and independent (Western) concept of identity tends to encourage students to give feedback and to readily participate in classroom discussion” (p.5). This may be perceived as if only Western countries promote individualism and independence and that other societies do not. Additionally, Gayeski et al. (2002, p.26) appear to highlight an inability to see things beyond their own cultural references when they state: “The content provided parameters of how to navigate the American work environment and emphasized the universal common denominators in values of personal responsibility and respect for the individual”. On the other hand, if an individual’s personal responsibility is to be a core value in individualistic cultures, it is completely void in the narrative of some collectivistic cultures; among some other cultures, it is even inappropriate to consider individual responsibility (Clausen, 2007).

Despite the ethnocentric rhetoric that has been documented in some of the studies that examine the influence of national culture on adult training in workplace contexts, some authors (e.g., Deal, 2004; Hassi, 2012) used a more neutral and less subjective descriptive account of the findings in their studies and exemplified a more measured way in which the authors carefully avoid relying on clichés and stereotypes to explain observed insights.

Regarding the methods used in the studies directly related to national culture and adult training, most of the research conducted were qualitative studies (see Flynn et al., 2005; Hassi et al., (2011); or syntheses of literature on topics that covered the impact of culture on diverse aspect of training (see Gayeski, 2002; Hassi and Storti, 2011; Kim and McLean, 2014; Apayday, 2008). Nevertheless, limitations are noted in each study; for instance,

Apayday (2008) discusses the Turkish cultural context providing more favourable conditions for implementation of the case method teaching technique compared to Western countries where the method was originally created; Türkiye scored high on collectivism despite lack of leadership and motivation among training participants. Even still though, the study looks at only one participative technique in the cultural context of one country. A more extensive approach covering other countries with similar cultures would have been even more informative and insightful.

Although some of the studies provide rich and useful insights on the impact of culture on the learning process, several studies focussed only on one aspect of the employee training process such as Hassi (2015) that examined the design phase without delving deep into other important components such as setting objectives, course or module planning, instructional methods, and evaluation. In the same vein, Roberts, and Tuleja's (2008) study focussed on a single experience of how instructor's cultural background affects the learning process in Hong Kong, hence restraint is needed at making broad generalizations.

Regarding the research sample, Hassi (2013) examined the use of case method in adult training only through the lenses of the learners; a limitation to this study is the fact of restricting the scope to the perspectives of the learners and not including other points of view such as those of the instructors. In fact, even though the study indicates that the case method is an effective technique to use with learning participants in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, we should not assume that just because learners enjoy case methods in training that they will necessarily acquire new knowledge efficiently or effectively and vice versa. Case method in employee training may be an efficient way to enhance learning from the point of view of participants but findings may indicate the contrary when examined from the trainers' perspective.

Considering the above literature review, few studies have discussed the effects of national culture on employee learning and training; even more so, there are yet to appear studies that provide detailed, systematic, and comprehensive insights on the whole learning cycle of a training activity. To bridge this gap, the following study will gather data about employee learning activities at each phase of the process from the Moroccan and Canadian contexts.

To do so, we rely on a clear conceptual framework. Although Marquardt's comparative approach is not void of ethnocentrism, it is the only comparative framework that looks at employee learning activities for the workplace from a comprehensive perspective. The present study will also examine the observed insights through the lens of Hofstede's Cultural framework and other cross-cultural theorists' views to help explain how the Canadian and Moroccan national culture influences learning for workplace training.

On another note, a respectful and neutral tone was elicited when explaining observed insights that emerged from investigating traits of national culture behind employee learning activities. In addition, the interview process that was relied on was carefully planned and conducted with consideration, thoughtfulness, and attention during each interview. Clear and relevant questions that informed the interview protocol and respected the interviewee's ideas, feelings, reactions, and voice were carefully designed and conducted. The observed insights have been communicated across the participants' responses by carefully noting accurate description, summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. In the study, a careful analysis and synthesis of the findings and results has been reported in a manner void of clichés, stereotypes, parochialism, or ethnocentrism.

In sum, the current study intends to provide rich, descriptive, and comparative insights about employee learning for work explained through the lens of national culture in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts.

2.2.5 Comparative frameworks: Linking Hofstede to Marquardt

In exploring the Moroccan culture across the lens of Hofstede's most pertinent cultural dimensions, an objective of the study is to get a bird's eye view of how national culture may influence employee learning for work as well as compare the insights from two distinctively diverse cultural realities. Four of Hofstede's (2001; 2010) cultural dimensions will be relied on to inform and frame the study in relation to Marquardt's dependent variables.

For this research, the last two most recent dimensions of Hofstede's model, namely, long term orientation versus short term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint, have been side-lined as their relevance to professional training in workplace milieus has not been documented in the literature. Hence, due to the dearth of information available on the topic, these two dimensions have been omitted. Ideally, these new orientations could be investigated in future studies when more available data is presented.

The main research question of the present study is *how do employee learning activities for workplace training vary across national culture in the Moroccan and Canadian context?* I approach the latter by addressing subsequent questions (SQ) designed to help link Hofstede's existing dimensions with Marquardt's employee learning activities. This will support the cross-cultural comparison of divergent approaches to learning in workplace settings. The sub-questions are followed up with a research proposition for each cultural dimension discussed.

2.2.6 Sub-questions and research propositions

SQ1: *How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, through the lens of the power distance cultural dimension?*

Marquardt (1990) notes that in the American approach, planning training activities is a joint effort by instructors and training participants as the latter are accountable for navigating their own learning, whereas in other contrasting approaches, the planning step is the sole responsibility of training instructors as learners are not expected to know how to identify learning needs. In hierarchical cultures, learners expect to acquire knowledge from expert trainers (Weech, 2001); whereas, in more egalitarian cultures such as Scandinavian societies, which tend to curtail inequalities, training participants ought to actively exchange ideas and learn from peers. In the same vein, Roberts, and Tuleja (2008) found that participation in Eastern cultures requires training participants to listen attentively and show respect to the instructor.

In low PD cultures, open communication between trainers, participants and among fellow participants is encouraged when planning training activities (Hassi, 2012). The Kamis et al. (2006) study emphasised that the Malayan approach to planning is based on the presumption of “with age, comes wisdom” indicating that decision-making rests among wise seniors that through lifelong experiences carry with them embedded and lasting knowledge.

In high PD cultures, knowledge is transferred through the expert as learners accept the exchange by instructors without questioning their expertise (Joy and Kolb, 2009). Along a similar line of thought, Hassi (2015) found that in high PD cultures such as Morocco and Singapore, participants resort to hierarchy who extend limited latitude to participants when planning training objectives; however, regarding the role of training participants, respondents

from low PD cultures such as Canada and Germany tend to lean more towards inclusive participatory approaches when setting objectives.

In strong PD cultures, training participants learn better passively (Rodrigues, 2005) and prefer approaches they are familiar with rather than delve into new and innovative methods (Hassi, 2012). In addition, in tight structure cultures, training participants expect clearly structured programmes that aim at solving problems; by contrast, in cultures with loose-knit structures where weak social norms and a high tolerance of differing behaviour (Gelfand et al., 2011) exist, there are various approaches to problem-solving issues as training participants view innovative ideas as a positive aspect of the knowledge acquisition process. In such cases, learners are at ease with training programmes that are changeable and flexible.

Trainers and participants are active contributors in the training implementation process in the American context with learning by doing as the leading technique. On the other hand, in other contrasting cultures, the implementation of the learning rests with the expert trainers where the latter model the way things should be done for participants to follow. In these contexts, experiential learning exposes vulnerabilities that may make adult learners feel foolish (Marquardt, 1990).

Instructive trainer-focused methods are developed in high PD cultures, as in Middle Eastern countries (Deal, 2004). Whereas participant-centred and experiential techniques are customary practice in cultures with a low PD such as Canada and northern European countries (Hassi, 2012).

In high PD cultures as Morocco, there is a preference for instructor-centred and trainer-guided learning. In contrast, the role of professional trainers for Canadian training participants are those of facilitator, training coordinator, or consultant (Hassi, 2013). In these views, cultures associated with the low PD dimension, such as Canada and Scandinavian

countries, a preference for peer-learning and team-oriented approaches has been observed (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009).

Regarding the evaluation of employee training, Singaporean and Moroccan organizations, both high PD societies, are dependent on hierarchy with minimum expectations of input from participants when planning training evaluations; on the other hand, Canadian and German organizations, both low PD cultures, tend to resort to more comprehensive training evaluation approaches that encourage flexibility and participant engagement in the process (Hassi, 2015). Centred on the above arguments, the following research proposition can be hypothesised:

Research Proposition 1: In the Moroccan context, which is a high PD culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low PD culture, the process is more decentralized.

SQ2: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, through the uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension?

Subject to variations in the degree of uncertainty avoidance, learners may exhibit wavering levels of anxiety regarding self-restrained learning environments. In UA cultures that are more resilient, an explicit course of action may be necessary for the learning activities, while more self-sufficiency is the convention in low UA cultures (Kim and McLean 2014).

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, organizations show important levels of rigidity during the planning stage of training as reflected when determining training objectives; whereas, Singaporean organizations, which are low UA cultures, are characterized by less restrictions in a way that non-planned objectives may surface during a training session (Hassi, 2015). In the same way, cultures with tight structures exhibit traits of intolerance and ambiguity as seen with learners expecting clear-cut objectives as part of their training

programs; however, in cultures with loose structures, learners are at ease with general goals set by the trainer (Weech, 2001).

Training participants from cultures with strong degrees of UA respond better to passive teaching methodologies; meanwhile trainees from low UA contexts acquire more from active teaching techniques (Rodrigues, 2005). For example, open-ended training strategies that focus on adequate solutions rather than exact responses may be viewed as a renunciation of a trainers' responsibility by participants whose need for UA is strong (Hassi, 2012).

The UA cultural orientation influences reflective observation (Kayes, 2005); with low UA cultures, as in Nordic European countries, participants are encouraged to explore diverse and innovative ideas (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Whereas in cultures with high UA, such as Middle Eastern cultures, training specialists tend to prepare detailed plans and formally present the ideas to participants (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). However, in cultures with low UA, participants tend to be more at ease with problem-solving questions without necessarily seeking the flawless perfect answer; the idea of this approach is for trainers to encourage learners to explore diverse ways to solving problems while positively embracing intellectual constructive criticism (Hassi, 2013). Along similar lines, Barmeyer (2000) contends that learners that adhere to reflective observation tend to be more contemplative when exposed to new insights; a characteristic that is more aligned with high UA behaviours.

On the other hand, low UA cultures that are characterized by a high degree of anxiety exhibited when placed in uncertain situations, as for instance Canada, informal learning encourages individuals to pursue innovative ideas aside from relying on common formal coursework to seek out solutions to issues and real-life problems (Phillips and Vaughn,

2009). Nonetheless, didactic trainer-centred techniques that provoke ideas in a formal manner are preferred in high UA cultures (Deal, 2004).

In designing training methods, in high UA cultures such as Morocco and Germany the levels of rigidity regarding training approaches are higher as predetermined methods and criteria were identified to evaluate the training session (Hassi, 2015). Thus, non-planned methods are unlikely to surface during a training session; whereas, in Singaporean organizations, which belong to the low UA cluster, the intended evaluation methods and criteria were expected to be selected and changed progressively throughout the session with programs designed on more ad hoc evaluation methods (Hassi, 2015). Considering the preceding observations that emerged in the literature regarding the UA cultural dimension, the following research proposition can be hypothesised:

Research Proposition 2: In the Moroccan context, which is a high UA culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is more rigid, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low UA culture, the process is less rigid.

SQ3: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension?

In collectivistic cultural samples such as Mexico, high importance is placed on an individual's status and hierarchical position when conducting employee needs' analysis (Deal, 2004). In these cultures, the tendency for organizations is to consider the collective needs of employees when planning and designing training objectives; contrariwise, in individualistic cultures, such as Canada and Germany, the tendency is to plan outcome objectives based on the individual needs of participants (Hassi, 2015). As individualistic cultures, Canadian and German organizations, have also been found to emphasize individual needs and objectives during the planning stage of employee training content (Hassi, 2015).

In individualistic countries, learners value self-sufficiency, autonomy, and self-efficacy and participants tend to be comfortable working independently on their own; whereas in collectivistic cultures as with many cases in Africa, participants rely on the groups they work with and collaboration despite any discord and disagreement that arises (Weech, 2001). For instance, Ndoye (2003) noted that discussions with the older farmers were the beneficial forms of learning in rural Senegal. In the Hassi (2015) empirical study, the author found that in collectivistic cultures such as Morocco and Singapore, organizations focused on the collective needs of the group and leaned towards selecting training methods that favoured collaborative tasks and progression as a team despite the risks of slowing down some training participants in the process (Hassi, 2015).

Regarding the participants' role, North American trainers have found that training participants in China tend to make decisions based on what is in the best interest of the group, instead of expressing individual preferences (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008). Chinese participants, known for being passive learners, are reluctant to engage in reviewing material from teammates as they try to avoid sharing what may be perceived as negative feedback to their peers, even if constructive feedback may be informative and helpful. They tend to also keep learner-instructor exchanges limited when it comes to topics related to their peers (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008).

Mature training participants in the Moroccan context perceive themselves as apprentices subject to the supervision of a 'skilled expert' until they master the subject area themselves (Hassi, 2013). In this landscape, training participants are good team collaborators that work collectively rather than individually, endorsing the notion that acquiring knowledge is part of a collective experience rather than an individualistic endeavour; conversely, Canadian training participants see themselves playing a more pro-active role in the learning process with learners favouring experiential learning techniques and preferring trainers that

are more like facilitators (Hassi, 2013). In training sessions, Canadian training participants tend to prefer working independently, are more comfortable with conducting activities on their own, and make independent decisions (Hassi, 2013) due to the individualistic nature of their national culture which values autonomy (Weech, 2001).

From a different perspective, in individualistic cultures, participants in trainings are more at ease with working alone and prefer self-sufficiency (Weech, 2001); by contrast, in group-oriented cultures, participants tend to opt for maintaining peace and harmony with the group (Hassi, 2012), and learning participants prefer group activities rather than independent-oriented tasks (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009).

In individualistic cultures, Canadian and German organizations emphasized individual needs during the evaluation planning phase with little concern for the group's progression as criterion to evaluate the training (Hassi, 2015). Regarding cultures that value independence, as in Northern Europe, Weech (2001) found that learning occurred independently. In individualistic cultures, training participants are also encouraged to actively engage in debates and the free expression of one's ideas (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009); whereas in collectivistic cultures, adult participants embrace unity among the group as seen in the African context. In his study, Ndoye (2003) highlights the importance of dialogue and discussions with elderly farmers in rural Senegal as the study identified these methods to be the most effective forms of acquiring sound knowledge and relevant know-how about efficient and productive farming. Based on the above discussion related to the individualistic versus collectivistic cultural dimensions, the following research proposition can be hypothesised:

Research Proposition 3: In the Moroccan context, which is a collectivistic culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centred on the group of training participants,

whereas in the Canadian context, which is an individualistic culture, the process is centered on the individual learner.

SQ4: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the masculinity/femininity cultural dimension?

Regarding the masculinity/femininity cultural orientation, limited studies emerged from the literature that highlighted the influence of this dimension of national culture on the employee learning. What surfaced was that contrary to masculine societies, feminine cultures are characterised by social approval through the importance of expectations and pleasant team dynamics; whereas, in masculine cultures, individuals tend to be more goal-oriented and focussed on training outcomes (Kim and McLean, 2014). Despite the dearth of studies highlighting this dimension and based on the presumptions noted above, the following research proposition can be hypothesised:

Research Proposition 4: In both the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, which are both slightly patriarchal cultures, the overall approach to employee learning activities is outcome-based.

2.3 National culture

2.3.1 Introduction

In attempts at defining what the notion of culture encompasses, over 150 definitions have been attributed to the term (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1961). In fact, the concept of culture has been examined from multiple disciplines including the humanities and social sciences. Culture is defined by Hofstede (1980, p.9) as “*the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one group or society or category or nation from another*”. The ‘mind’ referring to an individual’s ability to think, feel, and act, while being cognisant of one’s fundamental beliefs, attitudes, and skills. In many respects, value systems

are the core essentials embedded within the seeds of one's culture. While the concept of culture can be applied to any individual collectively, it often surfaces in societies which are operationalized as regional groups, nations, or ethnic entities across and even within nations (Hofstede, 2001).

2.3.2 Layers of culture

2.3.2.1 Organisational culture

Regarding organizational culture, Lewis, and Thornhill (1994) make a distinction between corporate culture and organizational culture. The former denoting managements' preferable ways of getting things done, whereas organizational culture is defined as the summation of all sub-cultures together with non-managerial ones within an organization. Schein (2010) considers organizational culture as a deep-rooted phenomenon, which cannot be changed easily, a pattern of basic assumptions that a group has invented, discovered, or developed to deal with two main challenges, namely internal integration, and external adaptation. Pettigrew (1990) concludes that organizational culture refers to people, their relationships and beliefs, products, structures, modes of recruitment and reward.

2.3.2.2 National and organizational culture

From the onset, it is necessary to mention that both national culture and organizational culture have similarities and dissimilarities. Nonetheless, the review of the literature does not allow for an assessment of what determines the relations between national or societal culture and organizational culture, particularly with the effect of the former on the latter.

Further, the question of the extent to which societal culture has an impact upon organizational culture is one of considerable debate. The literature addressing this question has been inconclusive [...] (Dickson et al., 2000, p. 455).

Regarding the relationship between both levels of culture, Holbeche (2005) contends that corporate culture may be dominant and paramount over national culture within international organizations:

In international organizations employing large numbers of local staff, the national culture will act as a moderator of the corporate culture [...] However, it is probable that the corporate culture will predominate over national culture, making local offices of the company designed to have a familiar feel, atmosphere and to some degree, shared values, wherever where they are based (Holbeche, 2005, p. 29).

However, Ouchi (1981) points out that managers can create solid organizational cultures that could even reflect divergent values from those of the national culture where organizations progress and grow.

Conversely, national culture was identified as a source of influence on organizational culture by several authors. In this regard, given that national culture constitutes an integral part of the environment where organizations evolve, organizational culture, by inference, should be influenced by societal culture (Dickson et al., 2000). Certainly, the surrounding national culture could affect organizations members' behaviours by means of its effect on organizational culture, as much as it could impact beliefs, values, and norms that individuals bring to an organization (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000). For instance, Hofstede and Peterson (2000) contend that the nationality of a parent company is reflected on its organizational culture given that "culture is not specific to management – it belongs to the total society of which management is just a part" (Hofstede and Peterson, 2000, p. 402). Moreover, national values tend to be more entrenched than organizational values. Nonetheless, as d'Iribarne (1989) illustrated in his analysis of how cultural roots' histories shape business practices, the values of nations reflect patterns exceeding periods of over 200 years (Hofstede and Peterson, 2000, p. 413).

Accordingly, the assumption that managers will have more influence on the attitudes and beliefs of employees and on organizational culture underestimates the power of peoples' socialization and overestimates the impact of organizations (Hofstede et al., 2000). Leaders within organizations only exert influence on observable behaviours. Hence, conforming to authority is not necessarily synonymous to a change in attitude or value. That said, organizations are not able to actively engage in a socialization rivalry against the forces of societal socialization to produce values among their members. Socialization is much more affected by societal culture than by the organizational culture manifested where people work. The collective mental programming at the national level impacts the values that people acquire at a younger age, by large before the age of 12 (Hofstede et al., 2000). On the other hand, programming at the organizational level exerts an influence on practices such as the symbols, heroes, and rituals according to results of a study based on 20 Danish and Dutch units carried out by Hofstede et al. (1990). In this respect, Sondergaard (2006) attributes more importance to values as opposed to practices:

[...] Values are assumed to be relatively more stable than practices. In other words, we are embedded in the values of the national culture in which we spent the years of primary education, either by birth or by parental choice. However, organizational practices can be learned. Learned practices may fit or misfit with cultural values (Sondergaard, 2006, p. 117).

Similarly, using the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) societal culture scale, Dickson et al. (2000) discovered that values shared at the societal level account for 50% of the variance in values shared at the organizational level. Whereas d'Iribarne (1989) insists that national culture constitutes referential connotations in terms of management practices; indeed, every culture is singular in this respect (Dupuis, 2008). In sum, several authors support the idea that cultural differences impact workplace practices at the national level such as Hofstede (1980, 2001), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997). Adversaries to the national culture thesis claim that the culturalist

approach reduces organizational culture to a simple reflection of national culture. However, when examining national culture within organizations, the latter does not necessarily mean reducing organizational culture to mere reflections of facets of the national culture. The objective is to highlight manifestations of national culture in how organizations manage in general.

When discussing the influence of national culture and organizational culture on organizational outcomes, Jacobs (2003) states “that in fact, national culture can be as strong a determinant of individual behaviour as is organizational culture” (p. 201). Similarly, McSweeney (2009) affirms that organizational culture influences, just like national culture, behaviours, and practices at work:

[...] action in an organization would be influenced not just by ‘national’ culture but also by the organizational culture which would not be nationally uniform – as it would vary between 49 organizations (McSweeney, 2009, pp. 937-938).

2.4 Cultural models and learning for work

In the early 1960s, Hall (1959) was identified as an exemplary scholar by relying on three essential elements in understanding and studying cultural orientations: the concept of time, space, and patterns of communication. Hall made the distinction between high and low context cultures. In high context cultures, the communicated message is embedded within the cultural context. Conversely, “in low-context cultures most of the information must be in the message in order to make up for what is missing in the context” (Hall, 1976). The high/low context is one of the most noteworthy features in cross-cultural communication. Likewise, the notions of monochronic/polychronic time and space are very vital when explaining distinct aspects of cross-cultural behaviour (Yeganeh et al., 2009). Hall’s cultural framework may be more fitting for qualitative studies that compare cultures that are unrelated, and in areas such as communication, negotiation, organizational behaviour, and consumer behaviour.

The decade long study of Trompenaars and his fellow researchers (1997) lead to the development of another important cultural framework. Trompenaars' model is based on data collected from about 15,000 managers in 28 different countries around the world. The authors viewed culture as the way in which a group of people solve problems with the process of the latter consisting of three vital features: relationship with others, time, and the environment. The authors identified seven major cultural orientations that would fit under the umbrella of their three core elements. Five of their orientations are related to relationships among people, and two are concerned with time and environment. The Trompenaars' definition of culture is common for national and organizational cultures with both concepts not distinguished from one another. There are also many similarities between Trompenaars' cultural orientations and those of Hofstede (1980), and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961). Nonetheless and in contrast to Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars' does not consider cultural dimensions linear and dichotomous (Trompenaars, 1997).

The model proposed by Trompenaars measures the intensity of cultural values but fails to measure or compare the importance of every cultural value in respect to other values. The work of Trompenaars' study is like Hofstede (1980) with a few more additional dimensions. The framework has not been discussed much in the literature and seems complex for use in empirical research studies. Despite the commonalities among some dimensions, the model is impractical to measure culture (Yeganeh et al., 2009).

The concept of culture developed by the GLOBE project (House et al. 2004) is an extension of Hofstede's model and yet another alternative framework to the study of culture. The GLOBE research program quantitatively investigated nine attributes of culture. The major concepts include Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance, Collectivism I: Societal Emphasis on Collectivism, Collectivism II: Family Collectivistic Practices, Gender Egalitarianism, Assertiveness, Future Orientation, Performance Orientation, and Humane

Orientation (House et al., 2004). Even though the GLOBE project seems empirically robust, it is nevertheless limited in the sense that it does not offer any conceptual inventiveness. For instance, the first six dimensions are derived from Hofstede's model (1980). The future orientation dimension is another replica of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) temporal mode of society. The projects' performance dimension derives from McClelland's work on need for achievement (van Emmerick et al., 2010). GLOBE's humane dimension is rooted in a combination of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) work on the human nature and Putnam's (1993) work on the civic society and conceptualization of the affiliative motive (House et al., 2004). Contrary to what the other cultural frameworks advance regarding societal values, the GLOBE dimensions differentiate between societal values and practices by asserting that the former "should be" whereas practices within a society are termed "as is." The distinction assumes that culture is multifaceted with concepts reflected through artefacts and practices at the surface, whereas values and fundamental assumptions people hold are at the core (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars, 1997). GLOBE represents a very sparing patchwork model that lags in applicability because it tends to deal only with work-related values. Nonetheless, the GLOBE dimensions could be useful to investigate culture in areas such as leadership, organizational behaviour, or human resource management (Yeganeh et al., 2009).

2.4.1 Hofstede's dimensions and a critique of his framework

Back in the early 1970s, Hofstede asked the question: *How can we understand cultural differences?* After a decade of research and data collected from employees at his company's 50 subsidiary offices around the world, Hofstede conducted a rigorous analysis of his findings, which consequently led to a model of cultural dimensions. With the objective to understand workplace values around the world, Hofstede scored each country using a scale of

0 to 100 for each cultural dimension; the higher the score, the more that dimension is exhibited in society (Hofstede, 2001). The model has become a globally recognized standard when studying the influence of national culture. With substantial cultural statistics, Hofstede analysed the results and found clear patterns of differences and similarities amid the responses related to his four main dimensions. As his research was conducted on IBM employees only, he was able to attribute the patterns to national differences in culture, eliminating the problem of differences in organizational culture (Hofstede, 1980; 2001; 2011).

In his seminal book *Culture's Consequences* (Hofstede, 1980), cultural dimensions reflected problems that different societies must address as the latter contemplate various solutions in their attempts to solve the issues with which they are faced. The original five cultural dimensions introduced by Hofstede (1980; 2001; 2011, p.8) included: power distance (PD); individualism versus collectivism (IDV); masculinity versus femininity (MAS); uncertainty avoidance (UA); and long-term orientation versus short-term orientation (LTO). More recently, Hofstede et al. (2008) introduced the Values Survey Module 08 instrument which measures the original five dimensions plus an additional two dimensions: indulgence versus restraint (IND) and monumentalism versus self-effacement. For the proposed research, it is important to briefly explain the four cultural dimensions that will be used as the explanatory cultural factors in the study.

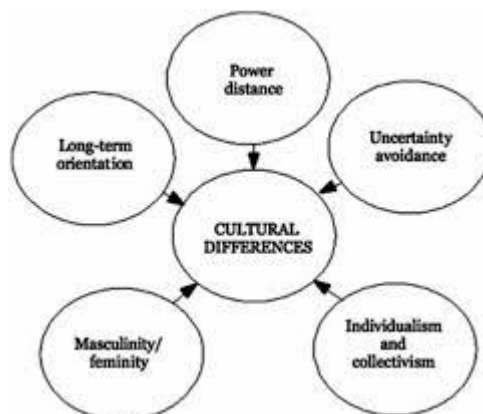


Figure 1: Dimensions of Hofstede's Model

The power distance dimension refers to the fact that all individuals in society are not equal. Power distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of an institution and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 2001, p.9). In low PD cultures, societies are characterized by decentralized decision-making responsibilities and authority; participatory and consultative managerial styles; linear organizational management; a fractional degree of supervision; lack of questioning and acceptance of authority; conscious of individual’s fundamental rights, and egalitarian in the sense that employees and their supervisors are almost considered equal (Hofstede, 2001). On the other hand, in cultures that exhibit high PD index scores, societies are categorized as: autocratic leadership styles with centralized authority within organizations; paternalistic managerial practices with many hierarchical levels; many employees with supervisory roles; acceptance of the fact that power has its privileges for those in higher positions; and, an expectation that members in societies are not equal with an awareness that inequality and power differences prevail (Hofstede, 2001; 2011).

Individualism versus collectivism refers to cultures in which people define themselves as individualistic and form loosely knit social ties within their groups compared to collectivistic cultures where people have stronger bonds to their groups with membership establishing a person’s main purpose. This is referred to as “the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members” (Hofstede, 2011, p.9). Individualistic cultures are characterized by: the idea that contractual relationships are rooted within the bargain principle of exchange (value versus detriment) before engaging in behaviour; a focus on the individual’s self-interests and goals and on very few close family members; value independence and self-sufficiency with an acceptance for confrontation as a positive attribute; emphasize a lifestyle of fun, pleasure, and personal enjoyment more than adhering to social norms and duties; individuals belong to in-groups that exercise minimal influence on

their everyday lifestyles; consider that their ways of doing things and beliefs are unique; and, hold paramount horizontal relationship over vertical relations (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). Conversely, collectivistic cultures are characterized by: the belief in behaving according to the social norms that are set in place with the intention to maintain social harmony among members of an in-group with the implications of their actions in light of the benefit of the collective members; sacrifice personal interests for the group and share resources to maintain cohesion; favour particular in-groups as friends and family members; belong to a small number of in-groups that dictate and influence the course of their everyday lives; have inclinations towards conformity; exhibit hostility and indifference towards out-group members while taking care of their in-groups only; place emphasis on hierarchy and harmonious relations within the group; and, regulate behaviour through group norms (Hofstede, 2001; 2011).

The fundamental principle under the masculinity versus femininity dimension in the societal sense as opposed to an individual characteristic, refers to the distribution of values between genders regarding another fundamental issue in any society, and to which different solutions are found. This refers to how much a society sticks with, and values, traditional male, and female roles. In masculine cultures, preference in society is based on achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material reward for success, whereas in more feminine cultures, preferences are for compassion, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life (Hofstede, 2011, p.9). Masculine cultures are nestled under the umbrella of career success. Typical characteristics of high MAS societies include clearly distinct gender roles; men are more assertive, strong, and centred on material success; there is an indifference for benevolence; a focus on need to master things related to their jobs, nature, and people (Hofstede, 1980; 2001; 2011). Thus, men are masculine, and women are feminine with a well-established distinction between men's and women's work. On the other end of the spectrum, quality of life

characterizes more feminine cultures by overlapping gender roles within society; not being concerned with the material possessions of success; advocating for both men and women to focus on quality of life, modesty, and tenderness. In these societies, women are equal to men and can do anything a man can do with powerful and successful women admired and highly respected within society (Hofstede, 1980; 2001; 2011).

The uncertainty avoidance dimension relates to the degree of anxiety that society members feel when in uncertain or unknown situations. A weak indicator is characterized by taking risks; tolerating differences of opinions and behaviours; flexibility; few rules; and rewards based on merit (Hofstede, 2011). On the other end of the pendulum, strong UA means to avoid risk; organizations with demarcated structures; many written rules and standardized procedures; rewards based on age or seniority levels; lack of tolerance for non-conformists; need for consensus; need for predictability and planning; respect for authority (Hofstede, 2011). Hence, high UA scoring countries tend to avoid ambiguous situations whenever possible and are governed by rules and orders that seek “collective truths;” whereas societies with low UA scores indicate that the society enjoys novel events and values cultural differences. In these cultural environments, there are few rules, and people are encouraged to seek truth independently.

The long-term orientation (LTO), which was initially called Confucian Dynamism refers to how much a culture values long-standing traditions and values within their societies. The LTO dimension was added to the main four cultural dimensions in the early 1990s, after it emerged that Asian countries rooted in Confucian thought acted differently from their Western counterparts. In countries with high LTO scores, delivering on social obligations and avoiding the “loss of face” are especially important. In Western countries, which have low LTO scores, creative expression and innovative ideas are expected (Hofstede, 2001; 2011). Characteristics of high Confucian values (LTO) include a culture that reflects a dynamic

future-oriented mentality; place an emphasis on perseverance and persistence; have relationships based on order and status; emphasize sense of shame; and are sensitive towards social contacts. Short-term orientations tilt towards the present and the past; have fixated and static tradition-oriented mentalities; emphasise stability; protecting face is important; have respect for traditions; focus on favours, gifts, and reciprocity; and are negatively associated with economic growth (Hofstede, 2001; 2011)

In 2010, a sixth cultural dimension was added. The indulgence versus restraint (IND) refers to societies that allow for uninhibited gratification of basic and natural human desires that have an appetite for enjoyment and enjoyable lifestyles; whereas the restraint dimension refers to societies that suppress gratification of needs and desires and regulate this by abiding to strict social norms (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). It is worth noting that regarding Hofstede's latest dimensions there is no literature highlighting the relevance of these dimensions in relation to employee learning activities, hence, for the proposed research the study relies on the initial four cultural dimensions to explain how national culture influences learning for work.

Hofstede's (1980, 2001) model (see Table 2) is widely recognized and influential for understanding cultural differences. The framework has several strengths for scholars conducting research in many disciplines. Nonetheless, it is not without limitations and faces criticism. A main critique is that the framework designed to explain cultural differences tends to oversimplify complex cultural realities reducing cultures into a few dimensions, such as individualism vs collectivism or power distance; dimensions which may overlook inherent nuances and complexities within cultures (Jackson, 2018). Culture is viewed as a multifaceted concept and any attempt to explain it within a limited set of dimensions can lead to misinterpretation and oversimplification. Secondly, the framework assumes that cultural values remain relatively stable over time, but culture is not a static concept as it evolves and

changes with time due to various factors (Rohlfers & Zhang, 2016) as globalisation, technological development, and societal shifts. Thirdly, some claim that the framework fails to consider dynamic changes, limiting its ability to understand contemporary cultural dynamics (Rohlfers & Zang, 2016). McSweeney (2002) has argued that the model suffers from bias and ethnocentrism in its construction because the initial research was based on IBM employees from Western countries, thus, not representing cultural diversity. As Western cultural values are core elements of the framework, the basis may not fully capture the values, behaviours, and experiences of non-Western cultures (Kwek, 2003; Yeh, 1983). The latter can lead to bias in how cultural differences may be interpreted (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1997; McSweeney, 2002a; 2009). The importance of understanding differences within contextual realities is another concern as cultural values and norms can vary significantly within a country or a region (Sivakumper and Nakata, 2001). In understanding cultural differences from the perspective of broad dimensions may simplify the intricacies and unique characteristics of specific contexts. Factors such as religion, gender, agency, power relations, globalisation, and cultural structures can significantly shape values and behaviours which are not adequately explained in the Cultural Dimension framework. While the model has been widely used and referenced in cross-cultural comparative studies its validity has been questioned (Javidan et al., 2006). Inconsistencies in applying the cultural dimensions across diverse cultures have suggested that alternative approaches may provide more insight into cultural differences. This lack of universal applicability raises concerns about the reliability and generalisation of the framework Schwartz (1994).

In short, despite critiques of Hofstede's Cultural Dimension framework, the latter remains a strong starting point for researchers who want to understand cultural differences. It is undisputed that his work has generated extensive academic research contributing to cross-cultural management, international business, human resource management, and

communication theories. Nonetheless, it is vital that when used to explain cultural differences, the framework is complemented with other perspectives and approaches to gain a more comprehensive and lucid grasp of other cultural complexities at play.

Table 3 Characteristics of Hofstede’s National Culture Model

Individualism	Collectivism
Cultures with individualistic preferences with people forming loosely knit ties within their social groups.	Cultures with collectivistic preferences with people forming tight-knit ties within their social groups.
High score culture indicative traits:	Low score culture indicative traits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I” mindset ▪ Relationships a private matter ▪ Fulfilling obligations linked to self ▪ Guilt and loss of self-respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “We” mindset ▪ Relations more important than tasks ▪ Realize obligations for the group ▪ Shame through “loss of face”
Power Distance	Power Distance
In high PD cultures the unequal distribution of power is acceptable with no need for justifications.	In low PD cultures equal dispersal of power is expected and justifications for inequalities are demanded.
High PD culture traits:	Low PD culture traits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High dependence needs ▪ Inequality accepted ▪ Hierarchical structure required ▪ Superiors not accessible ▪ Privileges only for those in power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low dependence ▪ Inequality minimal ▪ Hierarchy symbolic for convenience ▪ Superiors accessible ▪ Privileges for all
Uncertainty Avoidance	Uncertainty Avoidance
In high UA cultures individuals prefer predictability and have a low tolerance for ambiguity. Societies maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and do not accept unorthodox ideas.	In low UA cultures people are at ease with unpredictability and high tolerance for ambiguity. Societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice is more important than principles.
High UA culture traits:	Low UA culture traits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher stress, anxiety ▪ Desire to work harder ▪ Conflict is worrying ▪ Consensus-oriented ▪ Avoidance of failure ▪ Laws and regulations required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower stress, relaxed ▪ Demanding work not a primary virtue ▪ Competition and conflict are fair game ▪ Acceptance of opposing points of view ▪ Risk-takers ▪ Limited rules and law needed
Masculinity	Femininity
In MAS cultures people value achievement, competitiveness, assertiveness, money, and other material rewards for success.	In FEM cultures, individuals value cooperation and maintaining good relationships, caring for the weak, quality of life.
Masculinity traits include:	Femininity traits include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ambition and need to excel ▪ Tendency to diverge ▪ Live for work ▪ Fast and large are attractive ▪ Achievers admired ▪ Determination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of life is paramount ▪ Helping others is a virtue ▪ Strive for consensus ▪ Work to live ▪ Small and slow are ideal ▪ Compassion for the unfortunate

Based on Geert Hofstede, “*Culture’s consequences: Comparing values, behaviours and institutions across nations*,” 2nd Ed., 2001, page 318, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

2.4.3 Selected cultural dimensions as explanatory factors

For this research, we look for explanatory cultural factors of national culture that impact the various stages of the learning cycle; the latter will be examined and analysed through the lens of cultural theorists and primarily Hofstede's (1980; 2001) four cultural dimensions, specifically those of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and the masculinity/femininity. A brief overview of the explanatory cultural dimensions that will help to explain and compare what unfolds under different learning approaches is presented below.

The cultural orientation of power distance refers to the degree of inequality that exists and is expected among people with or without power (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). For instance, in high PD cultures such as Morocco, Singapore and Mexico, unequal distribution of power is accepted with employees knowing "their place" within their organizations. In low PD cultures, such as Anglo-Saxon Canada, the UK, the United States, and Scandinavian countries power is shared and more equally dispersed (Hofstede, 1980; 2001).

The degree of anxiety that society members feel in uncertain or unknown situations is referred to uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). In high UA cultures as Morocco, France, and Belgium, individuals try to avoid ambiguous situations as much as possible. Rules, order, and collective truths govern situations arising at work. In contrast, low UA cultures, like the UK, Denmark, and Anglo-Saxon Canada, and the US, studies indicate that in those cultures, individuals enjoy novel and original measures and value differences. The former is governed by fewer rules set in place with individuals encouraged to seek and validate truths on their own.

The individualism/collectivism dimension refers to the strength of the ties people have to others within the community. A high IDV index score indicates loose connections

with a lack of interpersonal relations and little sharing of responsibility beyond family and close friends; whereas, a low IDV would have strong group cohesion, loyalty, and respect for the group (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). This cultural variable without a doubt impacts employee learning within organizations. For example, Morocco viewed as a collectivist culture compared to Anglo-Saxon Canada and the United States, which are more individualistic will have inherent implications on how employees learn and acquire knowledge within an organization.

The masculinity/femininity cultural dimension refers to how much a society sticks with, and values, traditional male, and female roles. Countries scoring high on the MAS index are those where men are expected to be “tough,” they are considered as the providers in societies, and are individuals that are more inherently assertive. In lower MAS cultures, the roles are hazy and blurred and employees are more balanced in terms of skill rather than contingent on gender (Hofstede, 1980; 2001).

2.5 Complexities of national culture

As different researchers examine CCM in numerous ways, it was insightful to bring together some of the different approaches used to examine cultural factors in case some aspects of the primary study may have been taken for granted. For these reasons, although this research relied on the classical traditional approach to cross-cultural management studies which revolved around the cultural frameworks of Hofstede (1980; 2001); House et al., (2004); Schwartz, 1994; & Trompenaars, (1998) for the primary study, an overarching meta-analysis based on existing critiques, and on the extant literature examining aspects of culture from different points of view, was relied on as a tool for additional analysis, interpretation and understanding interactions in more depth. In Part II, I focused on studies that have discussed notions of complexities of national culture as traditional CCM theories did not concentrate on

non-cultural factors (i.e., globalisation, agency and cultural structures, gender, and power dynamics). Thus, to address questions that arose after the initial analysis, the meta-narrative delved deeper into the extant literature. Over the past 25 years, I have also travelled extensively to many countries, lived, and worked as a Western woman in diverse environments, and lectured on language studies and culture in Canada, Morocco, Rwanda, Italy, and Japan. Reflective observations from my professional work experiences in both countries also inform the narrative. This critical analysis aims to better understand questions regarding notions of complexity in concepts of national culture that touch on issues related to power, gender, globalisation, agency, and cultural structures. The latter are issues that have been raised by scholars (Jackson, 2018; McSweeney, 2012; Kwek, 2003;) who question analyses based on traditional CCM approaches and who have implicitly and explicitly called for paradigmatic shifts in CCM qualitative studies (Jackson, 2018; 2020; Kwek, 2004; Romani et al., 2015).

Traditional CCM approaches are being challenged and new perspectives that allow researchers to redirect their lens towards contextual factors call for shifts in the paradigms we use to analyze culture. Content is important to understand in CCM; however, contextual elements affecting perceptions of individuals from a given culture also matter because they can contribute to the interpretations of individuals' workplace practices from a different point of view. The meta-analysis focused on national culture and factors that may play a role in the context. CCM's traditional perspective focused on describing and interpreting the *content* of the shared insights. The meta-narrative drew our attention to the *context* and the crossroads of where the interactions occur. Guided by post-colonial discourses on globalisation, power relations, gender, agency and cultural structures, the meta-analysis examines literature to identify challenging issues researchers are confronting and discuss their implications.

The objective of the meta-narrative was to delve further into the culture discourse pertaining to training and learning for work in diverse comparative settings as Canada and Morocco. Postcolonialism is an area of study that leans on critical theory; it helps to better grasp non-cultural factors such as representation, power and the culture of individuals that have been led by a dominating force. This part of the analysis highlights different approaches relied on to examine assumptions and contexts in which national culture and learning for the workplace are understood and utilized. The backdrop of these contexts includes interconnected global environments; international development; and cultural exchanges of education, goods, services, and entertainment. The intention was to see how the context of social, organizational, and power relationships shape the role of national culture in the realm of professional learning and training. Based on the extant literature, the meta-narrative complements the established traditional perspective from the CCM viewpoint used in the primary study and examined how newer approaches to culture may contribute to this research study and the CCM field in general. This critical view provided answers to newly emerged questions, circumstances, location, and positioning of the researcher. The meta-analysis attempted to bridge a traditional CCM approach of examining cultural differences with more recent critical perspectives to further ground theory and practice.

2.5.1 Diverse approaches to examine complexities of national culture

Modern critics of CCM argue that Western norms have imposed standardized solutions with implicit western views for both management and cross-cultural research (Romani & Höök, 2010). It is said that in CCM learning and training, the area of study continues to perpetuate colonial workplace practices. In training, for instance, Jack and Lorbiecki (2003) point to the use of videos that merge countries in a single national culture; consequently, streamlining social and cultural views of the ‘other’. European American views are most prevalent in these

videos, and even though the ‘other’ may be peripherally represented, their voice is silent. Furthermore, CCM practices often rely on western perspectives when using teaching material or cases which often highlight differences from the ‘other’ therefore not represented for themselves.

Teaching material in CCM tend to implicitly favor western views (Kwek, 2003; Fougère & Moulettes, 2007). Consequently, this directs the propagation of power inequalities in knowledge creation between developed nations and developing countries; inequalities that continue to promote forms of western imperialism (Westwood, 2006; Jack & Westwood, 2009). CCM as a discipline implicitly advocates for respect for differences, a shared understanding, and non-ethnocentric views in both management and research; and so, critiques that stem from the post-colonial and critical lens are significant and matter.

In this study, we also explored studies from a post-colonial theoretical stance, as this allowed for a redirected focus towards the concept of the ‘other,’ imposed viewpoints of conventional western discourse, reproduced unequal power relations, and colonialism. I relied on the recent works and notable post-colonial scholars such as Said, Bhabha and Spivak who have all been referenced in cross-cultural studies when addressing issues in IB including learning for work, training, and development. Post-colonial scholars highlight the essentialization of non-westerners as the Others, as seen in teaching material where implicit references considered the norm are most often North Americans or Western Europeans.

Post-colonial theory is rooted in the classic works of Fanon (1952), Said (1978), Bhabha (1984), and Spivak (1988). The approach challenges traditional value systems and Western epistemology, politics, education, and social economic theory. Traditional thought depicts an embedded sense of European and American superiority when encountering people of other countries portraying other cultures as ‘other’ (Said, 1978). This presents the *us* versus *them* dichotomy based on the interactions of the colonizer and the colonized – who represent the

‘other.’ Although PCT has yet to shine in the CCM field, we begin to see studies applying it in the humanities, social sciences, particularly in anthropology, political science, linguistics, and literature. Studies highlight issues of poverty, race, gender (Moulette et al., 2015) globalisation, and loss of cultural knowledge and heritage (Jackson, 2018). Influenced by Foucault (1971), Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) attempted to decolonize CCM by using a PCT approach to examining cross-cultural issues. Said’s (1978) key concept of orientalism presented core arguments to guide a PCT analysis. Said (1978) examined how representations of the Eastern World are underpinned by creativity and maintaining power and control relations that favor the West (Europe and America). Homi Bhabha (1984), a prominent PCT scholar at Harvard was influenced by Said (1978), Derrida (1982), and Foucault (1971); he coined the post-colonial concepts of hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, resilience, and resistance. Bhabha argued that cultural values, norms, and practices are not homogeneous and pure because they are formations that are by nature hybrid; meaning that the values people have are formations from mixed elements between the colonizers and the colonized. The results from these encounters were hybridization which led to colonized people’s mimicry of the West to demonstrate the agency of colonized managers. Spivak (1998) who was inspired by Gramsci (1971), studied the concepts of subaltern and strategic essentialism. She argued that individuals who are considered inferior in status, rank, and class in societies (subalterns) have no voice and that all that has been documented about these groups of people is a result of distorted representations created by elitist individuals with positions of power. Women in post-colonial settings are even further marginalized by internal powers and Western feminism.

Traditional established models of culture have been criticized as static and decontextualized views of culture (Jackson, 2019); however, PCT proposes to shift the views on culture as one that encompasses abstract value and codes of behavior as determinants and with concepts of

culture dynamic and fluid as they unfold in practice and socially situated contexts. Kwek (2003) proposes that Hofstede's work on national culture needs to be understood across a PC lens in efforts to decolonize the entire CCM field. Although post-colonial contextual history assumes an end of imperialism, PCT illustrates the contrary. PCT stresses the need to examine changes that have resulted from decolonization and colonization. Changes revealed in the identity of the colonizers and the colonized that affect wealth, destruction, re-alignment of knowledge, power, cultural values, and norms have been examined in PC studies. Detrimental effects to cultural norms, values, knowledge & identity have undermined the power of individuals to identify themselves in their own image.

2.5.2 Global perspectives of culture

2.5.2.1 Intra vs inter-cultural variations

To understand culture's consequences when it confronts the forces of globalisation, we need to begin with clarity on the many cultural terms often used in the literature. In this study, culture is viewed as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one human group from another; culture is a set of accepted behaviour patterns, values, assumptions, and shared common experiences which are the building blocks of a national culture (Hofstede, 1984). The meaning of cross-cultural relates to the differences between two or more cultures or the comparisons between them. Cross-cultural management refers to the study of various management topics in a cross-cultural context including training and learning for work for employees. In cultural anthropology, cross-cultural research, involves systematic comparisons across cultures—comparisons expected to highlight and answer questions about cultural differences (Tran et al., 2017).

Intracultural variation means cultural differences between individuals who belong to the same larger cultural group and who have shared cultural values, beliefs, and norms even if some

individuals or sub-groups choose not to observe some of the dominant beliefs (Schrauf, 2009). On the other hand, intercultural means occurring or comparing between two or more countries. For instance, comparisons of national culture between Canada and China.

Western societies of Europe and America differ from Chinese, Arab, and Russian societies. In this study, it is important to note that although intracultural differences exist within both dominant cultures under analysis, intracultural differences are less compared to intercultural variations observed (Schrauf, 2009). For instance, when comparing national culture and learning in Canada and Morocco, despite the effects of sub-cultures within each dominant culture, the intracultural differences are smaller within each nation compared to the intercultural differences observed between both countries.

2.5.2.2 Culture and globalisation

There are various perspectives to examine the relationship between culture and globalisation. Nowadays, we live in a more fast-paced, complex, and interconnected world seen across global exchanges and interactions resulting from increased international mobility, amplified transfers of goods, services, commodities, and money, all of which significantly improve the living standards of many due to the dynamic forces of globalisation. The process of globalisation affects most individuals and countries of the world in remarkable ways (Yankuzo, 2014). Consequently, cultural consequences of this process are not an exception, in fact, the effects of culture on global interactions have existed long before the Middle Ages, but only given critical attention since the era of mercantilism in the mid-15th century (Wessling, 2009). Globalisation as a term was coined in the early 1980s (Levitt, 1983) and reflected an economic view of international exchanges of trade and finances and technological advances. Across its expansion over the past four decades, globalisation has come to include the spread of culture around the world. This intricate process of globalisation

connects multifaceted exchanges and interactions at intersecting points or nodes with continuous movement flowing on a global scale (Jackson, 2018). Metaphorically, globalisation can be imagined as an intricate operating system of arteries that carry energy to each vital organ (node) of the body. A globalized system consists of many organs; culture is the heart; the core of an individual's existence rests in the heart of one's national culture. Embedded within this internal apparatus, multiple linkages exist, interfaces at the points of interaction (Jackson, 2018). A vital crossroad of these interactions where we can lucidly observe the manifestation of globalisation is with the cultural relations between diverse nations.

At the intersections of these nodes, various individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds make contact and exchange ideas, money, goods, services, and other commodities. People connect through these human exchanges. Therefore, the cultural effects and consequences of the outcomes of these relationships are often contested and misunderstood. Hence, to better grasp the relationship between culture and globalisation, researchers need to understand the most prevalent points of view relied on which inform an understanding of the intricacies behind these very two complex phenomena. Models or paradigms used to provide guidance and direction include the homogenization or convergence perspective, the heterogenization or differentiation view, the hybridization paradigm, the polarization debate, and the cultural imperialistic view.

2.5.2.3 Homogenization view

Globalisation is the Americanization of the world (Liebes, 2003; Ritzer, 2010), a homogenized melting pot that corrodes cultural diversity in the world. This happens because for the process of globalisation to kick start, the latter needs to exert its force for the system to start working. As a result, the mightiest forces in the arena will by nature exert their

proress and diffuse it across the nodes of the entire system from the starting point of a single global and dominant culture (Brown, 1999). Hence, globalisation is not only about interactions and interconnectedness, but according to the homogenization view, it is about influences that promote and advance a dominant monoculture. Reasons why globalisation undermines cultural diversity globally are multiple.

First, transactional businesses that advance a consumer culture and western lifestyle with standardized goods and services are advocates for a homogenized culture. In the literature, this has been referred to as Coca-colonization (Wagnleitner, 2000). National culture is also undermined across 'cultural imperialism' with Western values and ways of doing things advanced as universal norms and traditions. This implies the idea of imposing a dominant culture in general and an American one. Rather than using military force as was the practice during colonial times, cultural imperialism intends to penetrate, control, invade, and undermine other cultures. A global culture conveyed across media, multinational corporations, information technology, foods, films, music, and fashion (Tomlinson, 2006). Cultural imperialism results in weakening cultural identity, eroding traditional national values, and debilitating the pride and dignity of an individual. Globalisation also affects multiculturalism. The McDonalidization theory argues that the dispersion of the fast-food culture secures western organizations and institutions a pathway to advance and move forward Western soft power (Ritzer and Malone, 2000). Lastly, the notion of Americanization with the USA promoting its customs, values, goods, services, and western lifestyles deteriorates national culture.

2.5.2.4 Heterogenization perspective

The points of contention between the processes of cultural differentiation and homogenization impact global interactions (Appadurai et al, 2008). Cultural differentiation,

also referred to as cultural heterogenization argues that the notion of globalisation is not only about the blending or diffusion of American and European lifestyles, values, norms, and traditions. Differentiation holds that despite the forces of globalisation, one's core national culture remains intact and unique; globalisation does not always have to be about cultural standardization and homogenization (Sotshangane, 2002).

2.5.2.5 Hybridization model

Holton (2000) states that a hybrid approach to understanding the cultural effects of globalisation is the most optimal way to grasp the relationship between national culture and globalisation. Although hybridization recognizes that the exchanges and interactions may not be evenly balanced (Crothers, 2013), this model implies that the effects of globalisation are neither unidirectional standardizations of Western norms, cultural values, nor polarized dichotomies of opposing forces (Ozekin and Arioz, 2014). The hybrid paradigm reflects an openness to a two-way process in the exchange of ideas, values, norms, and traditions; a reciprocal process between Eastern and Western cultural exchanges (Pieterse, 2009). This implies the continuous mixing of diverse cultures which will consequently lead to the creation of new, eclectic, and more dynamic cultural flows; thus, shaping the interactions between diverse cultures (Appadurai, 2008).

2.5.2.6 Polarization perspective

The polarization view of culture and globalisation implies that globalisation results in intense cultural conflicts between contradictory forces working at opposing directions (Holton, 2000). In the book *Jihad vs McWorld* (Barber, 1995), the author asserts that globalisation leads to brutal and ferocious collision between 'Jihad' and 'McWorld'. The former a reference to conflict on ethnic, cultural, and religious grounds for the protection of national identity that needs to be defended, whereas McWorld is a homogenization of a world across

the working of MNCs, industries, and information technology. Barber (1995) counterpoises cultural violence and tribalism against cultural imperialism which he terms as McWorld. Thus, cultural relations in diverse global landscapes will inevitably be conflictual because members of each group will seek to eliminate the other (Crothers, 2013).

Similarly, Samuel Huntington (1993), argued that cultural interactions are rooted in conflict as history illustrates with the events of the French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian Revolution of 1917 albeit with the latter, a shift from warfare between nations to ideological conflicts. Since WW1, the shift in frictions have focused on ideologies, hence the source of conflicts in international relations has been about religions and people's cultural identity. However, Huntington on culture held a conservative view and argued in his book *The Clash of Civilisations* (1995) that culture matters referring to it as 'civilizations' that are both durable and remarkably different from one another. In the same line of thought, Edward Said (1995) held that cultural dichotomies exist between Western and non-Western ways of life. Huntington (1995) polarized ideological views about global conflict arguing that the latter rests on cultural identities which he referred to as a 'clash of civilizations' because members of each group seek to defend and expand their own culture (Crothers, 2013).

2.6 Agency, cultural structures, and gender

Agency refers to a person's ability to act freely and make choices that shape everyday life with the intention to affect change (Code, 2020). Agency is an expression of independence from institutions, structures, and cultural forces that may impact a person's ability to think and communicate. Giddens (1979) coined the concept of structuration which argues that there is a relationship between agency (choices) and structure (chances) and refers to individuals as 'knowledgeable agents' with the ability to understand the circumstances and consequences of their actions, thus, exercising free will and making choices. Typically, men exert more

agency than women in workplace contexts due to structural forces (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Structures are factors of influence such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, ability, customs, etc. that limit or determine the choices, decisions, and opportunities available to individuals (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

2.7 Power relations and national culture

Power relations play a significant role in shaping national culture, and the way they impact culture can vary depending on the diverse culture in question. In many cultures, there is a dominant culture that holds more power and influence than others and can impact national culture by setting norms, values, and traditions reflected in various aspects of society such as language, art, and education; on the other hand, marginalised cultures may have less influence on national culture, but they still contribute to it in their own ways (Reisinger & Turner, 2012). They may preserve traditions, languages, and values that are distinct from the dominant culture, and these can enrich national culture (Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada.ca). When dominant cultures attempt to assimilate or impose their values and beliefs on marginalised cultures, it can lead to a loss of diversity and cultural heritage leading to a homogenization of cultural expressions (Berry, 2005). Marginalised cultures may also resist assimilation and assert their identities in many ways such as through art, literature, music, and activism (Sardar, 2015). Resistance can also impact national culture by challenging dominant values and norms and highlighting the richness of diverse cultures (Chua et al., 2015). It is also important to note that power relations can intersect with other social identities, such as race, gender, class, and sexuality (Warner & Shields, 2013). This intersectionality can further complicate the impact of power relations on national culture, leading to complex and diverse cultural expressions.

Power relations in distinct cultures can also have significant impact on national culture and training in many ways. Interactions and associations of power within a culture can shape its national culture (Eroglu & Picak, 2011). For instance, in cultures where power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or groups, that national culture may reflect this hierarchy through symbols, rituals, and traditions. This can lead to a culture that values authority, obedience, and conformity. On the other hand, in cultures where power is more diffuse, the national culture may reflect this through an emphasis on individualism, egalitarianism, and independence. This can lead to a culture that values personal autonomy, creativity, and motivation. Over the years, in Morocco, I have observed hierarchal tendencies with trainees and employees; the latter are cautious of authority, obedient, and ready to conform to the directives of their superiors. Contrariwise, power relations are more dispersed with autonomy and creativity valued from employers in a Canadian training milieu.

Dynamics of power can also affect the training and education systems in a culture. For instance, in cultures where power is centralised and authority figures are highly respected, training programs may emphasize conditioning, memorisation, and obedience to authority. In contrast, in cultures where power is more evenly distributed and individualism is valued, training programs may emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. These programs may encourage learners to question authority and challenge the status quo. Power relations can also impact social mobility within a culture. In cultures where power is concentrated in the hands of a few, social mobility may be limited to those who are already part of the ruling elite. This can lead to a culture of nepotism, favouritism, and cronyism. In contrast, in cultures where power is more diffuse, social mobility may be more open to individuals from diverse backgrounds and social classes.

In sum, power relations in diverse cultures can have a significant impact on national culture, and it is essential to recognize and celebrate the diversity of cultural expressions and the

value they bring to society. Understanding power dynamics in respect to national culture and learning for the workplace is important for designing effective training and learning programs that reflect the values and aspirations of a culture, while also promoting social mobility and equity.

2.8 Summary

In this thesis, the primary study presented in the comparative study relied on a cross-cultural management (CCM) perspective to examine and analyse cultural differences from insights shared on the role of national culture and learning from diverse cultures as Canada and Morocco. The Comparison Index Score Chart (Hofstede, 2018) below charts the index scores for the two-country comparative study sample of Canada and Morocco that was used for the primary analysis. However, although cross-cultural frameworks provide valuable perspectives for analysing and studying cultural differences, it is important to complement a CCM perspective with other points of view to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences of national culture as it confronts diverse complexities. For these reasons, a secondary meta-narrative based on the extant literature and existing critiques delved deeper into various perspectives and approaches that discussed complexities of national culture such as globalisation, gender, power relations, agency, and cultural structures.

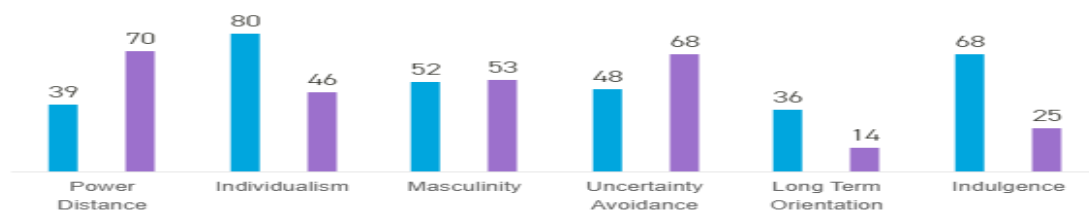


Figure 2: Hofstede's 6-D Model Comparison Chart (2021): **Canada** **Morocco**

Source: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/morocco,the-usa>

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

Chapter 3 Research Design & Methodology

3.1 Introduction

For the comparative study of this research, data was gathered from Canada and Morocco with the aim of exploring and seeking insights into how characteristics of national culture may influence learning for work from a cross-cultural management perspective. The interview protocol was the instrument used to collect data and as the main researcher, I interviewed the participants and conducted a content analysis of the shared insights to identify and describe cultural differences and similarities from a CCM perspective. Upon reflexion of the comparative analysis, questions emerged touching on concepts and complexities of national culture that could affect culture and learning for work. This resulted in a secondary analysis based on the extant literature and existing critiques discussing diverse approaches that investigated national culture and the interplay with other concepts such globalisation, agency and cultural structures, gender, and power dynamics. As cultural variations are complex and multifaceted the meta-analysis provided a deeper and more granular understanding of nuances and cultural differences.

3.2 Main research question and sub-questions of comparative study

Main research question

- ❖ *How do employee learning activities for workplace training vary across national culture in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts?*

Research sub-questions

- ❖ *SQ1: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the PD cultural dimension?*

- ❖ SQ2: *How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the UA cultural dimension?*
- ❖ SQ3: *How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the IND cultural dimension?*
- ❖ SQ4: *How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the MAS cultural dimension?*

3.3 Questions on complexities of national culture and other factors

Sub-questions that arose from the comparative study include:

- ❖ MAQ1: *How can a qualitative analysis include a more nuanced detailed perspective and granularity to address complexities of national culture?*
- ❖ MAQ2: *How does globalisation influence national culture and learning for work?*
- ❖ MAQ3: *How do individuals in diverse cultures use agency to respond to cultural structures and how does agency influence learning activities for work?*
- ❖ MAQ4: *Do both samples reflect gender in employee learning?*
- ❖ MAQ5: *What are the factors that construct agency, change, and development in learning for work? How do advanced cultures affect people's actions in developing countries? How do they manifest in the study?*
- ❖ MAQ6: *How do power relations in diverse cultures impact national culture? What are the implications for learning and training for the workplace?*

3.4 Qualitative research approach

In contrast to the quantitative modes of inquiry, qualitative assumptions are that: reality is socially constructed; the subject matter is a priority; variables are complex, interwoven, and challenging to measure; and the inquiry is emic in nature, that is, from an insider's point of view (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). It is accepted that in quantitative

studies the purpose of a research study touches on generalizability, prediction, and causal explanations, whereas, in qualitative designs, the purpose lies in contextualization, interpretation, and in understanding participant's perspectives (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). The approaches to qualitative inquiry are usually emergent, portrayal, and descriptive; the researcher is the instrument of the study; it is naturalistic; inductive; the inquiry searches for patterns; seeks pluralism and complexity; and provides a rich descriptive write-up of the findings. Contrariwise, quantitative analysis begins with hypotheses and theories; uses formal instruments; is based on experimentation; is deductive by nature; involves component analysis; seeks consensus; reduces data to numeric indices and uses abstract language when reporting on the findings. Lastly, the role of the researcher for quantitative analysis is of a detached and impartial nature and focuses on an objective portrayal of the findings; on the other hand, role of a qualitative researcher is framed around personal involvement and partiality with an empathic understanding of what is happening (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

3.4.1 Critical perspectives of diverse paradigms

In today's ever-changing world, there are many factors such as globalisation, agency, and cultural structures, gender, and power relations that affect how we may define a national culture. International business (IB) and cross-cultural management (CCM) are compelled to conduct advanced analyses mindful of diverse non-cultural factors to make wiser strategic decisions for employees and organizations. (Janssens, Cappellen, and Zanoni, 2006). In this study, Hofstede's (1980) dimensions helped to describe differences of shared insights on learning for work and national culture. However, nowadays, cultural complexities undoubtedly require considerations that extend beyond content-specific views and need us to draw our attention to more context-specific aspects of the phenomenon (Jackson, 2018; 2020). For these reasons, a meta-analysis based on a literature review of cross-cultural studies from a critical postcolonial lens of national culture complements the current research. This

provides a panoramic view of both implicit and explicit underlying subtleties of how non-cultural factors such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power relations may influence national culture (Lykke, 2005; Mulinari, 2005).

3.4.1.1 Nuances in qualitative research

Qualitative analysis is an approach to documenting reality that relies on words and images as the primary data source (Ruane, 2015). The aim is to explore “meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p3).” Questions and procedures emerge rather than being prescribed. Researchers value complexity, nuances, and individual meaning with varied data sources collected from interviews, observations, documents, existing literature, photographs, etc. The researcher must be reflective of their background, culture, and experiences as influential of the research. Interviews and surveys, focus groups, grounded theory, case studies, ethnography, discourse analysis, phenomenology, and participatory action research are all examples of qualitative research. Methods involve collecting and analysing data through various techniques such as interviews, observations, and document analysis.

To include a nuanced and detailed perspective in a qualitative analysis, we need to consider the following. First, use a variety of sources when collecting data to get a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon; secondly, conduct in-depth analysis by examining the data thoroughly identifying patterns, themes, and relationships - avoid generalizing findings, and include insights about the nuances and complexities; third, consider explaining the phenomenon from multiple viewpoints and be conscious of your biases and assumptions as well as consider multiple perspectives to gain a more nuanced understanding of the relationships (Lester et al., 2020). This can involve seeking out diverse participants or points of views or considering alternative explanations based on complexities that may be embedded within your findings. Fourth, provide rich descriptions and use descriptive language to

provide a detailed picture of the phenomena relationships (Lester et al., 2020). Include quotes and examples from participants to illustrate key themes and concepts. Fifth, triangulate findings by using multiple methods or sources to confirm or challenge your findings, this can involve comparing different data sources or triangulating data with other sources of information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In summary, to include a nuanced and detailed perspective in qualitative analysis requires careful attention to the data, an openness to multiple perspectives, and a commitment to providing rich and descriptive accounts of the phenomena being studied. In the following study, participants' insights were meticulously described and analysed to examine the influence of national culture on learning for work. Additionally, a meta-narrative based on the extant literature delved into non-cultural factors to zoom in on underlying subtleties and complexities of national culture and learning.

3.4.1.2 Granularity

Qualitative analysis can include nuances and granularity using various techniques and approaches. Thematic analysis is a way which involves identifying and analysing patterns and themes in qualitative data. It allows for a deep exploration of the data, uncovering nuances and granular details. Interpretive phenomenological analysis is another method that aims to understand the experiences of participants. It involves examining the data closely and identifying the nuances in the participants experiences. Grounded theory analysis involves generating a theory based on the data, allowing for the emergence of themes and patterns. This approach is particularly useful when exploring complex and multifaceted phenomena. Content analysis involves coding and categorizing qualitative data, allowing for the identification of patterns and detailed description of insights. This approach can be used to analyse data and can be particularly useful for identifying subtle nuances. Discourse analysis involves analysing language use and the social context in which it occurs and can help to uncover the subtle nuances in the ways people communicate and understand the world

around them. Overall, incorporating these approaches and techniques can ensure that a qualitative analysis includes nuances and granularity. It requires a deep engagement with the data, an openness to the emergent themes, as well as a willingness to examine that data from multiple perspectives.

In this study, the interpretive phenomenological cross-cultural analysis of the comparative study relied on content analysis which allowed for rich descriptions of shared insights explained across CCM frameworks of national culture, and a meta-narrative based on secondary data delved further into complexities of non-cultural factors such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power relations to achieve more granular and nuanced insights.

Granularity refers to precision and details that is represented in the data and can impact how the data is used affecting accuracy and usefulness of the results (DeNitto, 2022). Granular segmentation means to separate the study participants into various categories based on different variables such as gender, position, age, etc. Segmentation at midpoint yields granular precision; on the other hand, granular targeting aims towards specific aspects of the study (DeNitto, 2022). The concept of granularity is important when defining target participants to meet the objectives of the study. For example, in structuring the interview protocol, the questions were designed to be able to analyse different details related to trainees' learning activities. On the other hand, a lack of granularity could limit the analysis process. Granular levels that are high, allow for a description of verbatim insights shared to be precise, specific, and detailed. Criteria were relied on for the initial selection of the participants to gauge for culturally embedded values and characteristics of their respective countries. This yielded two comparable samples in terms of age, gender, education, and hierarchical position for the study. As a result, the samples are similar regarding every aspect, except their national culture allowing for the monitoring of alternative explanations in comparative studies (Taras et al., 2009). The rationale for targeting adult learners from the

public sector was because private businesses tend to adopt training activities for employees that are based on organizational objectives, requirements for their positions and performance levels, whereas the public sector is subject to factors from the national environment at the country level and thus is more representative of the practices of a given national culture than the private sector (Hassi, 2015). Similarly, public organizations provide more training opportunities to their employees compared to private organizations (Nisar, 2004; Nixon, 2004). Participants for the study were selected from a cohort of employees on professional corporate training for both the Canadian and Moroccan sample. The interviews were conducted in English and only trainees who had taken part in at least five corporate training sessions were selected. Additionally, to control for the cultural background of the participants to reflect the national culture of their respective country, only native interviewees born and raised in their country of origin were selected to participate in the current study. The data collection for this empirical study started with fifteen interviews and continued until no more significant insights emerged. Saturation met at the 21st participant for the Canadian sample, and 25th for the Moroccan.

In coding the data, the latter yields to granular and nuanced insight in a structured and systematic way. In this study, coding was achieved with the process of categorizing, labelling, and organizing the shared insights under headings about learning activities derived from the literature and then analysed for differences in behaviour and cultural values between two diverse samples. In this research, shared insights were organized and categorized in segments to identify learning patterns. Descriptive headings reflecting learning activities guided where each insight best fit; for instance, insights about assessment aligned with the assessment heading and were grouped, analysed, and compared from a cross-cultural perspective under that section. Headings guided the coding process in the primary study with insights described and explained across the lens of national cultural frameworks. The primary

study labelled the categories of the learning process based on existing categories from the literature on adult training in HRD (see Marquardt, 1990), as opposed to an inductive approach which creates categories from emerging data. As a goal of the study was to conduct an exploratory analysis on the influence of national culture on learning activities in diverse settings, deductive coding, using predetermined headings was relied on. Nevertheless, predefined set of categories can blindside a study by overlooking other complexities that may be present in the actual data.

For these reasons, complexities of national culture have been examined in a meta-narrative to cross-analyse for further meanings that may be embedded within the insights or taken for granted in the initial analysis. Based on the extant literature, the secondary analysis delved deeper into studies about influences of national culture and complexities such as globalisation, agency and cultural structures, gender, and power dynamics. This openness to seeking more insight yielded new sub-questions that emerged after the analysis of the comparative study. Categorizing the insights in the primary data helped to standardize the shared insights, limiting bias, and improving reliability and replicability. The meta-narrative introduced various complexities and diverse perspectives to provide for a comprehensive view of influences of national culture on learning practices and other intervening forces. Reflective personal observations have also been shared throughout the study.

3.5 Design and methodology

3.5.1 Country selection

Several scholars (e.g., Tung, Rosalie and Verbeke, 2010) require a degree of cultural distance in comparative studies which is the difference between countries in terms of cultural dimensions and values. Considering these views, Canada and Morocco were selected based on the premise that, from a cultural perspective they are on opposite ends of the spectrum

with regards to many of the cultural dimensions, and as a result could provide a meaningful comparison. From this starting point and based on Hofstede's Cultural Indices, Canada, and Morocco score differently in cultural index scores of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism/collectivism dimensions.

The Moroccan national culture is more risk averse, more collectivistic, and more hierarchical, whereas the Canadian culture is less uncertainty averse, more egalitarian, and more individualistic; nonetheless, both cultures are slightly patriarchal (GLOBE, 2006; Hofstede 1980). In respect to Hall (1976), Morocco is a 'high context' culture with values, norms and traditions interwoven to create a context where subtle messages and meanings are clear and lucid. Contrarily, Canada is defined as a 'low context' culture; one that requires an easy flow of information transfer among individuals at work with little aspects of the exchanges taken for granted.

3.5.2 Participants

Private businesses tend to adopt training activities for employees that are based on organizational objectives, requirements for their positions and performance levels, whereas the public sector is subject to factors from the national environment at the country level and thus is more representative of the practices of a given national culture than the private sector (Hassi, 2015). Similarly, public organizations provide more training and development opportunities to their employees as compared to private organizations (Nisar, 2004; Nixon, 2004) because, among other reasons, of the fragile threat of losing their human resources that they feel compared to private businesses (Méhaut et Perez, 2004).

The data collection for this empirical study started with 15 interviews with learning participants working as public servants in Morocco and Anglophone Canada and continued until there were no more significant insights emerging. In this respect, qualitative researchers

tend to select few participants who can shed light on the phenomenon under study rather than selecting a large sample of participants to generalize as indicated by Leedy and Ormrod (2001); as the authors recommend that the number of participants in qualitative studies range between 5 and 25, the average (15) number of respondents was set as a starting number until saturation was reached.

Participants for the study were selected from a cohort of employees on corporate training delivered in English in Morocco and from trainees on professional development training from English Canada. The interviews were conducted in English as participants had proficiency in the English language in both countries. To make sure that the respondents had the required information and knowledge related to learning activities for workplace training, only trainees who had taken part in at least five corporate training sessions offered by their employers were selected for the study. In addition, to control for the cultural background of the participants in a way to reflect the national culture of their respective country, only native interviewees who were born and grew up in their country of origin were selected to participate in the current study.

These controls aimed at ensuring that the validity of the findings would not be compromised. This is based on the following: 1) the selection of the countries is done in a systematic way (Van de Vijver and Leung, 1997) with the two countries reflective of divergent approaches; and 2); resorting to comparable samples as it is required in comparative and cross-cultural studies (Hofstede, 2001; Usinier, 1998; Van de Vijver et Leung, 1997). In addition, a pilot study was conducted on four participants who had similar characteristics representing both samples. This resulted in insightful feedback regarding the data collection instrument (interview protocol) about the way the questions were phrased and the respondents' understanding of the questions posed.

3.5.2.1 Criteria for selecting participants

The criteria guiding the initial selection of interviewees included: a) professional learners who have taken part in at least five training activities over the course of their professional careers, and b) who were born and raised in the country of study as gauges that they hold culturally embedded values and entrenched characteristics of their respective countries. In brief, two comparable samples in terms of age, gender, education, and hierarchical position were selected. As a result, the samples are similar regarding every aspect, except their national culture; this allows controlling for alternative explanations in comparative studies (Taras et al., 2009); in fact, when the sampling strategy is not probabilistic, resorting to comparable samples constitutes a necessity (Schwartz, 1994).

An array of opinions surfaced in each sample, nonetheless, divergent responses were found in both and have been highlighted to complement participants' direct quotes. The latter will be used to support the results as interpretations of responses are based on consistency, intensity, context, and content of the responses (Krueger, 1988).

3.5.2.2 Access to participants – Referral sampling

Due to access issues and because of the extraordinary circumstances of our times, I was compelled to resort to referral and snowball sampling for the Canadian sample. As a training consultant for many years, I provided extensive corporate training to professionals at various federal and municipal ministries and private sector companies in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Because of the lockdown measures that began mid-March, responses to my initial introduction emails and direct phone contact via the GEDS portal as originally intended received limited responses. As a recourse, I began to contact past trainees and former colleagues to seek participants suitable for the study. Referrals from my professional network proved efficient. I assured confidentiality by providing interviewees the option to initiate

calls via Skype or WhatsApp using a private number code to mask any nominal data that may be transferred. Participants controlled the calls from their end and thus, could withdraw their participation at any given time. At the onset, participants were provided with a description and rationale for the research, informed consent forms, and interview questions by request.

3.6 Data collection procedure: Semi-structured interviews

3.5 Data collection procedure: Semi-structured interviews

This research resorted to the interview technique to gather information about national culture and learning for work from trainees by collecting data through interviews, using open-ended questions to guide the interview, and following up with more specifically targeted questions to explore participants' experiences related to the research topic. For the study, questions about national culture on learning activities guided each question by using Hofstede's cultural dimensions to prompt answers related to the tendencies that participants lean towards in diverse cultural contexts. The goal was to identify and categorize the reactions and meanings that emerged from the interview and to highlight passages that related to what was being examined. For instance, in the present research, the responses related to Hofstede's cultural dimensions that link Marquardt's learning activities would be thoroughly examined and described by highlighting participants' responses to capture occurrences of the phenomenon. The findings from directed content analysis show what emerges from the interviews with exemplars; thus, reporting the descriptive evidence that surfaces. Consequently, Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Marquardt's learning activities mutually frame and guide the reported findings presented under coded themes which were created based on the interview protocol questions. Insights that emerged either presented contradictory views or further refined, extended, and enriched the emergent data. The information gathered during the interviews represents primary material; data collected

directly from the participants as opposed to secondary data or second-hand accounts written by others. Following the findings section, a discussion chapter is devoted to the analysis of the participants' responses by linking what emerged from the interviews to various theories of national culture and the literature on the topic outlined in Chapter 2.

The interview protocol technique suggests that the researcher take concise and detailed handwritten notes, audiotape the interview, or videotape the session during the interview (Creswell, 2014). The interview protocol needs to include the following components: a heading (date, place, interviewer, interviewee); instructions for the interviewer to follow so that standard procedures are used from one interview to another; the questions that ideally begin with an ice-breaker before delving into the sub-questions designed to frame the main issue under study; concluding statements or probes asking participants to explain their ideas in more detail, or to elaborate on what they have said; provide ample space between the questions to record as much of the details of the responses as possible; and the inclusion of a thank-you statement to acknowledge the time the interviewee spent during the interview (Creswell, 2014).

It has been suggested that in many cases an interviewee will be more relaxed when the participant knows that the interview is not being recorded (Gregory, 2015; Rutakumwa et al., 2020). Studies have been conducted using semi-structured interviews outside the workplace with participants more at ease when the interviewer took detailed notes as opposed to recording one's responses (Hickman, 2015). Another equally prominent issue is people's aversion to being recorded (Lee, 2004). Based on insights from informal discussions with colleagues and fellow employees, an aversion to recordings during interviews has been expressed often. Participants will not share as much information as they would if they are being recorded. Some participants are more comfortable with the traditional research practice of taking notes on paper which is an acceptable method of collecting data and should not pose

challenges to the research provided that the interviewer clearly discusses the reasons for this design, the challenges confronted, and lessons learned (Hickman, 2015).

It has also been documented that some participants are reluctant to have their conversations recorded due to confidentiality or because of subtle qualms one may have about discussing issues related to the workplace as stressed by Chong (2008). In Chong's study, detailed notes of the main points were written in complete sentences and were effectively transcribed with notes shown and discussed with the interviewees for accuracy and completion at the end of the interviews. Reviewing, analysing and working with the text right after an interview and immediately being able to make associations after each interview is much more effective rather than waiting for the recorded interview to be transcribed (Gregory, 2015). With studies where there are reservations, discomfort or unwillingness to be recorded due to status or limited access to participants, taking detailed notes is still an advantageous technique when participants trust the interviewer but may not want anyone else hearing what they have shared (Hickman, 2015).

As these scholars, over the years, I have also faced similar issues while collecting data through interviews more than once and a lesson learned from direct research practice is that adding a few minutes at the end of an interview to review what has been written while still lucid in my thoughts and clarifying my notes with the verbatim writings is an effective methodology for collecting and transcribing detailed information from interviewees. When using the traditional note-taking technique, respondents may be provided with the working draft of their answers to review what has been documented; the latter increases accuracy and awareness (Bryman and Cassell, 2006).

In the following study, the target training participants that were interviewed were professionals working for the public service, and hence, to avoid any reluctance, discomfort, or unwillingness to be recorded, recording devices were not introduced. While participants in

the Canadian context may have been more willing to be recorded, based on my familiarity with conducting research in Morocco, most Moroccan professionals would not voluntarily participate in interviews if they were recorded. For consistency and coherence, I relied on the same interviewing technique for both the Moroccan and Canadian samples and took detailed notes of their responses.

When taking thorough notes, as much verbatim as possible should be written down thoroughly without attempts at consolidating information provided during the interview (Bachiochi and Weiner, 2004, p. 167). An important note-taking strategy that was adopted was that of asking respondents to restate what they said, allowing the chance to capture what was expressed in a precise and coherent manner. The skills required for conducting high-quality research interviews and capturing the most important and essential data without having to use a recording machine is an asset (Gregory, 2015).

Detailed notes were carefully and meticulously written down as verbatim responses need to be written down as accurately and precisely as possible. Semi-structured interviews allow for open-ended questions which are rich in details that do not necessarily pose difficulties during the process of writing down the responses but are more of a challenge when analysing and connecting the information with the extant literature (Mathers et al., 2002).

In summary, good qualitative studies based on semi-structured interviews rely on the knowledge, skills, vision, and the integrity of the researcher doing that analysis. (Dingwall et al., 2002). For this research, I felt confident that my experience in academic writing, note-taking skills, knowledge of the subject matter and of both diverse contexts, as well as my innate affinity to upholding ethical and moral standards facilitated the process of collecting informative and descriptive data useful for the research study. The data is available for

storage on Middlesex's One Drive and back-up files are saved on the researcher's personal computer.

3.6.1 Data collection instrument: interview protocol

A qualitative study was conducted by means of semi-structured interviews between March and November 2020 with a total of 46 interviews for the Canadian and Moroccan samples. Interviews lasted between 40-45 minutes and aimed at gathering data about traits of national culture underlying learning activities for work training.

Data collection was about seeking insights on characteristics of national culture behind learning for work training; the learning process was guided by Marquardt's learning activities for employees' framework (1998) which includes: climate setting, planning, needs assessment, training objectives, design, implementation, and evaluation. The interview protocol followed ten judiciously designed questions reflecting the various components of the learning cycle. Questions 1 and 2 inquired about the importance of the climate setting in general; question 3 sought insights about the planning of learning activities; question 4 was about how learning and training needs are assessed for participants; questions 5 and 6 focussed on training objectives; questions 7, 8, and 9 probed about training methods; and the last question inquired about evaluation practices for trainees (see Interview Protocol Questions Appendix 1).

3.6.2 Interviewing technique

Throughout the interview, probing questions were posed as the initial responses provided by the interviewees influenced the natural course of the conversation and directed the path of how the interviews unfolded. Each interview covered the same questions using the same wording and in the same general order to ensure consistency with other participants.

The time of each interview varied slightly to ensure an in-depth and thorough discussion of thoughts and points of view and to obtain optimal input from participants. During the exchange, flexibility was encouraged with the intention to provide study participants the opportunity to share important aspects of their insights.

The interviews were summarized with key points highlighted and aggregated by means of content analysis; common themes were grouped in accordance with the objective of the study and based on references from the literature. The results of each interview were analysed using a qualitative and deductive reasoning approach.

While drafting the findings and reporting what respondents shared, the first review of the data aimed at getting familiar with each interview insight about the approach to using content analysis in both diverse samples. Second, subsequent reviews compared responses across each sample and identified recurring themes related to each interview question rather than reporting an entire exposition of each interviewee's responses. The findings reported on what was revealed based on the thematic headings identified from the interview questions.

3.6.3 Cross-platform messaging and voice over internet protocol interviews

Regarding the Canadian sample, due to the unprecedented global effects of the pandemic, travel to Ottawa to conduct in person interviews as originally planned was not feasible. Consequently, interviews had to be conducted through WhatsApp Messenger via videoconference.

The WhatsApp Messenger cross-platform messaging and Voice over IP (VoIP) service provider was the preferred option for the Canadian sample. Due to the lockdowns in response to the outbreak declared by the World Health Organization on March 11th (WHO, 2020), interviews were scheduled between June and September 2020 online. The service which runs on mobile devices was the preferred method of communication because of the

WhatsApp end-to-end encryption option. The latter is used to ensure that only the user and the other person in the communication can read or listen to the discussion, and nobody in between, not even the service provider. This is assured because the encryption mode highly secures the messages being exchanged on the service provider network with an electronic lock which allows only the recipient and caller to secure the conversation. This procedure is automatic with the VoIP application and hence, there is no need to turn on location site or set up undisclosed chats to secure your messages.

WhatsApp as a preferred method of communication protects participants' confidentiality and privacy. The end-to-end encryption protocol offered with this VoIP service is designed to prevent third parties and even WhatsApp from having plain text access to messages or calls. Even more, if encryption keys from a user's device are ever physically compromised, they cannot be used to go back and decrypt previously transmitted messages (WA White Paper, 2020).

Participants opted to not be recorded during the exchange. Detailed notes were taken and at the end of the discussion I took a few minutes to repeat the noted responses to the interviewees to assure for accuracy of their statements. A copy of the following research study will be sent to participants upon request.

3.6.4 Face to face interviews

As I currently reside in Morocco, interviews for the Moroccan sample were scheduled face-to-face with participants on corporate training in Ifrane between June and early November 2020. I scheduled meetings with interviewees outside working hours at a location of their choice. The interviews were conducted in English, as the target participants had attained postgraduate level studies in English and were fluent in the language. The selected participants for the study communicated their response in English with ease. The rationale for

the comparative study, confidentiality, and privacy issues were discussed with each participant before the interviews; informed consent was provided, and participants were informed that a copy of the research will be available for them upon completion and by request.

3.7 Data analysis technique

3.7.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with the objective to increase the quality of the current research by improving its' credibility, transferability, and dependability (Gudmundsdottir & Brock-Utne, 2010). Although validity and reliability are concepts rooted in quantitative studies, qualitative scholars (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Flick, 2018; Maxwell, 2013) suggest enhancing quality in research by using concepts such as credibility which corresponds to internal validity, transferability for external validity, and dependability for reliability in qualitative research analysis. First, the interview questions ensured that the collected information related to the participants' responses which enhanced credibility. Second, the use of a systemic approach to collect and analyse the responses aided to enhance the dependability of the study. Lastly, the findings linked and compared aspects of national culture from both samples to further inform the research.

A second purpose of pilot studies is to assess for the adequacy, effectiveness, and feasibility of the research instrument (Teijlingen van, & Hundley, 2001). An aim of the current research was to design a well-structured and thought-out data collection tool (e.g., interview protocol) allowing for descriptive responses that could be used to explain the data collected. Moreover, issues may surface during a pilot study while conducting the interviews relating to 'instrumentation rigor' and bias (Chenail, 2011). Hence, a pilot study should be viewed as a crucial part of a research design (Kim, 2010). Lastly, the purpose of a pilot study

is not to substantiate the ways of how to pose questions in an interview without focusing on details (Malmqvist, Hellberg, Möllås, Rose, & Shevlin, 2019); rather, the objective of the pilot should focus on identifying what adjustments may be needed to modify and tweak the interview questions, or fine-tune techniques or approaches that may not elicit pertinent responses or enable the interviewer to attain rich detailed information (Gudmundsdottir et al., 2010; Kim, 2010).

There are two main categories of pilot studies that are common in social science which are mainly either smaller versions of studies, called feasibility studies aimed at the assessment of practicalities of the main study in terms of implementation, utility and required resources, or those intended for the purpose of “pre-testing or trying out of a particular research instrument” (Malmqvist et al., 2019). For this thesis, the second type of pilot study was used and reported on.

A pilot test of the interview protocol was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the questions and to identify any errors in the blueprint of the interview questions. Participants from both countries were solicited to assess the interview questions with the former consisting of professionals working for government agencies, respectively. Four participants were interviewed for the pilot study, of which respondents were senior officials working on diverse projects. The pilot participants were public servants representing both cultural contexts. The pilot interviews took place in early March 2020 after the approval of the MORE ethics application by Middlesex University. The participants had the same characteristics required of those that were recruited for the main study; for instance, respondents were professionals who had participated in various trainings over the span of their careers. The pilot study allowed participants to answer the interview questions and comment on the relevance and clarity of the questions, the way the questions were phrased, the pace of the exchange, and on their comprehension of the questions. Based on their

feedback, most of the questions were understood clearly by the participants. Some insightful suggestions to improve the interview protocol were noted because of the pilot. For example, one participant asked whether the questions referred to a specific training or training in general. Another respondent raised the question about what was meant by learning by doing. These questions led to minor modifications of the interview protocol by adding 'in general' to the questions and adding a definition with examples of learning by doing.

Although I felt at ease taking detailed notes and listening attentively, at times I felt I could have probed more to get the participants to elaborate even further on their initial responses. In efforts to get more in-depth and detailed information from participants, probing questions are recommended throughout the interview (Flick, 2009). Adjustments were made accordingly for the main study.

At times, I also felt reliant on the interview questions and preoccupied with taking up too much of their time. King and Horrocks (2010) suggest the interviewer be more flexible and responsive to their notes instead of being too dependent on the questions. The interview questions were well-paced with enough time to write down their responses verbatim and with adequate pausing between questions. I did find myself repeating the responses to make sure that I had written down all the details precisely. After each question, I also asked the respondents to double-check the notes for accuracy. In sum, the pilot study was insightful and useful as it led to adjusting and clarifying a few of the questions. This allowed for participants to provide more concise responses for the main interviews.

In analysing the pilot responses from both the Canadian and Moroccan respondents, the pilot data illustrated that responses to the interview questions from the Moroccan interviewees were aligned with traits of Marquardt's Approach B framework. The Canadian responses also complemented Marquardt's model highlighting American learning characteristics. Based on the pilot data, the current research was a promising endeavour to

further explore as the pilot has established that the framework and interview protocol questions were a good fit for the following qualitative thesis.

3.7.2 Content analysis and categories

The present study adopted a content analysis with the goal “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wambold, 1992, p.314) and categorizing (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008) where the latter is defined as “the process of noting what is of interest or significance, identifying different segments of the data, and labelling them to organise the information contained in the data” (p. 10). Qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of the language communicated with particular attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Tesch, 1990). Content analysis goes beyond words to examining verbal text data obtained from narrative responses, open-ended questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or print media such as articles or books (Kondracki and Wellman, 2002).

Three approaches to content analysis can be distinguished (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005): 1) the conventional approach which starts with observation of themes or keywords derived from existing data that emerges during the data analysis; 2) directed content analysis is when the research study starts with the use of keywords and themes derived from relevant theory or relevant research findings which are defined before and during the data analysis phase; and, 3) summative content analysis is when keywords or themes are identified before and during data analysis and are derived from the interest of researchers or based on the review of the literature.

Prior research about a phenomenon may exist, nevertheless, directed content analysis would allow a study to benefit from further interpretation and description of what is happening from the participants’ perspectives. The goal of such approach is to extend or validate the

framework or theories the researcher is relying on to explain the insights; moreover, existing theory can aid in framing the research question to allow for predictions about the relationship between the main variables, a feature that helps to deductively determine relationships between them (Mayring, 2000). A directed approach results in a more structured process compared to the conventional approach (Hickey and Kipping, 1996). With the use of existing theory or prior research, key concepts or variables are identified from the onset (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999).

A strength of a directed approach to content analysis is that existing theoretical assumptions may be supported and further extended. Additionally, as research in culture and learning grows, a directed approach makes explicit the reality that researchers are not working from a naive perspective. On the other hand, the directed approach does present challenges in the sense that researchers may approach the data with an informed but resilient bias (Shieh and Shannon, 2005). Another issue that may be confronted is social desirability bias which occurs when participants answer the probed questions, and the respondents may agree with questions just to please the researcher. Also, an overemphasis on the theory can blind the researcher to contextual aspects and cloud one's ability to recognize traits that influence the phenomenon (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). These neutrality-related limitations touching on trustworthiness are parallel to the objectivity assumption (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To achieve unbiased and neutral outcomes, a fellow academic may review and examine the predetermined interview questions drafted on principles of existing theory; this will increase the accuracy and appropriateness of the carefully structured questions (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

A successful content analysis is dependent on how the interview questions are structured and coded in the research process with progression resulting from organizing large quantities of text into much fewer content categories (Weber, 1990). Categories are patterns

or themes that are directly expressed or derived from them through analysis. Next, the relationships between the categories are identified. A coding scheme is a mechanism that categorizes the data collected including the process and rules of data analysis that are systematic, logical, and scientific (Poole and Folger, 1981). Good examination of coded text is central to trustworthiness in research using content analysis (Folger, Hewes, and Poole, 1984). Following an analytical procedure or a scheme will increase trustworthiness or validity of the study. Careful description of the type of approach to content analysis used can provide direction for researchers to strengthen the foundations of the research methodology (Maxwell, 2013).

The steps in analysing the various forms of qualitative data are intended to make sense out of information collected from the interview. It involves segmenting and analysing the information and comprehending what has been collected. This process inherently complements other parts of the research design such as the data collection and the write-up of the findings (Creswell, 2014). Another important feature in the data analysis process is to focus only on the most essential information collected and set other parts aside; focus should be on what surfaces that sheds light on the research propositions (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey, 2012).

Qualitative researchers recommend that despite analytical differences in data analysis, blending the general steps with specific ones may be prudent as the various stages are interrelated. Creswell (2013) suggests that the data analysis steps should begin with: collecting the raw data (transcripts, interviews etc.); organize and prepare the information for analysis; third, thoroughly read through the data collected from your respondents; thematically code or highlight key insights from the responses; then, from the two-pronged route either identify the emerging themes paving the way for grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) or describe the findings (content analysis); next, interrelate the descriptions

linking them to your explanatory factors (e.g. Hofstede's cultural dimensions with other cross-cultural theorists) and dependent variables (Marquardt's comparative learning activities' framework); and finally, interpret the meanings of the themes or descriptions (Creswell, 2014, p.247). At the interpretation phase, a description of how the outcomes may be compared with theories and the general literature on the topic may be discussed.

3.6.3 Saturation

In qualitative research, a few respondents are selected to aid in investigating the research problem under study. In this respect, Leedy and Ormrod (2002) recommend that their number vary between 5 and 25 individuals. Therefore, the pre-set number of participants was initially established at 15 and interviews continued until no new meaningful insights were noted in both samples; saturation was reflected at the 21st participant for the Canadian sample, and 25th for the Moroccan learners.

3.6.4 Credibility, transferability, and dependability

While validity and reliability are associated with the positivistic paradigm, Robson (1993) recommends the use of three specific concepts which he considers appropriate for qualitative research. These include credibility which is equivalent to internal validity, transferability as congruent with external validity and dependability as an equivalent of reliability.

Credibility calls for identifying crucial elements embedded within the research question and precisely and completely describes how they are reflected in the data gathered (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.246). A structured interview protocol guided the exchange between the researcher and the participants for this research study. Asking the same systematic questions to each participant along with a thorough analysis of the interviewees'

responses ensured that the collected data corresponded to the participants' perceptions and views; both principles of the research process designed to establish trustworthiness while contributing to the credibility of the research outcome. Furthermore, the way data is managed and organized contributes to procedural precision and preservation of the quality of the research (Mills & Birks, 2014). This research was conducted in a rigorous and thorough manner.

Transferability is about the applicability of findings from one context to another based on multiple data sources that can be transferred with greater confidence (Guba and Lincoln, 1980). The researcher situates the findings within a theoretical paradigm and tries to understand how they can be applied to other comparable contexts. Data is collected to answer the research question from one or multiple data sources for a better understanding of the phenomenon. Collecting, analysing, peer debriefing and member checking the data from various angles is a triangulated way to heighten a qualitative study's credibility and dependability of the study.

In efforts to further enhance dependability, a researcher puts "aside perceived notions about what the researcher expects to find in the research, and letting the data and the interpretation of it, guide analysis" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.160) and the approach tends to be exploratory. In the following study, the underlining intentions were to develop a rich descriptive analysis, design a conceptual tool that could be useful for researchers, and establish a chain of evidence which would allow to conduct similar research in diverse contexts.

Dependability in qualitative studies refers to the assurance that the research can consistently be repeated under comparable circumstances (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The latter was assured in the study by means of standardizing the interview questions and by following a systematic process of conducting the research. Due to the thoroughness of the

research process, the results propose insightful observations about underlying cultural traits that influence learning at work.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

3.7.1 Researcher Reflexivity

The role of researcher bias and credibility are often contemplated by qualitative researchers as the data is not only about the unit of study but also involves interaction with the researcher. Seasoned researchers mitigate bias by reflecting and acknowledging potential biases and assumptions that may affect the way they conduct their research from the onset beginning with the formulation of the main research question and sub-questions through the conclusions of the study. This process is known as researcher reflexivity.

In qualitative research, reflexivity refers to a researcher's level of active involvement and consciousness in conducting research (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, and Caricativo, 2017), a way of recognising and strengthening self-awareness (Lambert, Jomeen, and McSherry, 2010). In brief, it questions whether the researcher shares the experiences of the study participants, hence, being part of the research process (Berger, 2015) with the researcher together contributing to the creation of the interpretations derived from the data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Thus, reflexivity is about how the researcher, and the participants influence the interpretation of the data.

In recognizing how the principle of reflexivity is a fundamental part of my research, from the beginning of this journey, I have reflected on how my own cultural identity, international experiences, and diverse background have all shaped this research.

Over the past 25 years, I have lived, studied, and worked in diverse cultural places such as Canada, Japan, Italy, Rwanda, and Morocco and have travelled extensively to over

fifty countries across five continents. These lived experiences have and continue to shape and form the fabric of a fascinating cultural mosaic that informs me as an individual, lecturer, and researcher. An advantage of this myriad of experiences is that it leads one to embrace and understand complexities of cultures from diverse perspectives while it heightens awareness of the subtle dynamics relating to their intricacies. This rapport and involvement within various cultures has enriched my academic research by providing a unique deepness that is well-versed, informed, and cognisant of observed realities. Nonetheless, whilst the connections enrich the research, they can also lead to a researcher's conscious and unconscious bias.

Teaching in diverse cultural places undoubtedly has stimulated my interest and motivation to examine employee learning, training, and development from a cultural perspective. Conducting this research with Canadian and Moroccan participants allowed me to delve deeper into two distinct cultures that I am familiar and comfortable to navigate in, as I seek participants' voices and perceptions that reflect a mirrored understanding of learning and national culture. A motivation to study employee learning and culture was to seek deeper knowledge as to how national culture influences learning for work.

To mitigate my own potential bias, several decisions were made. First, to ensure a more profound understanding of the cultural contexts, a comparative and descriptive analysis of the shared insights were situated within the body of existing literature and explained across cultural frameworks, thus, not relying on any of my own firsthand experiences of these cultures. Although familiar with both the Canadian and Moroccan educational contexts, potential researcher bias was minimalized and mitigated throughout the different sections of the thesis.

To avoid any risk of researcher bias, triangulation helps to validate data collected by utilizing different methods such as theory to back up the results and explain the phenomenon

more in depth (Creswell, 2014). In the present study, although different data sets were not used, two different methods of analysis were thoroughly presented under themes derived from the literature with the latter explaining influences of national culture on learning activities based on various cross-cultural views. To maintain some degree of objectivity, the researcher will not involve themselves in the research situation as in action research (McNiff, 2013) but will take an external standpoint without being involved too much in the research context to avoid a bias by being part of the research situation. From the onset, I approached this research study from the stance of an external researcher. My experience in teaching and research facilitated this process. As a researcher, I situated the findings within a theoretical paradigm and attempted to understand how they can be applied to other comparable contexts. Data was collected to answer the research question from one or multiple data sources for a better understanding of the phenomenon. Collecting, analysing, peer debriefing and member checking the data from multiple angles is a triangulated way to heighten a qualitative study's credibility and dependability.

Another potential for bias may occur if only one researcher is responsible for the data collection and analysis as one may look for expected results. The following research alleviated this potential risk by presenting a descriptive account of participants' actual responses, and conducting an analysis based on the literature and the views of notable cross-cultural theorists to explain the influences in learning activities for the workplace, hence the researcher's role in the process was peripheral. Another strategy that was used to reduce potential bias was that at the end of each interview, participants were read back their responses and given the opportunity to provide feedback and clarify word choices in their statements. This enhanced the quality of the research.

A structured interview protocol guided the exchange between the researcher and the participants for this research study. Asking the same systematic questions to each interviewee

and thoroughly analysing their responses ensured that the collected data corresponded to the participants' perceptions and views; both research principles designed to establish trustworthiness while contributing to the credibility of the research outcome. Furthermore, the way data is managed and organized contributes to procedural precision and preservation of the quality of the research (Mills & Birks, 2014). This research was conducted in a rigorous and thorough manner.

Dependability in qualitative studies refers to the assurance that the research can consistently be repeated under comparable circumstances (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The latter was assured in the study by means of standardizing the interview questions and by following a systematic process of conducting the research. Due to the thoroughness of the research process, the results propose insightful observations about underlying cultural traits that influence learning at work.

In efforts to further enhance dependability, a researcher puts "aside perceived notions about what the researcher expects to find in the research, and letting the data and the interpretation of it, guide analysis" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.160) and the approach tends to be exploratory. In the following study, the underlining intentions were to develop a rich descriptive analysis, design a conceptual tool that could be useful for researchers, and establish a chain of evidence which would allow to conduct similar research in diverse contexts.

Learning and culture are the heart of this dissertation, and the research is about participants' perceptions, beliefs, thoughts, and cultural norms expressed consciously and unconsciously. The study describes and explains facets of national culture that may influence learning for work and sheds light on the effects of this phenomena on peoples' learning experiences regarding learning, training, and professional development.

3.7.2 Trustworthiness, confidentiality, and anonymity

Cross-cultural studies require special attention in respect to ethical considerations in qualitative research and is being increasingly recognised as an essential aspect of academic research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). From the onset, it is my personal conviction that as Maxwell (2013) points out, ethical concerns should be involved in every aspect of the research design in any academic undertaking. Ethical considerations should be implicitly embedded within a researcher from the introductory phases of identifying goals and laying out the conceptual framework, across the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process, and right through to the final stages of documenting the findings and drafting the final thesis. Also important is that researchers need to anticipate ethical issues that may arise at each step of the research design (Maxwell, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2016; Creswell, 2013; Lincoln, 2009; Mertens and Ginsberg, 2009; and Salmons, 2015).

Prior to conducting the research there are several types of ethical issues that may arise. For instance, when collecting data from individuals in their environments, researchers need to protect the participants; develop trusting relations with them; promote the integrity of the research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations; and cope with challenging unforeseen problems (Israel and Hay, 2006). It is also important to examine professional ethics standards, seek university approval through an institutional review board, and get permission from participants to conduct the interview (Creswell, 2014, p.132).

For the research under study, an ethics application was submitted to the Middlesex Online Research Ethics (MORE) review committee in October 2019. The research was approved early January 2020. The consent, privacy, and data protection policies in accordance with the MORE (Middlesex University, 2019) ethical standards were prudently abided by and respected. This strategy ensured that in moving forward with the project, the

latter conformed to the highest standards of best practices and principles according to ethical, legal and the professional obligations as set out by Middlesex University.

At the onset of a research undertaking, ethical issues may relate to identifying a research problem or issue that benefits participants; disclosing the purpose of the study; pressuring participants; respecting societal norms; and being sensitive to the needs of the participants (Lincoln, 2009; Mertens and Ginsberg, 2009; and Salmons 2010). Scholars also contend that ways of addressing these issues are by relying on informal conversations with participants about the requirements and benefits, by informing them about the purpose of the study, by respecting cultural, religious, gender and other differences, and by obtaining appropriate consent to take part in the research when required (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln, 2009; and Salmons 2015).

The participants in the study were initially approached via email requesting their participation in the study, however, due to the global pandemic and a global shutdown, I had to resort to referrals from colleagues and former trainees to reach target participants for the research. Trainees approached for the study received clear explanations about the purpose of the study and how their responses would inform the doctoral research. Participation and identity disclosure were voluntary, and a consent form was required from the interviewees (see Appendix 2).

During the data collection phase, ethical contemplations that may arise concern participants feeling unequally or unfairly treated; power imbalances and exploitation issues; participants being deceived; and collecting harmful information (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln, 2009; and Salmons 2015). Suggestions for managing these issues consist of building trust, avoiding leading questions; veiling personal ideas and thoughts; avoiding sensitive discussions, and involving participants as collaborators by following the questions stated in the interview protocol (Creswell, 2014, p.133).

The interviews were conducted in an upmost professional manner and began with a brief informal icebreaker in a comfortable and relaxed academic setting for the Moroccan sample and online via WhatsApp videoconference with the Canadian respondents. I followed the interview protocol questions and continued probing with focused follow-up questions related to the prompted questions in efforts not to go off on tangents and to respect the time the interviewees were giving me to participate in the study.

Ethical concerns that may develop when analysing the data may be with cases of researchers siding with participants and in respecting the privacy and anonymity of participants. A strategy to overcome these concerns is by reporting multiple perspectives, by including contrary findings, and by assigning pseudo names to participants (Creswell, 2014; Mertens and Ginsberg, 2009). In this research, various trainee viewpoints were presented without the use of nominal data to compare the findings from the Canadian and Moroccan context.

In addressing ethical concerns when reporting and documenting findings, scholars (Maxwell, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Mertens and Ginsberg, 2009; and Salmons 2015) point out the importance to avoid falsifying information, findings, and conclusions; avoid plagiarizing and disclosing information that may harm participants; communicate in clear and appropriate language; keep a record of all the notes, details of procedures etc.; provide proof of compliance with ethical issues if requested; and state who the data from the study belongs to. In addressing such vital issues, researchers should: provide an honest account of the findings (APA, 2010); use unbiased language appropriate for audiences of the research; provide copies of the research to the participants; share results with other researchers; consider publishing in different languages; refrain from using the material for multiple publications; disclose who is funding the research; and, credit the ownership to the researcher, participants, and advisors (Maxwell, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Mertens and Ginsberg, 2009; and Salmons 2015).

In good faith, it has always been my intention to report the findings of the study in a sincere, candid, and straightforward manner. When conducting research, I am instinctively sensitive to the language used during the interview. The learning participants for this study were trainees employed as public servants for both samples. Training participants were proficient in English and all the interviews were conducted in the English language. Moroccan participants were given the option to use French and express themselves in French if they wanted to; nonetheless, they all chose to be interviewed in English.

In conclusion, for this research project, safeguards employed to protect the rights of the participants included: a) the research objectives including a description of how the data would be used was articulated verbally and in writing so that they were clearly understood by the participants, b) participants were informed of all data collection procedures, c) verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports are available to the participants upon request, d) the rights, interests and wishes of participants were considered first when choices were made regarding reporting the data, and e) the final decision regarding their anonymity was given to the participant (Creswell, 2014).

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

Chapter 4 Learning across national culture

4.1 Introduction

This comparative qualitative study focused on a descriptive content analysis of participants' responses to questions that aimed at exploring influences of national culture at various stages of the learning process in Canada and Morocco. The findings in the Canadian sample illustrated that employee learning activities are aligned with a decentralized, flexible, individualistic, and an outcome-based learning approach. In contrast, the Moroccan sample revealed that learning practices of professionals are aligned with a learning style that is more centralized, rigid, collectivistic, and less outcome based. In the following chapter, section 4.2 will present comparative insights shared from Canadian and Moroccan participants under themes stemming from Marquardt's comparative learning framework (1990). Insights were then bridged to scholarly work highlighted in the literature as discussed in chapter 2. Section 4.3 delves further into the analysis to explain the findings by highlighting how national culture influences learning. The latter provides reasons for the contrasting differences that were revealed in both contexts. In doing so, I relied on cross-cultural management experts and other thinkers' (Hofstede, 1980; 2001; Trompenaars, 1998; House et al., 2004) views on the role national culture plays in learning for the workplace. The sub-questions, designed for the purpose to explain national cultural influences in learning for work were answered in this section. Lastly, the research propositions were verified and discussed under section 4.2. Before we examine the comparative insights of this study, it is important to recap the main research question, sub-questions, research propositions, and outcomes of the research study.

After the initial analysis of the comparative study, questions arose regarding complexities of national culture and non-cultural factors that may have underlying effects on the outcome of the study. Consequently, a meta-analysis was conducted based on an examination of existing

critiques in the extant literature focusing on concepts such as globalisation, agency and cultural structures, gender, and power dynamics. The meta-narrative helped to answer the meta-analysis questions (MAQ1-MAQ6) and further informed the study.

Comparative study main research question

- ❖ *How do employee learning activities for workplace training vary across national culture in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts?*

Comparative study research sub-questions

- *SQ1: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the PD cultural dimension?*
- *SQ2: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the UA cultural dimension?*
- *SQ3: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the IND cultural dimension?*
- *SQ4: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the MAS cultural dimension?*

Research propositions and outcomes of the comparative study:

- RP1: In the Moroccan context, which is a high PD culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low PD culture, the process is more decentralized. In this study RP1 is established.
- RP2: In the Moroccan context, which is a high UA culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is more rigid, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low UA culture, the process is less rigid. RP2 is established.
- RP3: In the Moroccan context, which is a collectivistic culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centred on the group of training participants,

whereas in the Canadian context, which is an individualistic culture, the process is centred on the individual learner. RP3 is established.

- RP4: In both the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, which are slightly patriarchal cultures, the overall approach to employee learning activities is outcome-based. The findings indicate that RP4 is partially established. The Canadian sample (MAS: 52) showed that training-activities, as described by the respondents are outcome-based as it should be in a fully-fledged masculine culture. On the other hand, the Moroccan sample (MAS: 53) illustrated that training-activities were not outcome-based.

4.2 Learning activities: Comparative insights and complexities of culture

4.2.1 Climate setting

The first theme compared in the samples is about the importance of the setting for professionals on work-related training. Canadian responses revealed that setting matters for learners to acquire knowledge while on training. Learning spaces where the program delivery occurs is effective for professional trainees. On the other hand, the Moroccan sample showed that trainees consider the setting a minor aspect of their learning experience.

Climate setting considers environmental, interpersonal, and organizational aspects of the learning environment in an informal and relaxed learning space; the latter elements are deemed relevant in the American approach to adult training (Marquardt, 1990). The Canadian sample illustrated that learning environments matter and preferences for the delivery of training lean towards professional milieus such as offices, conference rooms, or university classrooms; for instance, participant C1 stated that:

“Setting matters a lot. I need to feel that I am in a professional setting with flipcharts, boards, projectors, visuals etc. to process current information. I, personally prefer the conference room at work when taking an on-site course or following a seminar remotely online. I also prefer situations where we are not too many employees.”

Several respondents referred to the importance and need for the physical space for their learning in general, regardless of delivery mode; for example, interviewee C12 mentioned that setting was:

“Very important whether face-to-face or online. I was part of the Authority Delegation Training (ADT) online program and felt comfortable with the modules delivered virtually; the online class was similar as the on-campus one with the same equipment and a similar setting.”

Participant C18 added: *“It’s important for me; I internalize more material when an instructor is physically present in the classroom, however, my recent classes have been through the GC Campus platform.”* Similarly, interviewee C21 indicated that it was: *“Really important for me, I need to feel that I am in a proper workshop or seminar for learning to occur.”* Quite a few respondents commented on the preference for the learning to take place in the office or conference room. To illustrate this, research participant C6 mentioned that:

“I prefer my office, no classrooms, or boardrooms. Individual training seminars now have on-site options for us at our offices. These for me are the most time efficient options. [Can you think of specific examples from personal experience?] Training seminars related to the latest software programs are best done at my office using my own laptop. I have also taken foreign language training courses one-on-one at the office and in a classroom. The ones at my office are more relaxed and when a trainer is good, they are very efficient.”

Along a similar idea, interviewee C10 said that *“Conference rooms with a flipchart and board on-site at the office are preferable; I do not want a classroom college setting nor to deal with the inconvenience of having to get to another location. I like to fit my training in between time slots and my tasks at work.”*

In contrast to the Canadian responses, most learners in the Moroccan sample indicated that climate setting regarding physical space or location is less important than the content material discussed in seminars, courses, or workshops as summarised by interviewee M1: *“The setting where the training takes place is not important as long as it enables communication and interactions among learners and with instructors especially for training events.”* Respondent M10 also mentioned: *“Personally, I believe that setting is not very*

important while on training as long as it enables the trainee to feel comfortable with the trainer". Interviewee M19 specified that, *"There's no problem where we train, the most important is that all the components should be present - material, tables etc.* The content material discussed in training is more important than the actual physical aspects of climate for setting. This was affirmed in the following statement by participant M3: *"I think it is not very important how the setting is done, in my opinion, as long as we have a place to discuss the material that helps us to see each other and interact more easily, it's good."*

Respondents' preference for a learning space that was professional was revealed by multiple interviewees in the Moroccan context, for instance, interviewee M11 mentioned that *"Although I personally don't think the setting really matters, I believe that training that takes place in a classroom offers a laid-back environment, while those in the office makes you more focus and feels like more responsibility, especially for entry level employees."* Similarly, M7 stated: *"We can use PPT, videos and it needs to be a professional place for learning."* Furthermore, interviewee M22 claimed that *"The area of training is supposed to be one of the first professional settings that I set foot at, so, it is very important for it to be represented in a manner befitting professionally."* Participant M13 revealed that setting was *"Not very important, but it gives you the first impression of how the seminar will be."* Hence, although the place or location per se is less important, wherever the learning is taking place, there is an expectation that what unfolds in the exchange is professional.

The literature on the importance of the setting indicates that mature learners acquire knowledge and learn if the climate promotes learning (Knowles, 1984). In the international arena, workplace learning milieus and the required needs for a conducive learning climate cannot be fully recognized without exploring the cultural viewpoints that are associated with the setting where learning takes place (Felstead et al., 2009). For instance, systematic variations found in the way in which classrooms function in diverse parts of the world have

been connected to cultural differences (Charlesworth, 2008). Thus, an increasing necessity for reflection of cultural influence in learning (Merriam et al., 2007).

In developed regions of the world, a conducive learning environment requires well-balanced and harmonious arrangements between learners and instructors from the onset of the learning process (Marquardt, 1990); important aspects that are often considered before any learning session include the environmental, interpersonal, and organizational features of where the learning takes place. On the other hand, the latter may be less important in regions where traditional classroom settings are the norm and formal relations between instructor and learner are customary (Marquardt, 1990).

Contingent on the degree of uncertainty avoidance, learners may display a varying level of anxiety about the self-restrained learning environment. In resilient UA cultures, more explicit and clear guidelines may be necessary for the learning activities, while more self-sufficiency is conventional and, in some cases, even requested in low UA cultures (Kim and McLean, 2014).

The research findings of the current study illustrate that climate setting in the Canadian sample are important and aligned with Nordic cultures, whereas, in the Moroccan sample the setting of where a training unfolds is less important.

4.2.2 The instructor-trainee rapport

Another sub-category related to climate setting is the relationship between the two main stakeholders in the learning process: the instructor and the learner. Participants in the Canadian sample described the rapport as a two-way joint effort, collaborative, and overall balanced. Contrariwise, respondents in the Moroccan sample highlighted a professional and formal relationship with trainers. Training experts are perceived as leads throughout the

learning process with participants on training there to learn from experts or specialists delivering training.

When asked about the instructor-learner relationship concerning learning activities for work-related purposes, Canadian participants described the nature of the relationship as balanced, unrestricted, collegial, and collaborative. The notion of egalitarian emerged in interviewer C1's comments:

“With professional training related to work, the relationship between instructor and participants is very egalitarian, not top-down like we experienced in university. It is similar to the relationship we had with profs during our graduate where we work together on what needs to be done to meet the objectives.”

Several respondents mentioned the collaborative facet of their connection; the latter are exemplified in participant C3's statement: *“Collaborative, we senior managers have to get subject area experts come to the office and we fit in the sessions between meetings.”*

Participant C11 also mentioned that the relationship was *“Collaborative as we experienced at the university; more collegial and less formal; it's very good.”* Furthermore, respondent C7 revealed insights into the rapport:

“For managers, it tends to be collaborative with coaches or instructors combining both formal and informal aspects of learning; non-formal in the sense that participants also guide the learning objectives, the learning time and the support we need.”

Research interviewee C5 emphasized on collaborating with their trainer when they stated that *“In that PM course, the instructor was really experienced (over 25+ years of experience), so he lectured when explaining the theories, but for the practice exercises he worked collaboratively with all of us on our projects.* The two-way nature of the relationship between instructors and learners is discernible in the responses noted in the Canadian sample. Another insightful aspect that emerged from question two was about the role of the instructor. Canadian participants termed them as facilitators, learning guides, experts, specialists, coaches, consultants, service providers, and mentioned a colleague-like rapport. Several

remarks of ‘facilitator’ were noted in several responses; for instance, participant C2 stated “*I need to discuss matters openly with trainers or instructors; they are facilitators who guide what is being taught and need to make sure we are focused on what we need to improve for work*”. Interviewee C10 commented that “*With those I have attended, the instructor is more of a facilitator not like a teacher who is accustomed to speaking to their students.*” Participant C21 also revealed that the relationship is: “*Facilitator style – instructor or consultant shares knowledge about a subject area and we participate, and exchange ideas and our thoughts openly.*” Respondent C4 referred to professional development trainers as subject-area experts and coaches that guide the learning process:

“In the PSC training, instructors are or have been subject-area experts and they are more like professional coaches that provide us with the tools necessary to meet objectives. They guide the learning, but we execute the tasks by doing all the work. They provide feedback which is often helpful.”

The coach rapport was also mentioned by interviewee C8 when they quoted that: “*Coach-like rapport for the Management Trainee and LD programs. Equal exchanges as opposed traditional top-down approaches.*” C14 also pointed out that “*I prefer a coach; they focus on the target and on our competency skills and help us develop them to attain success.*” Research participant C16 considered the training coach as a specialist: “*We had coaches who were specialists in procurement and material management. They explained ways to plan, monitor, and manage activities throughout the phases of the procurement process.*”

Lastly, Canadian respondents characterized the relationship between the instructor and learning participant as egalitarian, direct, and practical. Participant C17 summarized it as: “*For the MDP, it was collaborative, very hands-on and team oriented.*” Interviewee C13 mentioned the relation was based on interactive exchanges: “*For the SDP, it was very interactive; we worked in small groups; instructors at the CSPS guide and facilitate the*

learning; it's very collaborative.” Respondent C12 affirmed that *“participants actively ask questions; interactive discussions are encouraged.”*

The trainer-trainee relationship in the Canadian sample illustrated a more egalitarian rapport between the two main stakeholders. The Moroccan sample, however, shows the need for a formal relationship between the instructor and the learner in the workplace is important; the latter was highlighted when Moroccan interviewee M10 said that *“Personally, I believe that setting is not very important while on training as long as it enables the trainee to feel comfortable with the trainer.”* In the same line of thought, respondent M25 quoted, *“What is important is having a friendly and positive training environment with all the participants and keep them motivated to take part in the discussions about the subjects.”* Concerning the instructor-participant role regarding employee learning activities for work, Moroccan respondents emphasised the requisite for a professional and formal relationship. They referred to the need for friendship with limits. This was illustrated in the reaction of respondent M1: *“There is a case where we trainees dealt with two different instructors. One who we had a sort of friendship with limits of course and the other who kept strict limits; both learning was with positive outcomes, but I personally prefer the formal relationships.”* Participant M3 mentioned that *“It's important to keep the formal relationship because for me it's a sign of respect for both sides.”* The need for formalities was also cited by interviewee M6: *“The relationship with the instructor should be both formal and informal to feel free in the classroom and learn the way you feel most comfortable and at the same time it needs to have formalities.”* Additionally, respondent M10 added that *“The relationship was very formal and within the framework of a training.”* Also, interviewee M17 stated that *“The relationship between the instructor and the learner is very formal and professional based on mutual respect and for one objective which is learning.”* Respondent M20 interestingly

claimed that a little informality was fine, when they stated that *“it is okay to have some informalities, but not too much”*.

Regarding their actual role in the learning process, several participants indicated that when delivering seminars or workshops, the program delivery should be based on an instructor-led approach. This was illustrated in interviewee M2’s response: *“I prefer instructor-led lessons to the extent of possible adjustments if it is not suitable to everyone because in my opinion, instructors know how and what should be covered in the training.”* Along similar lines, participant M21 specified that trainers should lead the sessions, *“Good relations are good so participants feel comfortable to express their ideas freely, but the professional must be the leader of the class. They are the experts we need to help us.”* Another mentioned the supervisory nature of the relationship illustrated when participant M22 stated that *“Based on my personal experience, the instructor was like a supervisor, and most of what he had taught us was something that he had previously mastered throughout his career; he also had done a good job of showing us leadership and integrity.”*

Lastly, there was a reference to the need for mentorship where a more knowledgeable and experienced person helps to guide learners not versed in that area of study. This was illustrated by interviewee M24 when citing that *“The relationship is based on mentoring and learning surrounded by respect and trust.”*

In the literature that relates to the instructor-trainee rapport, Scandinavian societies are characterized as egalitarian; they value low PD, directness, consensus in decision making, and promote gender equity (Warner-Søderholm, 2012). In these Nordic cultural surroundings, there is a tendency to restrict inequalities, and trainees are expected to engage and share ideas to learn from peers. Similarly, the Canadian sample showed an alignment with Nordic cultural backgrounds as respondents revealed that the trainer-trainee relationship is collaborative, egalitarian, and a two-way exchange. In contrast, in hierarchical cultures,

training participants expect to acquire knowledge from the experts (Weech, 2001). Along similar thoughts, Roberts, and Tuleja (2008) investigated participation of training participants and found that the inclination in Eastern cultures is that trainees listen respectfully to their trainers. The Moroccan sample illustrated similar leanings in this regard as respondents confirmed that their acquisition of knowledge comes from what is shared, transmitted, and transferred by their trainers.

A two-way reciprocal communication rapport in low PD cultures such as Canada, USA, UK, and Nordic countries, has been found between service training providers, trainees, and fellow training participants; the latter are also stimulated and encouraged to actively participate in the planning of their own training activities (Hassi, 2012). Contrariwise, in high PD cultures as Morocco and Malaysia, wisdom resides with the expertise of seniors. The Malayan approach to planning is based on the presumption of “with age, comes wisdom” (Kamis et al., 2006) indicating that decision-making is the sole responsibility of the experienced and more informed seniors who possess an awareness based on lived experiences. These knowledgeable individuals hold embedded and profound understanding and knowledge of the inner workings of professional workplace practices. Contrary to the Canadian insights, Moroccan responses in the study also showed that decisions about employee training are made by senior members within their departments or units.

When highlighting the informal and formal nature of the interpersonal setting between the instructor and trainee, in hierarchical cultures, individual learners expect to acquire knowledge from professional experts (Weech, 2001); while, in more egalitarian cultures, which tend to curtail inequalities, as seen in Scandinavian countries, learners are supposed to exchange ideas and actively learn from each other. Also, Roberts and Tuleja (2008) concluded that classroom participation in Eastern cultures requires that learners listen to show respect to the instructor. Similarly, the findings illustrate that Moroccan learners expect a

professional and formal rapport with their trainers and the relationship is more top-down. Similarly, empirical evidence (see Forster and Fenwick, 2015) shows that patriarchal and authoritarian leadership styles are expected by subordinates within the Moroccan workplace. On the other hand, Canadian respondents revealed that formalities are not customary practice, and the relationships are more egalitarian and reciprocally balanced. Thus, the findings further inform the extant literature about practices from the Canadian and Moroccan contexts.

4.2.2.1 Globalisation and climate setting

In training for work, climate setting is a vital initial step for trainees as it includes environmental, interpersonal, and organizational climate factors (Rothwell, 2020). Aspects of the latter were illustrated in both samples of the current cross-cultural comparative study. Globalisation influences the setting of where trainees learn in many ways bringing to light both opportunities and challenges to the climate setting of training activities (Zajda, 2021). Over the years, I have observed training participants from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds even within a country's national borders affecting the setting of a training by requiring a more culturally sensitive and inclusive approach from the onset to ensure that trainees feel valued and are at ease with the program or modules. In developing countries, globalisation constraints often stem from limited resources, infrastructure, and access to advanced technologies. Also, language differences may pose challenges. On the other hand, advanced industrial countries tend to have more robust infrastructure, technological capabilities, and established professional learning programs. Globalisation constraints for them may involve adapting to diverse workplaces and navigating complex international regulations. This was illustrated with the various learning programs that were available on the internal campus platform of the PSC for the Canadian respondents compared to the Moroccan participants who were sent on specific custom-tailored training based on workplace

requirements which were decided by their managers. As the participants selected for this study were all public servants, financial resources were not limited for both sets of participants; training fees for Moroccan respondents were incurred by their employers while costs for the Canadian respondents were part of their annual CPD Learning Plan – a plan that allows public servants to enrol in seminars, courses, and programs with fees up to \$1500 per year as part of their professional development activities. Additionally, seminars for the workplace were conducted in a state-of-the-art facility with the latest advanced technologies for both the Canadian and Moroccan participants. Language barriers were not an issue as target participants were fluent in English.

With technological advances, globalisation has led to online training activities being available as part of remote or virtual program offerings. Participants connecting from diverse national regions or various parts of the world impact the climate setting phase of a program as trainers and stakeholders need to take into consideration accommodating trainees from various time zones. In this study, technological advances were evident with the Canadian sample, for instance, trainees explained that they had the option to take f2f or online courses. In contrast, this was not the case in the Moroccan sample, trainees were pre-selected by their direct supervisors for f2f training and participants in this study mentioned they did not have access to online training options.

Globalisation impacts the quality and availability of the technological infrastructure available. For instance, in some regions, trainees may have limited access to technology which impacts virtual sessions. In this comparative analysis, although the Moroccan trainees that participated in the study had access to technology, they were attending f2f corporate training seminars; virtual courses were not offered as an option. On the other hand, many participants in the Canadian sample explained that both f2f and online options were available to them when registering in training for work courses, seminars, or university programs.

Also, cross-cultural collaborations influence climate setting as participants learn to work in diverse teams in virtual breakout rooms. This study also highlighted that cultural differences in expectations, communication styles, and training participants' norms and values can all influence the climate setting of a training (Yaghi & Bates, 2020). As a trainer, I have observed that cultural sensitivity helps to create a learning environment that embraces and respects differences. Language barriers in a globalized setting require consideration. Training materials need to be custom-designed and adapted to include multilingual transliterations and translations. Additionally, by considering broader matters such as climate change, economic disparities, and social justice, training participants are connected to current global issues. The latter are often discussed in training sessions, tapping into the environmental, interpersonal, and organizational climate from a globalized perspective. The climate setting of a training activity can be influenced by globalisation in both developed and developing countries in many ways. For these reasons, training stakeholders need to be cognizant of these influential global forces to understand differences in terms of cultural values and norms (Azevedo & Shane, 2019) and to better adapt training approaches that contribute to productive, effective, and positive learning environments.

4.2.2.2 Agency and climate setting

A participants' agency can influence the climate setting of a workshop or training program. Individual agency plays a role in how trainees from diverse cultural backgrounds engage with and adapt to the training context. Cultural values and norms shape the way learning participants from diverse cultural backgrounds perceive and interact with a training environment (Canning et al., 2020). For instance, as seen in this study, cultures may prioritize harmony and conformity within their group while more individualistic cultures may encourage individual expression, critical thinking, and questioning ideas. In my experience

when dealing with such issues, trainer awareness of sensitive cultural subtleties helps to foster an inclusive atmosphere based on respect and understanding. Another point to consider regarding the influence of participant's agency on climate setting is individual choices. Learners bring their own attitudes, behaviours, and preferences to the training environment from the onset. Participants' choices concerning willingness to engage, participate, and learn from a training can be influenced by their personal values and beliefs with the latter often shaped by how learners choose to exercise their free will (Manyukhina & Wyse, 2019). For example, if participation in a training or workshop is voluntary, individuals can exercise their agency to decide whether to attend or not. This choice directly affects the group composition which subsequently impacts the social aspects of the climate setting. A participant's engagement can also influence the general learning mood. At the beginning of a training, trainees can choose the extent they want to engage with the material and activities. Their level of participation and enthusiasm can impact the climate atmosphere. From my trainers' perspective, trainers and instructors can exercise their agency to acquire cultural competence which enables them to better adapt and understand the diverse needs of trainees. Consequently, trainers and learning participants possess the free will to shape their interactions and experiences within a learning setting albeit the forces of cultural factors. Based on my teaching experience, it has been vital to foster a culturally aware and inclusive learning environment that allows trainees from diverse cultural contexts to exercise their agency in a manner that enhances their learning and professional development. While learning participants have the potential to influence the training climate through their agency, it is important to take into consideration that external factors and the training design may also play vital roles in shaping the climate setting of a training program, workshop, or module (Oliveira et al, 2021).

In developing countries agency constraints in workplace training from the initial stage of climate setting may include factors such as limited government support, regulatory frameworks, and oversight. Advanced industrial countries as Canada typically have more developed agencies and regulatory bodies that actively shape and monitor training standards. In this study, the PSC provided Canadian learning participants with a robust CPD learning infrastructure guided by regulatory frameworks with high training standards. On the other hand, developing countries may face challenges in coordinating and enforcing effective training programs due to weaker institutional frameworks. Advanced countries often benefit from more established systems that facilitate effective training management and implementation of workplace training

4.2.2.3 Gender roles and climate setting

Gender norms, access to training, perceptions of competence, communication styles, leadership opportunities, and inclusive practices are issues that can influence the climate setting for a training impacted by gender roles. Cultural norms, behaviours, and expectations of people at work can influence how women are treated in employee training (Kroese, 2022). For instance, in some cultures there may be traditional gender roles that guide certain behaviours and responsibilities, which may impact how trainees participate or are perceived during a training. In both samples of this study, when targeting training participants, I carefully approached and selected from a balanced pool of adults who were on corporate training to participate in the current research. During the probing, I focused on the research questions of the study and did not delve into questions about how they were selected for the corporate training they were on. A content analysis of the shared insights indicated that they were selected by their supervisors to meet requirements for work-related projects. However, in my experience working in Morocco, I have observed that some colleagues are selected for

external training based on criteria set by their supervisors. Often times, employees are not aware of the criteria. Internal training workshops are offered to faculty, but external training opportunities are limited, especially for women. For instance, over the past decade teaching in Morocco, I have self-financed all my external professional development activities, whereas as back in Canada, as a faculty, I had both internal and external opportunities with greater access to formalized training programs.

If trainers or trainees hold traditional gender biases, the latter can influence the way they perceive and interact with participants of different genders. This bias may lead to unequal expectations throughout an entire training course. Gender disparities in access to training opportunities can be influenced by cultural norms (Jayachandran, 2021). In some cultures, there may be a preference for investing in the education of one gender over the other, which results in unequal access to training programs. Thus, gender roles may limit access to resources or opportunities necessary for a training, such as financial support, access to IT or time release for the training. In the following study, although patriarchal structures may still exist in the Canadian context, they are less overt or institutionalised. In my experience, gender stereotypes persist in both cultural contexts but in the Canadian context, gender stereotypes are often challenged through legal frameworks and cultural shifts, for example, women's participation in the workplace is much higher than in the Moroccan workplace context. Nevertheless, women still face discrimination in leadership roles and unequal pay. To illustrate, we have some of our Moroccan colleagues that have a market value double that of a foreign woman faculty with a more compelling educational profile and extensive teaching experience. Work life balance policies and parental leave provisions are more advanced in developing countries, though disparities in caregiving responsibilities still exist.

Cultural stereotypes about gender roles can impact how trainees and trainers perceive the competence of learning participants (Kroese, 2022). To illustrate, in some cultures there may

be stereotypes that link certain skills and competencies with a particular gender, which can result in biases in evaluating trainees. Gender roles and stereotypes can shape expectations about certain skills and behaviours. For instance, if leadership is associated with masculinity, training participants that are women may face challenges in leadership training. Cultural gender norms may influence who is perceived to be a more suitable and appropriate leader in a training group. I have observed that in developing cultural contexts, men are more likely viewed as leaders, while women face barriers to assuming leadership roles. Cultural differences in communication styles based on gender influence how learners interact in various settings (Allen, 2023). Some cultures may have specific expectations about how adults ought to communicate which can influence individual participation and overall effectiveness in training for work. In my view as a trainer, cultural awareness and sensitivity towards inclusion and representation are essential to better grasp the importance of gender roles in employee learning and training. The gender composition of trainers and trainees can impact the climate training setting from the onset. Lack of diversity in gender representation may make some trainees feel less comfortable, less included, and less valued as learners. The training content may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes based on gender roles (Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020). For example, if a training program focuses on gendered topics or uses a linguistic narrative that perpetuates stereotypes, both the climate setting and the overall learning experience can be affected. Gender roles can also interact with other aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, leading to complex dynamics in the training atmosphere.

In developing countries, patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched in social, economic, and political structures. Women often have limited access to training and economic opportunities, which affects their participation in the workforce. Traditional gender roles dictate women's primary responsibilities as caregivers and homemakers, limiting their engagement in formal

employment. Legal protections against gender discrimination may be weak or inadequately enforced, perpetuating inequalities in the workplace. In both developed and developing countries, addressing gender disparities in workplace training and challenging patriarchal norms are essential for promoting gender equality and fostering inclusive work environments. However, the strategies and approaches may vary based on the socio-economic and cultural contexts of each country.

4.2.2.4 Power dynamics and climate setting

Creating equitable and inclusive training environments that promote learning and professional development for trainees regardless of their status or position within a group or organization requires an understanding of power dynamics. In cultures that focus on authority and hierarchy, stakeholders and particularly trainers may need to adapt their approaches to complement and accommodate power dynamics (Cardador, Hill, & Salles, 2022). For instance, some trainees may need to show deference to those in positions of authority and be cautious not to challenge their status openly. In hierarchical environments, trainees may be less likely to speak up or challenge the status quo during a training. Contrariwise, in low power distance cultures as Canada where cultures have flatter power structures, a trainee may have more flexibility to engage in critical thinking, open dialogues, and discussions. Different communication styles also influence the climate setting phase of a training (Healy, 2023). In high-context cultures (Hall, 1976) where narratives and meanings that glorify status are transferred and conveyed across non-contextual cues and the actual environmental context, training providers may need to recognize implicit and subtle signals. Conversely, in low-context cultures, trainees may value more explicit and direct communication. Power relations can influence who actively participates in training at the workplace (Schweiger, Müller, & Güttel, 2020). In some cultures, trainees may be hesitant to speak up or ask questions in the

presence of authority figures. Power imbalances can affect whoever has access to training opportunities. Those with more power may have easier access to training activities, programs, and workshops, while marginalized employees may confront barriers such as exclusion or discrimination. Stakeholders and trainers should be aware of these power dynamics and create inclusive environments that encourage participation from all trainees. Cultural norms and values frame how trainees perceive authority and respond to hierarchy (Brion, 2022). For example, as illustrated in this comparative study, in high PD cultures as Morocco, learners may prioritize collectivism and consensus-building, whereas in low PD cultural environments as Canada, trainees may value individualism and assertiveness. Power dynamics can shape the content and curriculum of training programs (Fuentes, Zelaya, & Madsen, 2021). Those in power may prioritize topics and materials that align with their interests or perspectives, potentially neglecting the needs and points of view of marginalized groups. Instructor bias may also be influenced by power dynamics (Fairley, 2020). Trainers may be influenced by power, leading to biases in how they deliver training. This can lead to manifestations such as favouritism towards certain participants or the reinforcement of existing power structures. Gender roles and power dynamics also play a role in climate setting for a training (Casad, et al., 2021). In some contexts, gender-based hierarchies may influence how people contribute and interact during a training. As a trainer, I have observed that representation is also a factor of influence. The presence of diverse voices and perspectives in training settings can be impacted by power. Those with more power or perceived power may have greater representation, while others may be excluded or marginalized limiting the different viewpoints and diversity of experiences. Non-verbal cues as gestures and body language also convey dynamics of powers. It is important to be mindful of these contextual non-verbal cues and consider how they may be interpreted differently in diverse cultural contexts. In brief, climate setting for a training is also predisposed to power dynamics. An awareness of the

issues to keep in mind can aid in promoting gender-equity and inclusion. Stakeholders, particularly trainers, ought to be culturally competent, adaptable, and cognizant of these underlying power dynamics to create a more just and effective learning environment. Trainers should also be sensitive to the particularities of power issues and accordingly adapt their training methods.

In workplace training, power constraints can also vary between developing and developed countries due to differences in infrastructure, resources, and socio-economic factors. Developing countries may experience additional power constraints such as limited access to reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and technological resources. This can hinder the delivery of a training program, particularly in remote or rural areas. Also, political instability, economic factors, and inadequate government support may exacerbate power constraints by affecting funding availability and policy frameworks for workplace development. Employers may face challenges in allocating sufficient resources for training programs, implementing advanced technology for e-learning initiatives, and overcoming resistance to change within established workplace cultures. In my experience as a trainer in Morocco, the latter has certainly posed challenges when introducing innovative ideas and initiatives.

In contrast, developed countries as Canada typically have more abundant resources, including financial resources, technology, and educational material, which can facilitate comprehensive training programs. This comparative study illustrated that the Canadian learning participants had ample access to CPD resources compared to the Moroccan trainees in this sample. Developed countries have more reliable infrastructures, including stable electricity supply, and internet connectivity, reducing interruptions during training sessions. In Morocco, the civil servants and professionals interviewed for this study participated in training seminars and CPD programs in-house at their place of work or followed programs at private institutions with state-of-the-art IT facilities. The latter benefiting from a reliable IT

infrastructure and strong internet connectivity. Developed countries often have well-established regulatory frameworks governing workplace training, ensuring quality standards and compliance with safety regulations. Employees in developed countries may also have higher expectations for training opportunities, leading to greater demand for diverse and specialized programs. In this study, the latter may be inferred from the Canadian respondents. Canadian civil servants have strong institutional support for their professional development, which allows employees to develop their competency skills by taking courses, seminars, and programs for professional and personal development. Developed countries tend to adopt advanced technologies more readily, allowing for the integration of e-learning platforms and other innovative training methods. This study illustrated that in the Canadian context e-learning platforms available to the training participants were robust, whereas the Moroccan trainees still relied on f2f interactions.

4.2.3 Planning learning activities for trainees

The aim of question three in the interview protocol was to seek insights related to the planning phase of the learning process. In the Canadian sample, employees on training revealed that they are keenly involved in the planning step of their training activities and are encouraged to advance and improve skills and abilities that are aligned with work-related tasks and responsibilities. On the other hand, the Moroccan sample illustrated that the planning of a training activity rests with management who collaborate with the instructors before program delivery.

Regarding the planning phase, Canadian trainees are encouraged to upgrade competencies and skills as revealed by interviewee C7: *“We have training opportunities at all levels in our dept., i.e., for new employees, managers, specialists, and advisors. PSC promotes a learning culture and encourages employees to develop their skills.”* Participant

C21 said that *“employees have the option to upgrade skills, and we plan according to what can help us better meet our objectives before the next fiscal. Additionally, respondent C11 added: “We all have to include some training focused on skills development to give to the HR unit.”* Research participants C8, and C12, also cited that planning of CPD activities is aligned with upgrading competencies and skills for the workplace.

Work-related needs and priorities of the department also guide the planning of learning activities, this was highlighted in several responses. According to interviewee C1:

“For us senior managers, our director generals as heads of units are responsible; DGs decide the needs required for the department based on departmental priorities and they are responsible for ensuring that the training of their managers is completed in a timely manner based on meeting departmental objectives.”

Similarly, respondent C6 added: *“Usually based on my needs related to current work tasks.”*

Participant C21 also mentioned internal needs are a factor in the planning of learning activities: *“Each fiscal year, DGs present departments internal needs based on what programs will need.”* Interviewee C19 cited that *“As a director, decisions are made based on unit needs in accordance with employees’ interests, but each employee in our unit has access to some funding.”* Last, a mention to needs-based planning and flexibility from interviewee C3 was that *“Programs or target seminars are quite flexible, more or less based on needs that arise throughout the fiscal year.”*

Insights from Canadian research participants indicate that encouragement to upgrade on skills and competencies, collaboration, and flexibility contribute to the planning phases of learning activities for the workplace. For example, participant C9 claimed that:

“In general, the planning of learning is carried out in a collaborative way between the instructor and participants. Once the head of the department shares the training calendar, each manager informs their team and then a direct and informal collaboration between the instructor and the participants starts taking place.”

A few respondents mentioned the smooth, practical, and flexible facets of the planning; respondent C18 revealed that: *“Yes, they are flexible; there are many offerings, so*

we can select the courses that are most practical for us. Research participant C15 revealed that *“In my experience, I find the online courses tend to be more flexible with many offerings open throughout the year.”* Respondent C2 on planning said: *“...planning is flexible.”* Participant C3 alluded to the fact that *“programs and seminars are quite flexible...”* Interviewee C17 added: *Well, as I mentioned, I requested it as a C PD activity and as most of them are online with very flexible schedules, it was approved by our manager. My manager wants me to consider branching into management in the near future.* Albeit the fact that managerial approval is customary, professional adult learners in this Canadian sample also contribute to the planning phase of their learning paths as interviewee C16 affirmed: *“We (employees) propose courses we would like to take to our managers; most courses or programs are available in a way that they don’t interfere with daily tasks, so they get approval each fiscal.”*

On the other hand, Moroccan trainees accepted the fact that the planning of training activities is decided by top management; however, it is the responsibility of the instructor or subject area expert to adequately deliver well-designed and structured training plans. This line of reasoning was voiced by multiple respondents during our discussions, interviewee M2 quoted that: *“Our directors determine which manager needs training in our unit, but the instructor/consultant and director plan what the training should focus on.”* Respondent M3 similarly expressed that senior management plan and decide about training for work, *“The directors and managers above us make those decisions, I assume based on the projects we need to prepare but we don’t know.”* Participant M1 mentioned planning is decided *“From the top.”* Interviewee M18 reiterated *“The top manager decides the training and they are group oriented.”* Likewise, respondent M20 mentioned that *“The planning is done with the director.”* In the same line of thought, participant M14 mentioned that *“The training in my*

department is decided by the training manager at the HR unit". Lastly, interviewee M25 cited: *"Our superiors plan and decide who in the unit needs to have a training"*.

Most participants were in agreement that although the planning is signed off by directors and senior management, the roadmap for specific types of training is drafted uniquely by the instructor, trainer, consultant or coach, and in essence, is not very flexible in respect to participant input as exemplified in interviewee M4's response: *"Programs are not flexible, we don't have many options like you have in Canada and decisions are made by directors and supervisors."* Respondent M6 indicated that *"We participants don't decide about this, the director decides with the consultant/trainer."* Similarly, participant M20 indicated that *"The director of our unit decides. They are not flexible because the trainers come to us with their programs."* Inflexibility linked to a lack of input from the learning participant was noted in respondent M24: *"Instructor decides on the planning; not very flexible because there's little individual input."* Interviewee M23 thought that instructors design and plan: *"I think the instructor on the advice of the director."*

Few respondents noted the need for an instructor-led approach as cited by interviewee M7: *"I think the professor should lead the discussions and make it more collaborative for everyone."* A reference to fixed programs was pointed out by interviewee M10: *"It is generally the manager/head of department that is mostly in charge with fixed programs that can be flexible based on group consensus."*

In the literature regarding the planning of learning activities, studies show that in Singaporean and Canadian organizations, which are low UA cultures, there are less restrictions imposed on the learning process and unplanned objectives may spur up throughout a training session at any given time; as a result, adjustments are made as required (Hassi, 2015). In high UA cultures such as Morocco, companies and organizations exhibit

aspects of rigidity during the planning step and when determining training objectives for their employees (Hassi, 2012). Along a similar line of thought, cultures with tight structures display facets of intolerance with trainees expecting clear-cut objectives from the onset; however, in cultures with loose structures, learners are at ease with general goals set by the trainer (Weech, 2001).

In this research, Canadian interviewees revealed that they are inherently part of the planning phase of their training activities with trainees encouraged to improve competencies and skills to support work-related tasks and responsibilities. On the other hand, in the Moroccan context, senior management delegate planning tasks to training providers and both plan the training for employees; trainers execute based on how they are directed by management. Trainees have limited direct input at this stage of the process. Thus, the findings related to the planning phase in the Moroccan and Canadian context corroborate what has been documented in similar and diverse cultural environments.

4.2.3.1 Globalisation and planning

The planning phase of a training activity in a culturally diverse, globalized, and interconnected world requires careful consideration of a range of factors (Zajda, 2021). Trainers and professional development planners must be culturally sensitive to the diverse backgrounds of training participants. An awareness of diverse communication styles, values, traditions, and customs is helpful to ensure that content is respectful and inclusive. In a global context, language barriers may be a significant hurdle. Materials need to be custom-designed and easily accessible for trainees. Learning styles play a role as well in the planning phase of a training because in distinct cultures there are often varying preferences of how individuals prefer to learn. Some may favour group-oriented discussions while others prefer working independently. Training activities should be custom designed to cater to these differences.

In this cross-cultural comparative study, Canadian learning participants revealed that they are involved in the planning phase of a training activity and are encouraged by their superiors to advance and improve competency skills aligned with work-related tasks and responsibilities. On the other hand, the Moroccan trainees showed that the planning step of a training activity is decided by managers and is planned primarily with management and trainers; training participants do not contribute to this phase of the process. The managers also decide who will participate in the training activity.

Globalisation also requires a broader understanding, and vaster perspectives embedded and transferred across the training content. Knowledge of how a skill or concept applies or is perceived in various cultural contexts can enhance effectiveness within a more globalized world moving towards virtual teams and remote working realities. The Canadian respondents illustrated that upgrading skills and acquiring knowledge was encouraged at their workplace. Training plans need to include and integrate technology for remote training and learning collaboration tools. Coordination such as time zone differences and scheduling may have an impact on access to training. Planning should accommodate different time zones and schedule courses and meetings accordingly (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). In this study, Canadian participants indicated that competencies, collaboration, and flexibility contribute to the planning phase. However, Moroccan participants accepted that the planning of a training for work is decided by their direct supervisor in collaboration with the training service provider. The instructors draft the training with trainee input not encouraged in the planning stage. Programs are designed based on what management needs; trainers prepare the programs with clear objectives set by the trainer. Program delivery is signed off by management.

As observed and experienced with the Covid crisis, global events like pandemics can hinder coordination and lead to travel restrictions. At the planning phase, these unexpected

limitations need to be considered, and stakeholders should be prepared to adapt to hybrid or remote training modes; agility to such challenges must be the default plan b.

As senior management delegate planning tasks in the Moroccan context, and trainers execute based on how they are directed to do so, training planners should consider ethical and legal differences across cultures ensuring that during the planning phase, content aligns with local regulations and ethical standards. Organizations working globally must comply with international laws and regulations. Training programs may need to address global compliance standards when dealing with issues such as trade regulations or data protection. The regulatory environment in developed countries as Canada often has well-established regulatory frameworks governing workplace training and ensuring quality standards and compliance with international regulations, whereas in developing countries as Morocco the regulatory environment is at embryonic stages.

Access to internet and technology can vary globally. Training activities may require a robust IT infrastructure to support online remote learning, especially in MNCs. Training planners need to ensure that trainees have the necessary technological support for a training delivered across virtual platforms (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). In addition, across cultures, consideration for seasoned, diverse, and knowledgeable instructors can enhance the reliability and credibility of a training. This was highlighted in the study. Canadian participants indicated that the rapport between the instructor and the learner was a collaborative and reciprocal joint effort. On the other hand, Moroccan participants mentioned that the trainer-trainee relationship should be formal and professional as they are trainees on training to learn from the experts or specialists. Training plans may need to be custom tailored for specific markets or regions to respond to unique challenges and training needs. Encouraging knowledge sharing and cross-cultural collaboration can be a goal in the planning phase of a training activity to harness the benefits of globalisation. Globalisation introduces

complexities into the planning phase of training activities with the former necessitating a nuanced approach that recognizes and respects cultural differences while ensuring effective and efficient learning outcomes for trainees.

4.2.3.2 Agency and planning

An individual's agency plays a role in training (Shankar, 2019). Respecting cultural values, behaviours, and norms, adapting to people's varying communication styles, custom-designing training plans, considering motivation for learning, and being open to adaptation and constructive feedback are prominent issues to consider when at the planning phase of a training. As a trainer and lecturer, I have relied on this approach to help enhance the success of a training by promoting cultural diversity and inclusivity. In diverse cultural contexts, societies place differing levels of focus on individual autonomy and agency. In some cultures, as Morocco, collective decision-making and conformity might be more important while in others such as Canada exercising ones' autonomy and choice are highly valued. I have found that aligning training plans with these cultural values has been helpful and beneficial. Training participants may have the free will to choose the programs or modules they want to participate in, as seen with the Canadian sample in this study. Personal interests, career goals and motivation can guide a trainees' selection, impacting the planning phase of a given training. When a trainee has agreed to take part in a training, their agency plays a role in scheduling sessions and committing to the learning program. Their availability, dedication, and willingness to set aside time can affect the planning phase. Cultural differences in communication styles (Godwin-Jones, 2019) can also impact how trainees express their preferences and how they exercise free will. Trainers and stakeholders must consider and adapt their communication methods to respect cultural norms, and open dialogue. When developing training plans, I have found that they need to be customized to fit the preferences

or choices of trainees and continuously tweaked. In individualistic cultures, trainers may expect more flexibility and agility in tailoring their training experience to complement their aims, goals, and interests. In the Canadian context, I have noted learners exercising their free will by requesting modifications to better suit their learning needs, however request for changes to a training plan have been rare with Moroccan trainees. Understanding cultural factors that impact participant engagement and motivation (Zacharias, Rahawarin, & Yusriadi, 2021) is another necessity. Some cultures may respond positively to intrinsic motivation whereas others may respond better to extrinsic motivation. Training planners need to grasp these differences to optimize participant engagement. Trainees that are initiative-taking and seriously committed may participate more enthusiastically, leading to modifications in the planning of a program to cater to their level of engagement. Trainees may also use their agency to provide informative feedback and communicate their concerns or needs during a training (Castanelli et al., 2022). This feedback can inform the planning phase leading to adjustments to the program or training module; consequently, enhancing overall effectiveness. Respect for diversity matters and is a sensible approach to the planning step. The former recognizes diversity within groups; hence, acknowledging and accommodating individual differences including those related to personal preferences and individual agency.

In developing countries agency constraints in workplace training may include limited government support, regulatory frameworks, and training standards. Countries as Canada typically have more developed agencies and regulatory bodies that monitor and guide the oversight of training standards. Developing countries, on the other hand, may confront obstacles in organizing and administering effective and efficient training programs due to fragile institutional frameworks. Industrialised countries frequently benefit from more

established systems that facilitate effective and successful training management and program delivery.

Undoubtedly, individual agency plays a pivotal role in framing the planning phase of a training activity by influencing program selection, communication, motivation and effort, scheduling, and customization throughout the entire training process.

4.2.3.3 Gender roles and planning

Gender roles in both developing and developed countries can influence the planning of a training activity in diverse ways. In both contexts, addressing gender disparities in workplace training and challenging patriarchal norms are essential for promoting gender equality and fostering inclusive work environments. However, the strategies and approaches may vary based on the socio-economic and cultural context of each country. In this research, training participants reflecting a balance between men and women were carefully considered when identified as prospective participants for both samples. During the interviews, the questions focused on learning activities for work and did not delve into gender roles. Nonetheless, dynamics of patriarchy may be deeply entrenched in social, economic, and political structures in developing countries whereas in developed countries as Canada, although patriarchal structures may still exist, they may be less evident or established. Role expectation may dictate what is considered appropriate for adults in diverse cultures. Diverse cultures may have traditional gender roles that are imposed by societal norms (Jayachandran, 2021) which can impact the type of training planned. For instance, in some cultures there may be expectations that men receive leadership or technical training, while women are encouraged to concentrate on softer skills. This was not illustrated in this sample, the participants selected for the study were professional men and women with higher degrees who held professional positions in their area of expertise. Nevertheless, understanding the specific training needs of

diverse genders is important. For example, I have observed that if a workplace has female or male trainees in certain roles, training needs to address gender specific expectations and challenges.

In developed countries, there is greater access to formalized training programs as illustrated in the insights shared from the Canadian participants in this study. Although in developing countries training opportunities may be limited, especially for women due to socio-economic barriers, this was not the case in this research study.

Accessibility to training may affect gender (Casad et al., 2021). The latter can impact access to education and training opportunities. In developing cultures where women have limited access to resources or are expected to prioritize family over career, training programs may need to provide more flexibility and address barriers. For instance, we need to ensure that the training facilities and materials are available and accessible to all genders. Considerations such as providing appropriate facilities and ensuring an inclusive and safe environment is essential. Inclusive planning challenges and acknowledges traditional gender roles (Mangubhai, & Lawless, 2021). Programs that promote gender equality and challenge stereotypes can be constructive in diverse cultural settings. Gender roles can influence the program content, curriculum, and training delivery. Material used should avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes (Solbes-Canales, 2020). Content should be more inclusive and not only focus on what traditional gender roles dictate. Specific gender dynamics should be considered when working on training in each culture. Effective planning needs to reflect gender particularities. This requires customizing training material, instructors, and approaches to be more sensitive and respectful of local gender norms. These training delivery considerations have informed my personal approach and have been integral parts of effective and well-structured planning phases in training for work programs. Research suggests that people have diverse learning preferences (Tanis, 2020), so providing various training methods could be

beneficial and helpful. The planning stage should also reflect on feedback and evaluation of training effectiveness in relation to gender roles. This can refine training programs over time. We need to collect feedback from trainees of all genders and assess the inclusivity and efficiency of a training, making necessary adjustments as required. Therefore, gender roles can impact the planning phase by having an impact on the training content, material, the program delivery, and overall inclusiveness. Understanding and addressing gender roles in diverse cultural contexts is important as it ensures that programs remain relevant, effective, and equitable. We need to recognize and challenge these roles to create a more positive, fair, and just training experience.

4.2.3.4 Power dynamics and planning

In my 25 years of experience as a trainer in diverse cultural contexts, I have observed that power relations in terms of resources, decision-making, access to information, inclusivity, evaluation, implementation, and accountability all play a role during the planning phase of a training for work activity. In a workplace environment, individuals with more power within a group or an organization may have greater influence over how resources are allocated. This may be in terms of time and budget for workplace training. The latter can impact the scope and quality of the training. Power dynamics impacts who gets to make decisions about the material, content, objectives, and training methods (Fuentes et al., 2021). In this study, Moroccan training participants indicated that the planning of a training is decided by senior management who delegate program planning and delivery to training service providers. Canadian training participants play a collaborative role in the planning of training for work programs and plan their learning programs with their trainers. Those with more power will attempt to frame the training agenda to align with their priorities and interests (Brion,2022). Individuals in positions of power often have access to more information about a unit or

departmental needs, goals, objectives, and challenges. Information can frame the direction and design of a training program. Power imbalances also influence who is included in the planning process, thus less powerful employees or marginalized individuals may have limited input, a situation that potentially leads to training that is not aligned with trainees' specific needs. Evaluation and feedback can be influenced by power forces at work. Those with more power could define success criteria and control the evaluation process, potentially leading to biased results. The implementation of a training can be impacted by power relations at work. Compliance or resistance may vary depending on who has more to say in the process. Additionally, accountability plays a part. For instance, power dynamics can influence who is held accountable for success or failure of the training initiative. This can affect the effort level and internal resources dedicated to ensuring a successful program delivery. In sum, grasping the complexities surrounding power dynamics during the planning phase of a training activity helps to ensure principles of fairness, inclusivity, and that organizational alignment of goals are respected. It is important to keep sight of how diverse stakeholders' interests and power levels could frame the overall training process plan and training outcomes.

4.2.4 Assessing learning needs

When comparing the role of training participants at the needs' assessment phase, interviewees in both the Canadian and Moroccan contexts mentioned active projects and budgetary limits guide departmental learning needs. Trainees in the Canadian context play a role in assessing needs for their training; however, the Moroccan responses show that learning needs for work-related training rests with the senior management of their divisions.

Canadian respondents in the following study indicated that needs' assessments for training in their departments were decided based on projects. Consultants, corporate training

instructors, coaches, and specialists are responsible to conduct training needs which focus on work-related skills and competencies. Hence, the assessment of needs is outcome-based as they are crafted around projects and required skills. Flexibility with employee input and registration to module by choice also surfaced in the findings.

Required skills and competencies appear to guide the learning process from the early planning stages as mentioned by interviewee C17 when stating that *“I think they need to follow guidance based on the skills they need for their units.”* In a similar fashion respondent C1 illustrated that *“Our reference point are skills we require in our division. For example, if as a manager I need to develop a particular skill, this will be a priority training need.”* Like the Moroccan respondents in this respect, projects and financial resources are also considered when conducting needs’ assessments within a unit as mentioned by participant C3: *“Current projects decide to who and when training will be provided in our unit. Fiscal resources determine how many employees will go to specialized training.”*

Although needs assessment for training are drafted by professional trainers, consultants and/or coaches, the process begins with an understanding of required skill sets, as well as input from outside sources such the learning participants themselves. This is illustrated in interviewee C4’s response:

“Often times with mature instructors or coaches we can still see the traditional approaches to learning, but with my learning experience, participants are very much involved when setting the objectives. For instance, it is more common than not to see instructors ask us what we want to get out of the module followed up with collaborative effort to reach a good balanced outcome based on what the instructor and learners set as goals.”

Trainers are also open to change at various stages of the learning process as mentioned by respondent C11:

“I have not experienced a situation where if something is not working, they don’t change course. [Can you think of an example?] We had a Team Management seminar

years ago where the instructor used a case study that was a bit challenging for the group; she changed it immediately and replaced it with another less vague case.”

When drafting the needs assessments, the findings of the Canadian sample revealed the relaxed nature of this step in the learning cycle. For instance, respondent C2 mentioned that *“There were no pre-set expectations in the last workshop; we had a brief outline with objectives on a PPT slide presented to the group.”* When probing on the question a little further, participant C2 added that *“... it was not stressful at all. Sometimes, when coaches make things too complicated, it makes me feel a lot of anxiety. I do not like those types of in-house training.”* The input from participants was mentioned both implicitly and explicitly, for example, interviewee C9 revealed that *“The needs assessment is conducted by managers of each unit who collect data from their employees. It is conducted in a flexible way as it usually includes all needs indicated by employees.”* Learning participants also register for seminars, modules, and courses by choice as noted by participant C13:

“The manager recommends ideas to employees under the direction of our DGs who follow the required skills for their unit each fiscal; supervisors follow the SDP; managers follow the DDP etc. [I presume registration to these programs is by choice]. Yes, of course, absolutely.”

In brief, the findings regarding learning needs and assessment illustrate that Canadian professional learners are guided by the expertise of training providers who draft and determine learning needs based on required departmental skills and the input of the trainees, who also inform this phase of the learning process. Competency-skills and standards of knowledge for specific work-related tasks and responsibilities may also be considered at this step. The Moroccan sample, on the other hand, illustrated that needs assessment about work-related training is a managerial decision made at the most senior levels in the department or unit. For instance, respondent M2 stated: *“Our directors decide the training we need to take.”* Another claimed that *“Needs for training are decided by our manager and the director of our unit.”* Interviewee M20 confirmed *“What we need in a training is decided by the director.”*

Respondent M19 emphasised the role of the director in collaboration with the training consultant when they stated: *“Yes, we use consultants a lot; we tell them what we need from our employees, and they draft of working schedule/plan for a seminar, for example, and I approve and decide which employees will go to the training.”*

In consultation with senior management, instructors, training consultants, and coaches play a secondary role in determining the learning needs of participants on training as illustrated in interviewee M3’s quotation: *“The instructors need to determine the learning needs because he may know more than the participants.”* In the same vein, participant M21 responded *“I think the instructors/consultants know better than us.”* Similarly, others added that *“The instructor decides the needs,”* and *“Yes, they decide together”* (M25; M20). Likewise, respondent M8 commented: *“I believe, instructors decide on the needs, but I think a more participatory approach involving participant’s areas of expertise and interests would generate more interest towards content especially with working professionals.”* Interestingly, an interviewee suggested that learning needs were conducted during the pre-training stages of the process. This is illustrated in participant M25’s quote: *“Frankly, no, these parts of a training are decided before we start it.”*

Interviewees mentioned their role is minor at this stage of the learning process, for example, respondent M1 cited that:

“We had a training session where the instructor at the start asked us about our expectations from the seminar and we had to write them down for him; I suppose that’s the way he could identify common needs and adjust in case of need; he pre-defined objectives in my opinion”, albeit the fact that he [the instructor] followed the initial plan for most of the time.”

Another participant mentioned the formal nature of learning needs and informal role of participants when determining training needs; interviewee M6 revealed that *“Yes, I think so, learning needs are set in a more formal way and the interactions about needs between instructors and participants is done in an implicit manner.”*

Regarding what determines access to workplace training, participants touched on various other reasons that influence learner needs, such as, it may be based on budgetary constraints, current projects, deadlines, and/or on departmental priorities. The reference to budgetary needs was highlighted when participant M5 mentioned that *“We directors decide based on our budget and needs.* Several participants said that projects determine what kind of training employees need and who will go on the training. This was expressed when interviewee M7 said: *“they say it is based on the projects they have. [Can you think of an example?] Yes, for example, if we need to learn about a new software in finance to help us with a project, they will recommend one of us learn it and take a seminar.”* The skill requirements for a project and deadlines are also determinants of the needs assessment of a training. This was revealed by participant M15: *“The needs are conducted based on the person’s skills and the deadlines of the projects we are working on.”* Respondent M24 also mentioned that priorities in their unit are a factor when determining the needs for training as cited in their response: *“Needs assessment are based on priorities.”*

The literature suggests that to establish the learning needs of employees it is essential to be mindful that some individuals are not inclined to identify their learning needs because they may not want to lose face or expose a vulnerability on their part. Also, employees in some countries consider it inappropriate to discuss training needs with an instructor. In their views, practitioners are the experts, and it is their responsibility as instructors to know what trainees need to successfully meet desired outcomes. Engaging the learner at this phase may be perceived as a lack of ability from a professional (Marquardt, 1990). Thus, a balance is required between the processes of predetermining which needs are established. Information from external sources may be beneficial when confirming training needs and setting objectives. When working on the needs’ analysis, the effectiveness of the training is regarded as a product of the trainers’ knowledge, expertise, and knowledge (Weech, 2001; Hassi

2012). Is it in general or in some specific cultural context? In collectivistic cultures, a prominent level of importance is placed on the status of the individual and hierarchy while conducting employee needs' analysis as documented by Deal (2004) in samples from China, India, and Mexico. The Moroccan insights in this research support the findings in studies that illustrated that in collectivistic cultures employee status and hierarchy while conducting needs' analyses in training for work are important.

In summary, the current study showed that the learning needs of training participants in the Moroccan context are determined by senior management in collaboration with instructors who plan according to their directives. Additionally, factors that also determine learning needs include reasons based on active projects, unit necessities, performance, skills, type of training available, internal budgets, and departmental priorities. On the other hand, the Canadian sample showed that trainers are facilitators in this part of the process as they guide, draft, and determine needs based on trainee input about employees' individual learning plans. Competency-skills and standards of knowledge for specific work-related tasks may also be considered at this step of the process.

4.2.4.1 Globalisation and needs assessment

Training participants of both samples in this study mentioned that the needs assessment phase of a training activity is contingent on active projects and budgetary considerations. Canadian respondents mentioned that they play a role in assessing needs for their training; whereas Moroccan participants showed that learning needs are decided by senior managers within their divisions. In the Canadian context, assessment of training needs is outcome-based as they are drafted around projects and required skills. Employee involvement, signing up to modules by choice, and flexibility also emerged in the findings. On the other hand, Moroccan training participants showed that needs assessment regarding work-related training is a

managerial decision. In consultation with senior management, training providers determine the learning needs of trainees based on what the managers want the training for. In regard to access to training, Moroccan participants similar to the Canadian respondents mentioned reasons that influence needs assessment for a training to include projects they were working on, deadlines, and priorities at work.

Globalisation can influence the needs assessment of a training activity across a diverse workforce, market expansion, technological advances, remote or virtual work, compliance and regulations, cultural competency, and adaptation of global trends. In globalized workplaces, the latter often reflects more diverse workforces with culturally diverse employees from various backgrounds (Seliverstova, & Pierog, 2021). Globalisation thus requires training programs that address cross-cultural economic and cultural sensitivities, in addition to linguistic barriers. Organizations and MNEs expanding beyond their national borders may need to adequately train their employees in international business practices, trade, international regulations, and market specific knowledge. At the needs' assessment step of a training program, these factors need thorough consideration. Globalisation is also interconnected to IT and technological progress (Stephen, 2020). Needs assessment need to pay attention to digital literacy, remote working tools, and cyber security. These issues need to be addressed by keeping updated with the latest and most advanced technological trends. Remote work is also influenced by globalisation (Donnelly, & Johns, 2021) and should be considered when working on needs assessments of a training. The rise of this new way of working requires training on virtual collaborations, self-motivation, and time management, which in the past these issues may not have required consideration in traditional workplaces. Different countries also have varying local laws, regulations, and compliance standards (Kim, Li, & Lee, 2020). Organizations need to assess training needs to ensure that employees are cognizant and adhere to global regulatory standards. As companies go international,

respecting and appreciating cultural diversity has become a necessity. Cultural competences, diversity, inclusion, and equity should be emphasized at the needs assessment phase. The quick and rapid pace of change and development in globalized markets necessitates that training programs be flexible and responsive to emerging technological trends. Globalisation allows for a broader scope of training needs assessment making it vital to consider cultural, technological, market-specific, and regulatory factors that affect a companies' workforce and how trainees operate on a globalized scale.

4.2.4.2 Agency and needs assessment

Complexities of culture as individual agency can influence training needs assessments due to many factors. Cultural values, language barriers, communication and learning styles, social norms, resources, and decision-making processes are factors that may play a role. Training participants have differing preferences and motivational reasons for attending workplace training (Zacharias et al., 2021). This study illustrated that Canadian training participants opt for training options based on required competency skills needed for work-related projects making the needs assessment of a training outcome-based because they are designed around required skills and projects in their units. Similarly, although the Moroccan sample highlighted that the needs assessment phase of a learning for work initiative is a managerial decision, the reasons for the latter also included mention of ongoing projects and skills required for a project. While diverse cultures influence the reasons for training due to diverse belief and value systems, in this research, when probing about needs assessment, the samples illustrated a similar rationale for why participants take training for work-related purposes. However, differences in what determines access to a training for a Canadian trainee and a Moroccan training participant differed, access to training for the latter was solely determined by their superior with limited input from the trainee.

In developing countries agency constraints in workplace training may include limited government support, weaker regulatory frameworks, and little oversight about how decisions to who has access to training are decided. In more advanced industrial countries, however, more developed regulatory bodies are in place that actively monitor training standards. Developing countries, may face challenges in coordinating and enforcing effective training programs due to weaker institutional frameworks; whereas more developed countries often benefit from established systems that facilitate effective training management and implementation.

Some cultures may prioritize individual agency, allowing trainees or employees to have more say or control over their training choices. This surfaced in this study, with Canadian trainees mentioning that their input was part of the process at each step of the learning activities. It was also found that other training participants may prioritize their collective agency in decision-making or in adhering to hierarchical structures that limit free will and individual autonomy. This was certainly the case with the Moroccan respondents of this study. As a trainer, I have also observed that some learners may have self-identified needs meaning that they believe in their own perception of what knowledge and functional skills they want to have or acquire. These preferences are driven by their personal interests and career objectives and are often self-financed CPD activities. In these situations, there may be a divergence between the organisation's training objectives and a trainee's preferences. Motivation to participate in workplace training plays a role in how agency can influence the needs assessment step. Training participants with a keen sense of agency and autonomy are more likely to engage actively and participate in the needs assessment process. Trainees may express their preferences, actively engage by sharing input, and participate in interviews or surveys to influence the training content.

Communication and language styles can affect how trainees express their training preferences and learning needs (Godwin-Jones, 2019). In cultures with indirect communication styles, learners may be unlikely to explicitly state their learning needs and assert their individual agency, both of which can affect the precision or validity of the needs assessment. Cultural differences in learning styles also influence how training participants would rather acquire new knowledge and competency skills. As showed in this research, some trainees prefer experiential, unmediated direct and active training, while other mature learners favour systematic, structured, and methodically detailed classroom style learning. At the needs assessment phase, stakeholders need to consider these preferences to be effective. The alignment of training programs with learners' personal goals should be considered. Gauging individual free will help with the alignment process of aligning training participants' professional and personal aspirations because it ensures that the training objectives meet the trainees' needs, both relevant to a learner's individual and professional development.

This research also illustrated that social and cultural norms regarding mentorships, teamwork, and collaboration can impact how individual trainees approach training for work. In some cultural contexts, seeking help or a mentor may be encouraged and supported in the organisation, while in other cultures such social and cultural norms may be perceived as a lack of individual agency or a sign of weakness. Socio-economic and cultural factors can influence a trainee's access to training resources and opportunities. Financial constraints or limited access to IT can impact an employee's ability to pursue specific training programs, hence limiting a person's ability to exercise their free will. Resistance to mandated training, especially if the training is perceived to infringe on one's free will should also be considered when drafting a needs assessment for a training program. In such situations, a well thought out needs assessment can aid to pinpoint alternative approaches or incentives to encourage active engagement. When considering the role of individual agency at the needs assessment

phase, decision-making processes should be reflected on (Shankar et al, 2019). The latter within an organisation can be influenced by cultural norms as found in this study. For instance, in some cultures leaders make training decisions, limiting all forms of a trainees free will to choose; however, in other cultural contexts, more participatory approaches are encouraged. In the latter cases, employees as trainees have a say in their training needs. Recognizing free will at this step of the training process is valuable because it allows for custom tailoring the content to follow and informs the delivery methods; consequently, leading to more effective and engaging training experiences that consider trainees' preferences. Individual agency plays a key role in the needs assessment phase by influencing what trainees perceive as their needs, their commitment to and willingness to participate in a training program, and with the customization process of aligning training needs with trainees' preferences, objectives, and goals. To oversee and manage effective needs assessments in diverse cultural environments, stakeholders need to be culturally flexible, agile, and sensitive to diversity. Employing culturally competent trainers that acknowledge and respect individual agency within boundaries of cultural norms is necessary for designing inclusive and reflective programs

4.2.4.3 Gender roles and needs assessment

A well-planned needs assessment should take into consideration the interplay of gender roles and cultural and social norms embedded within a training activity. Cultural expectations regarding gender can influence the way individuals perceive their own training needs and expectations (Kroese, 2022). Women trainees may downplay their potential or need in male-dominated areas of study, and vice versa. In some cultures, certain jobs or skills may be traditionally associated with one gender which could significantly impact the training requirements for people very differently. Gender-based disparities (Jayachandran, 2021) in

access to training opportunities can shape training needs. In contexts where women have limited access to certain professional tasks, there may be needs for specialized training to respond and address these gender disparities. Stakeholders working on needs assessments should be mindful of these biases to circumvent shortcomings.

Social and economic concerns can impact the priorities of training programs. For instance, in cultures where women are more likely to be responsible for the management of their households and children, training focused on time management and work life balance may be relevant. Gender roles often dictate different responsibilities in respect to family and managing a household. This can influence the time and flexibility an employee has for training. Social and economic constraints should be considered in training for work initiatives. This study showed that in the Canadian context trainees are more involved in the needs assessment phase than training participants from the Moroccan training context. The involvement of all stakeholders at the needs assessment step of a training representing diverse gender groups with diverse cultural backgrounds is crucial. The latter ensures that perspectives and stakeholders' needs are all contemplated. The assessment stage should involve both men and women so diverse views and trainee's needs are adequately considered.

Tailored designed training content can be customized to address gender-specific norms, challenges, and opportunities. Including culturally sensitive and respectful gender norms within a culture can result in more inclusive and effective training programs. This may require adapting the training content, examples used in a course or module, and adjusting the teaching methods to be more inclusive while avoiding reinforcing gender stereotypes. Legal and policy frameworks related to gender discrimination and equality also influence how needs assessment are drafted. Training needs may include compliance with gender-related laws and policy regulations. Discrimination based on gender can hinder career development and limit training opportunities. These systematic issues should be discussed when assessing

a thorough training needs assessment as gender roles influence training needs assessment in numerous ways. The complex interplay should be examined and should aim to be inclusive, respectful, and responsive to trainee's specific needs and expectations regardless of one's gender identity or cultural background.

4.2.4.4 Power dynamics and needs assessment

To mitigate the complexity of power relations on the needs assessment phase of a training for work, several factors need to be considered. These include, but are not limited to, issues pertaining to information access, decision-making, resource allocations, selection of trainees, feedback, organizational culture, and resistance to change. Stakeholders in positions of power may have access to vital information about a companies' internal corporate needs (Brion, 2022), and thus, control the access of information available to employees. The latter can influence what is made available during a needs assessment process potentially skewing fact. As a trainer, I have also observed that in some cultures, some employees have more social power than others and are forceful voices in determining the priorities and objectives of a training program. Their biases and preferences can influence what needs are identified and addressed in a provided training. Power dynamics can impact resource allocation, including budget and trainee selection for training initiatives (Schweiger et al., 2020). Those with more power may have more influence over decisions, hence, affecting the scope and effectiveness of a training program, course, or module. In some situations, those in power may have a say in who participates in the needs assessment process and even the training itself. This leads to biased samples that do not accurately reflect the diverse needs of the organization or company. Another notable observation from my teaching experience is that employees lower in the hierarchy are far less likely to provide honest and candid feedback during a needs assessment process due to fear of reprisal or to please those in positions of power that

instrumentalize and manage their actions. This leads to an incomplete and distorted idea of an organisation's actual training needs. Organisational culture, a reality that is often influenced by power relations at work can influence how training needs are perceived, decided, and addressed. For example, a culture that values the opinions of senior leaders, their training needs will be prioritized over those of employees. Additionally, those in more powerful ranks may resist changes suggested by needs assessments if they view them as threatening to their status or influence within a company. Thus, to navigate in these contextual complexities, needs assessments need to ensure that they are as inclusive, objective, and transparent as possible. This may require input from all the stakeholders while protecting the trainees' anonymity. Promoting an open culture of communication and commitment to information-driven and informed decision-making can minimize the negative effects of power dynamics on the needs assessment process.

4.2.5 Setting training objectives

In the Canadian sample, when setting objectives, learning participants consider elements such as trainee involvement; departmental requirements of skills and competencies; needs assessment outputs; custom-directed objectives; unit concerns and priorities; and active projects for their fiscal forecasts. This objective-setting approach is fundamentally outcome-based. On the other hand, the Moroccan sample shows that directors and managers decide about the learning needs and objectives of the training, as well as which employees will participate in the training. Training service providers draw up learning plans as advised and requested by management. Training participants are seldom asked about training objectives.

The findings related to setting objectives in the Canadian sample illustrate the latter are set in a reciprocal fashion with active participant-trainer involvement. For instance, interviewee C1 mentioned that:

“When on one-to-one training, goals and aims are decided collaboratively with the instructor or trainer. Actually, even in seminars about soft skills, although the trainer leads with the seminar, we, the participants are involved in the session. For example, there are often simulation or mini-case studies to work through in small groups.”

The employer in the Canadian sample actively encourages their employees to upgrade their skills and competencies as participant C13 described:

“As part of our Career Development Plan, HR in each unit inform us about courses, seminars, and programs we may be interested in and that are available to us online or on-site at GC Campus or Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) and we choose from there...In my case, I was often encouraged to upgrade on skills by superiors over the years; it’s better for them when they help us to climb the ranks. [How so?] We can take on more tasks and responsibilities.”

Respondent C12 mentioned that programs are designed for professional advancement: *“The ADT program is open to all federal employees and learners who are interested in developing their managerial skills for career development purposes.”* Objectives designed for the purpose of upgrading knowledge also emerged from interviewee C6: *“Examples are of the latest MS programs available to most of us. We have regular training sessions for those of us that need to upgrade our knowledge of the programs. In consultation with the trainers, we set the objectives of the training.”*

Objectives are custom designed to meet optimum results from the training experience. Research participant C3 revealed that *“trainers will need to custom design based on our internal requirements for that fiscal.”* Additionally, there was a mention that learning objectives are set based on needs assessment decided beforehand, for, instance respondent C9 stated that *“Training objectives are set based on the need's assessment. It mostly depends on employee needs and areas identified by the organization or the unit.”* Departmental requirements play a role in guiding employees towards knowledge upgrading, C PD activities for their learning plans, specialized training, and prospective initiatives for future career transition. Interviewee C10 quoted that *“The departmental needs are a first priority, but they also give a lot of importance to the professional development of employees.”* Respondent C11

reiterated that *“The starting point begins with DGs, directors, unit managers and HR advisors who collect the CPD needs in the unit or sub-sections of various departments. Skill sets inform the priority list.”*

Interviewee C21 made a reference to learning and development: *“We all have access to some training, more senior ranks have more responsibilities and inevitably require more training; so, in this respect, they have more access. In my case, I took a course at the University each semester and they have all been approved.* Participant C14 in the same line of thought mentioned: *“DGs and HR managers identify potential future managers and executives within our department and recommend courses and programs for career development.”* Learning objectives may also be programmed and pre-set, especially with academic courses and modules offered for professionals at local institutions, as inferred in participant C5’s response: *“In the PM course at a local institution, the objectives of the modules were part of the course/program syllabus.”*

Setting training objectives in the Moroccan sample, however, shows that they are pre-set by senior managers and directors in collaboration with training consultants, instructors, or trainers who custom design the blueprint of a required training. Participant engagement by trainees at this phase of the process is indirect and unplanned with limited trainee input when setting training objectives.

Directors collaborate with consultants to design a plan for training objectives for their subordinates. Respondent M2 illustrated this when citing *“For us managers, the director decides on objectives based on what we need to develop more or if there is a special project, they focus on what we need for that project.”* In a similar line of thought, M22 mentioned that *“Training objectives are decided by the directors.* Further, M8 thought that *“The consultants or instructors with the approval of the directors”* decided and planned the

training objectives. Participant M14 highlighted that *“The training manager makes all those decisions.”* Another mentioned that supervisors determine the objectives needed for employees on workplace training when citing that *“Depending on my needs for my job, the supervisors set the objectives that I should meet at the end of the training”* (M16). Respondent M15 said: *“Training objectives are decided by our superiors; they plan these with the trainers.”* Directors also play a leading role when drafting training objectives as seen in responses from M21 and M22: *“Our director”*, and *“Training objectives are decided by the director.”* It is evident from what emerged in the sample that senior management such as directors’ play a vital role in the process of deciding on training objectives for employees selected for training within their respective departments.

Albeit the fact that it is an ancillary role, training instructors, coaches, and expert-consultants have a say when drafting training objectives for trainees as confirmed by several respondents. On the directives of senior management, the input of the instructor is a vital part at this stage of the learning process and learners follow their lead. To illustrate this, respondent M2 cited that *“people follow what the instructor says; they are grateful for the opportunity and do not complain.* Participant M7 asserted that *“The professors and the directors make those decisions.”* M5 expressed the need for objectives to be set by professional trainers: *“Objectives should be determined by instructors; participants don’t know better their own needs.”*

The role of training participants when deciding on training objectives is minimal. This insight appeared in the response of participant M1: *“Once we are engaged in a training activity, we contribute indirectly to the process of identification of goals and definitions of what we need by sharing what we would like to see as learning objectives when we are asked our opinions.”* Interviewee M9 in the study referred to informal involvement when they mentioned that *“Yes, mostly, so, we are involved once and while and informally; it is an*

implicit way.” An interesting response was in relation to how the process works within their unit, interviewee M10 claimed that *“They are set through email sent way ahead of the program delivery date.”* Similarly, M8 mentioned a need for objectives to be pre-set by instructors, they stated that *“yes they should be the general framework.”* A few mentioned that in their units, training objectives are decided before the delivery of a training as noted by respondent M15: *“Training objectives are decided before a new project for example.”* Likewise, participant M18 also mentioned that *“The training is planned way before the delivery because they need to be efficient and give the expected results.”*

Several authors such as Hoff (2002) found that national culture influences various aspects pertaining to objectives in employee training activities. In this regard, in a training program within a joint venture of four multinational firms destined to participants from Russia, the USA, Norway, Ukraine and the Philippines, Gayeski et al. (2002) found it beneficial to pose multiple questions about objectives from the onset of the design stage to avoid falling into the abyss of ethnocentrism.

In Marquardt’s (1990) employee learning activities framework, the author stresses that negotiable and mutually acceptable training objectives are usually set in cooperation with the instructor and learner in the United States; whereas in other foreign settings, training approaches including objectives are solely decided by the instructor who communicates to the participants what the aim, objectives and outcomes will be throughout the course. From this perspective, trainers tell trainees what they need to know with a clear drawn-out roadmap to follow. In the current study, the findings revealed in the Canadian sample are similar to the US approach regarding collaboration between trainers and trainees when setting training objectives. However, in the Moroccan sample, insights showed that decisions about objectives reside with management. Trainer’s draft and align objectives with the expectations

set out by senior management. In this respect, the latter play a significant role in the decision-making of the training.

The consultation of the extant literature mentions how various dimensions of national culture influence the way training objectives and aims of modules are set for trainees. In a four-country comparative study examining the impact of national culture on designing training practices, Hassi (2015) found that respondents from organizations in high PD cultures (i.e., Morocco and Singapore) resort to authority and do not extend latitude to participants during the planning stage of training objectives, whereas organizations from the low PD cultures (i.e., Canada and Germany), the tendency is to adopt an inclusive and participative approach to setting objectives. Similarly, the findings in this study, are aligned with what has emerged in high PD and low PD cultures regarding setting objectives for employees on training for work. In high UA cultures such as Germany and Morocco, organizations show higher levels of rigidity during the planning stage of training as reflected, for instance, in determining the objectives before the training session; on the other hand, in low level UA cultures as in Singaporean organizations, the approach is less restrictive with training sessions designed in a way that non-planned objectives could emerge during a session (Hassi, 2015). Furthermore, cultures with tight structures are known to be intolerant of ambiguity with learners expecting to receive precise objectives as part of their training; however, in cultures with loose structures, learners are comfortable with general goals set by the expert (Weech, 2001). The results in this study substantiate similar traits as revealed by Moroccan respondents regarding limited trainee input and expectations when deciding on training objectives. Similarly, to the findings in low UA cultures as Singapore, Canadian respondents also showed that they are involved when setting objectives and changes can be made accordingly throughout a training.

In collectivistic cultures such as Morocco and Singapore, organizations consider the collective needs of the employees in planning training objectives; however, in individualistic cultures, such as Canada and Germany, the tendency is to plan training objectives based on individual needs and participants' learning objectives (Hassi, 2015). In this study, the practices of setting objectives in the Canadian sample are aligned with low UA, low PD, and individualistic cultures whereas practices in the Moroccan sample are similar to high UA, high PD, and collectivistic cultures.

4.2.5.1 Globalisation and learning objectives

When setting learning objectives in a training, Canadian respondents in this study showed an objective-setting outcome-based approach that includes trainee involvement, whereas in the Moroccan sample, directors and managers decide about the training needs and objectives of a training for work activity. Reciprocal involvement between training participants and trainers characterised the Canadian learning experience with both parties involved in deciding training objectives. In the Moroccan setting, objectives as needs assessment are determined by senior management in collaboration with training service providers; participant-trainer interaction is limited with little if any direct input from the trainees.

The setting of objectives in training for work programs is also influenced by forces of globalisation. Complexities to consider are cultural awareness, language considerations, global marketplace trends, cross-cultural relations, local adaptation, virtual and remote work, and technology (Zajda, 2021). Sustainability, diversity, inclusion, economic and political matters, and ethical concerns also play a role (Zajda, 2021). Nowadays, organisations have diverse workforces across cultures. Learning objectives (LOs) set in training programs require a sound understanding and awareness of the culture the training is delivered in to ensure that the latter is relevant to the trainees and respectful of diverse cultural values and

norms. As this study highlighted comparative cross-cultural perspectives can aid in this regard.

In a globalised world and even within national boundaries, trainees may communicate in various languages. Linguistic proficiencies assure learners that materials are available in different languages. Technological advances have significantly aided in this respect (Stephen, 2020) with online translations and transliterations easily accessible for learners. In the following research, the selected participants were either native English speakers or trainees that had high proficiency levels of English; nonetheless, Moroccan participants were asked whether they wanted the interview to be held in English or French. Participants in both samples opted for the interviews to be held in English.

LOs need to be aligned with global market trends to keep up with international standards, which may require stakeholders to keep updated with global standards, regulations, and emerging technological advances (Kim et al., 2020). In developing countries, globalisation constraints often stem from limited resources, infrastructure, and access to advanced technology. Advanced countries, on the other hand, tend to have more robust and established training programs and thus, globalisation for them may involve adapting to diverse workforces and navigating complex international regulations. Furthermore, collaborations play a role when establishing LOs in training programs. LOs need to consider fostering and nurturing cross-cultural collaborations and communication skills. Employees need to collaborate and work effectively and efficiently with colleagues, co-workers, clients, and other organizational internal and external partners from diverse backgrounds. Training requires adaptation to local contexts while setting clearly defined LOs. What works in one place, may not work well in another cultural context due to market or cultural differences. As shown in the study, cultural differences became known in this research at every phase of the learning process.

Globalisation has accelerated the use of technology for training by creating remote work options (Donnelly & Johns, 2021). LOs need to incorporate digital skills and online collaborative teamwork capabilities. LOs may need to consider synchronous and asynchronous modes of training when drafting objectives. The Canadian participants showed in the shared insights that training for work options were mounted on a more robust infrastructure compared to the Moroccan trainees.

LOs may include goals and objectives that relate to creating an inclusive workplace environment while mitigating biases. Political and economic factors impact training and learning objectives on a global scale. For example, changes and modifications in trade policies or shifts in the global economy may require employees to acquire specific knowledge or competency skills. Sustainability and ethical concerns have heightened awareness of ethical and environmental issues (Nuseir, & Ghandour, 2019). LOs may need to consider or incorporate these considerations into a training to better align with global expectations.

In brief, when setting objectives for a training for work activity, globalisation necessitates a broader perspective. The latter involves recognition of a diverse, dynamic, and interconnected facet of a globalised business environment including learning for working professionals and should align training objectives with these realities.

4.2.5.2 Agency and learning objectives

Setting training objectives for a training activity in the Moroccan sample showed that senior management with the assistance of training service providers custom design the required training with participant engagement indirect, unplanned, and limited. On the other hand, Canadian respondents mentioned considerations include trainee involvement, budgetary forecasts, and departmental requirements.

Educators, curriculum developers, or institutions typically design and determine the learning objectives of a training and while individual agency can play a role in a trainee's learning experience, it usually functions within a structured framework set by these objectives (Oliveira et al., 2021) A participant's free will can influence LOs in many ways. In some cultures, there may be a strong focus on individual agency and autonomy which allows training participants to have more influence over their own LOs. Trainees can set their own learning goals within the broader established objectives. Learners may choose to delve deeper into understanding a particular concept or aim for specific professional achievement. The latter was illustrated in the shared insights of the Canadian training participants. Despite a trainee's cultural background, learners often have personal interests and motivations that drive their learning objectives (Zacharias et al., 2021) These individual preferences allow trainees the freedom to choose professional development areas or subjects that best align with their personal interests. In this study, although departmental training needs were the main reasons for training with both samples, Canadian respondents did highlight that they had many CPD options to choose from on the campus platform presumably as a result of their robust internal training infrastructure. This allowed them to exercise their agency by having a say in the selection of their CPD activities. Individual agency can guide them to pursue LOs related to their professional and personal interest areas. On the other hand, Moroccan trainees mentioned that decisions were made by their superiors and trainees had little input in the process. Access to training is also determined by senior management in the Moroccan context.

In contrast to individualistic societies, in collectivistic cultures, societal or family expectations may take on a more significant role when shaping LOs. The latter may also be influenced by the educational systems trainees are accustomed to within a culture. Some systems are more rigid and tend to prescribe to specific LOs, as seen with the insights shared

by the Moroccan training participants, while other cultures such as Canada allow for more flexibility and custom-designed programs based on learner's choices and interests to meet their workplace needs. Different people have different learning preferences and learning styles (Manyukhina & Wyse, 2019). Individual agency allows trainees to adapt the way they approach learning and training for work to better suit their preferences and strengths even within a predetermined set of objectives presumed by their employer. Working in diverse cultural settings, I have also noted that a trainee's socio-economic status can impact a training participant's ability to pursue certain LOs. In some cultures, economic chances, opportunities, and constraints may frame the type of LOs that people can realistically pursue. Trainees can exercise individual agency in selecting the resources used to meet LOs, such as books, e-books, online resources, or study groups. Cultural expectations and norms can set the context for what is perceived as important or valuable in terms of LOs. These norms can be aligned with a trainee's individual agency or place an ineffective constraint on it. The level of social support and encouragement from peers, mentors, and colleagues can influence a learning participant's ability to pursue their desired LOs. Cultural factors may play a role in influencing the availability and nature of this support (Canning et al., 2020). Individual agency enables trainees to reflect and self-assess their progress and adapt their learning strategies and LOs accordingly. They can modify or re-evaluate their goals upon new insights. Thus, while LOs are often set by administrative stakeholders beyond the trainee and trainer, individual agency influences how trainees engage with and pursue the LOs. It allows for personalisation, adaptability, and motivation in the learning process. The extent of the role individual agency has on shaping LOs varies significantly depending on cultural values, structural factors, and societal norms within a given culture.

4.2.5.3 Gender roles and learning objectives

Gender roles influence the setting of learning objectives across several ways in training for work initiatives. Over the years, having lived and worked in both cultural contexts, I have observed that in more developed countries, patriarchal structures still exist but may be less overt or institutionalised compared to what unfolds in developing countries as Morocco. Gender stereotypes also continue to persist but are often challenged through legal frameworks and cultural shifts in more advanced societies as Canada. In the latter, women participate more in the workforce, but still face discrimination in leadership roles and unequal pay. Contrariwise, patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched in social, economic, and political structures of developing countries. The Moroccan context is by no means an exception. At the societal level, women have limited access to education and economic opportunities, which affects their participation in the workforce. Traditional gender roles dictate women's primary responsibilities as homemakers, and caregivers, limiting their engagement in formal employment. Legal protections against gender discrimination seem to be inadequately enforced, perpetuating inequalities at work. Learning objectives should not reinforce gender stereotypes (Kroese, 2022). For instance, stakeholders should avoid assuming that certain roles or skills are inherently masculine or feminine. Diverse points of view in content material can help participants see how gender roles differ across diverse cultures. LOs need to promote equality and inclusion among the various genders. This may require teaching skills and ways of doing things that may challenge traditional gender roles and norms, while promoting inclusion and diversity. Awareness of unconscious bias regarding gender roles is vital (Peterson, 2019). Training objectives can include a component on addressing biases at work. Restrictive gender roles can be broken down by empowering trainees to break free from traditional roles and interests. LOs may consider elements in the training that fosters assertiveness and self-confidence. Trainers may also create a safe and respectful learning

space where trainees feel at ease when discussing gender-related topics, issues, and challenges. Gathering feedback from trainees to assess how effective the objectives are in addressing gender roles can be helpful. In my teaching and coaching experience, continuously being in an agile and adaptable mode helps refine objectives as required. These considerations ensure that LOs are sensitive to gender roles in diverse cultural settings and promote an equitable and inclusive learning and training experience.

4.2.5.4 Power dynamics and learning objectives

Power dynamics in diverse cultural settings influence learning objectives in training for work. This study illustrated that considerations should focus on understanding cultural values and trainee's priorities (Brion, 2022), socio-economic disparities, gender roles, language, and communication (Healy, 2023), cultural biases in the content material (Fuentes et al., 2021) representation, and cultural appropriateness. Diverse cultures prioritize certain knowledge, competency skills, or values over others. Power dynamics can guide the setting of objectives in a training to align with the forces of the dominant values or interests. For instance, in collectivistic cultures as Morocco, LOs may focus on teamwork and community building. In cultural societies where economic disparities are significant, power imbalances can influence the availability and access to training resources. The former may directly influence some groups who receive more than others. Expectations and gender roles also impact LOs for work (Kroese, 2022). In cultures, with traditional gender norms, LOs may be different for people, consequently, reinforcing existing and entrenched power dynamics. Efforts to promote gender equality can challenge and reframe LOs. The dynamics of power related to language proficiency and communication can influence which languages are prioritised in LOs. The curriculum or program in a training may reflect power imbalances and power influencing LOs (Fuentes et al., 2021). For example, historical events or figures from one

cultural point of view may be emphasised over others, shaping learners' perspectives of the world. The voices and experiences that are included and excluded from the content material used in a training can be impacted by power dynamics. LOs should also be relevant and culturally appropriate. Power relations may indicate whether LOs are respectful of diverse cultures or inadvertently perpetuating biases and reinforcing stereotypes. In effort to address these power influences that impact on LOs of a training activity it is important to encourage and promote culturally appropriate programs that acknowledge and respect diversity within a society. This may require ongoing collaboration and dialogue exchanges that value diverse perspectives and actively work both implicitly and explicitly to reduce power imbalances embedded within training for work programs.

When considering setting objectives for a work-related training, power constraints can vary significantly between developed and developing countries due to differences in infrastructure, access to resources, and socio-economic factors. For example, as seen with the Canadian insights, developed countries have more abundant resources, including financial resources, technology, and educational material, which can facilitate comprehensive training programs such as the Aspiring Director Program (ADP), Director Development Program (DDP), Leadership Development Program (LDP), Manager Development Program (MDP) and so forth. Additionally, developed countries benefit from more stable infrastructures, including stable electricity supply and internet connection, reducing interruptions during training sessions. In contrast, developing countries may experience additional power constraints such as limited access to reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and technological resources. This can hinder not only the setting of objectives but the entire delivery of training programs, particularly in rural or remote areas.

Developed societies tend to also adopt advanced technologies more readily, allowing for the integration of e-learning platforms and other innovative training methods. This was evident in

the Canadian responses with references often made to the internal learning platforms of the Public Service Commission. On the other hand, Moroccan respondents made no reference to e-learning activities available to them as CPD initiatives.

The regulatory environment in developed countries often has well-established regulatory frameworks governing workplace training, ensuring quality international standards and compliance with regulations. However, political uncertainty, economic issues, and insufficient government support may impair power constraints by affecting funding availability and policy frameworks for workplace development. Overall, while both developed and developing countries encounter power constraints in workplace training, the nature and severity of these constraints vary based on the socio-economic context and the available infrastructure.

4.2.6 Designing activities for trainees

Canadian interviewees' insights about the design phase of learning activities highlighted two major subheadings: first, question six of the interview protocol probed about the role of participants with the latter characterized as active; collaborative; interactive; independent; self-directed; pro-active, and participatory. Second, the findings revealed use of methodologies such as learning by doing as contributing to the design phase of the learning process. The Moroccan sample showed that the onus of designing activities for training rests with expert service providers. Also, learning by listening and retaining material seems to be the most prevalent approach that emerged with training participants taking on a less active role in the process.

With the role of participants in the Canadian sample, the responses illustrate that participant involvement is a key feature of the learning process. Interviewee C1 maintained that *“With most of the training I have attended these past few years, participants are actively*

involved throughout the whole process. Respondent C3 added that *“I have to say, my role has been of an active participant.”* A few research participants referred to a ‘hands-on’ approach; interviewee C5 quoted that *“In the PM short program, courses – the role of participants was a combination of following lecture style teaching and hands-on practical exercises working in small groups in a computer lab.”* Similarly, participant C6 added that *“Initially we set the guidelines with the consultant; during the training, we are actively involved and engaged in the learning process, and after the session, we reflect on what has been learned and evaluate the program and consultant.”* Research respondent C9 also mentioned that *“Participants are heavily involved in their training process.”* Furthermore, interviewee C8 cited that *“With in-house seminars, participants are active throughout the programs.”* Aspects of collaboration that also frame this step of the learning process emerged in participant C10’s quotation:

“The role before the session is collaborative in the sense that we hash out the objectives and program together with the trainers during the needs analysis sessions; during the training it is very interactive; and after it goes back to an independent role where we try to use what we learned on our own.”

A few respondents made references to self-directed and pro-active learning, for instance, interviewee C14 stated that *“my role as a participant was self-directed and pro-active.”* *We read independently though.”* Both participants C17 and C16 mentioned self-directed learning in their responses: *“It was self-directed; we were encouraged to refer back to our course manuals.”* The participatory facet surfaced in respondent C20’s reaction when they stated that *“At the start, we are attentive and listen; during the course, it is more participatory with more active involvement, and after the course, seminar or workshop, it’s more self-directed.”*

Regarding the role of Moroccan training participants with respect to the design stage, words emerging from the interviews were termed as follows: passive; listener; attentive; limited talk; and follower. Most respondents referred to being a listener during a training activity. This is exemplified in participant M5’s response: *“We listen and participate in the*

seminar.” Similarly, another cited *“I would say trainees listen and learn to reach their training goals during the program and as expected, increase their performance after the program is over”* (M11). The role as listener was highlighted by interviewee M15 when they stated that *“Participants are usually very engaged all the time by listening to the trainer and following attentively the seminar.”* Also, claiming to be learning by listening more was respondent M17 as she commented that *“At first, we listen to the instructor, then we work the material, and at the end we have projects to prepare about something related to our work.* Likewise, interviewee M20 illustrated it with an example, stating that *“Training participants, from my experience, listen more to the instructor and follow what they want us to do...’in a seminar I wanted to cover more corporate finance material instead of cases that focused on financial markets, but the instructor did not make any changes, he continued with his original plan. [Did you enjoy the seminar?] Yes, but it was not especially useful for me. I just listened and talked a little.”*

Additionally, some made comments about playing a passive role. Illustrating the latter, interviewee M3 quoted: *“The role starts passive, usually we listen and follow directions from the trainer”*. Respondent M21 revealed that their role was both passive and communicative: *“Role of participants in our seminars, is both passive and interactive.* Some described the role as quiet; M4 said: *“Participants are quiet at first, then we are more talkative and there is no follow up after we are finished.”* Another participant mentioned that little discussion takes place in training as M7 pointed out: *“We listen the professor. [Are there many discussions during the training?] Not a lot.”* Interviewee M13 described the role as *“super attentive.”* Respondent M11 mentioned the *“trainees listen and learn to reach their training goals.”* Participant M16 said that her role was *“Passive, I just listened to them and took notes in my notebook.”* When asked about what the role of the instructor in a training should be, references were made to an active and dynamic instructor role; respondent M2’s thoughts on

the issue were: *“The instructor should tell and share more than learners; they have a more major part because he/she knows more and better than us.”*

The second emergent theme related to the design phase was about the use of various learning methods apparent in a Canadian PD learning context. Findings indicate that training methods are flexible and adjustable in efforts to best meet the aims and objectives of the training provided.

In terms of flexibility, many Canadian respondents revealed that methods are more flexible, adaptable, and delivered at a measured pace to accommodate professional learners with their manifold of tasks and responsibilities they have related to work. Participant C3 stated that methods are compromising: *“They are not rigid; they are very flexible. If something is not working, trainers change it.* Respondent C7 said that *“For LD programs, most instructors or coaches are flexible. I have not been part of programs that I would describe as rigid.”* Another illustrated in their example that they were invariably flexible:

“In one of my recent training sessions about safety and security at work, while the instructor was getting ready to hand out copies of a case study to work on in groups, some participants told him they preferred to watch the corresponding videos of the companies in the case study, he immediately switched as if he was prepared for that. It was the end of the business day; colleagues were tired and wanted to passively watch videos rather than to read text. I really appreciate that agility in training activities.”

The flexibility with relation to time was also voiced by interviewee C13 when they cited that *“We have many dates to choose from when selecting our programs.”* Training programs are structured yet flexible as mentioned in C12’s response when they added that *“They are flexible in the sense that the module can be completed at a measured pace but are carefully structured modules from the onset.”* A few respondents explained that the methods were not rigid, for example see participant C3’s comments noted above and C5 citing *“I personally haven’t felt them to be rigid.”* Independent work was also brought up in the interviews, for instance interviewee C2 said: *“we followed up independently at home [...] the readings we*

did independently at home.” Respondent C20 mentioned how some instructors tailor programs in corporate training:

“Most professors or in-house trainers are quite flexible; they assess our needs and work on a plan from there. Even the university courses for professionals are flexible in the sense that they give us more time to work on assignments; they use case studies reflecting real work situations – this is great.”

Likewise participant C17 mentioned that *“I found the MDP flexible, the blended learning structure is helpful for busy professionals. [Were the trainers/coaches professionally qualified?] They were expert coaches, very qualified professional consultants.”*

The writings on employee learning and national culture indicates that the latter impacts the selection of training content including the sequences and modularisation of training at the design phase (Hoff, 2002). In high PD cultures, the training expert is the main, if not the only source of information for participants as trainees accept what is transferred to them by the subject area expert at face value without questioning the instructors’ “power” (Joy and Kolb, 2009). Thus, the need for learners to form their own points of view through concrete experience is low. Moroccan insights in this sample confirm similar preferences as responses revealed a hierarchical approach of knowledge transfer from the trainer to the trainee.

In cases where the need to structure and make sense of material provided by the instructor is high, there is a preference of learners in these high PD cultures towards vague and intangible conceptualization (Joy and Kolb, 2009). Along the same lines, organizations from high PD cultures such as Morocco and Singapore have been found to resort to hierarchy and do not give much latitude to participants when planning training content; conversely, organizations from Canada and Germany, which are considered low PD cultures, inclinations are to adopt an inclusive approach to planning content encouraging participants to engage and be part of the learning (Hassi, 2015). Results of the present study showed that trainee input

when setting objectives and designing training programs is low in the Moroccan context as senior management play a significant role in the training, while Canadian responses revealed contrasting findings with trainee involvement occurring throughout the various learning phases.

In high UA cultures, learners have been found to be more comfortable with structured learning situations and concerned with concrete and correct answers because these cultures value the information and knowledge delivered by the instructor and consider it as the best explanation to the problem (Jaju et al., 2002). Also, this Moroccan sample showed similar leanings in this regard. Hence, individuals with a strong tendency to avoid uncertainty are more likely to prefer abstract concepts with one correct answer that is accurate (Joy and Kolb, 2009) rather than prefer responses based on concrete experiences with a wide variety of potential outcomes and interpretations.

On another note, organizations belonging to high UA cultures such as Germany and Morocco, studies indicate higher levels of rigidity at the planning phase of content design for a training; whereas, Singaporean organizations, which are part of a low uncertainty avoidance culture, showed lower rigidity levels with fewer restrictions when planning content (Hassi, 2015). Aspects of inflexibility at various phases of the learning process also surfaced in the Moroccan sample of the current research. Conversely, Canadian, and German organizations, as individualistic cultures, have been found to emphasize individual needs and objectives when planning training content material (Hassi, 2015). Canadian responses in this study are indicative of a similar orientation in this regard.

The design phase of the learning process is defined as the instructional methods or techniques used to best meet target learning objectives. The design phase identifies the teaching and learning process and lays down the conditions and activities performed by the

trainers and learners in order to achieve the required learning outcomes (Conole and Fill, 2005). Marquardt (1990) argues that with the teaching methods selection, professionals should question three main points: What methodological approach is the individual or group expecting to receive? According to the instructor, which methods would best fit the learners' needs? And which methods would best compliment the learners? (Marquardt, 1990, p. 23). This comparative study revealed that cultural dimensions in diverse contexts shed light on varied approaches trainees expect to receive from their trainers or coaches, as well as which methods work best for diverse types of training participants.

A variety of learning methods characterise the western approach to knowledge acquisition. Learning by doing is customary practice in North America and Nordic countries with experiential learning considered as an effective technique when seeking and acquiring knowledge; learners are actively engaged as they work on case studies, simulations, role-plays, etc. (Marquardt et al., 2004; Waddill et al., 2010). Canadian professionals learning for work in this study also steer towards high self-direction, experiential, and independent learning. On the other hand, individuals in more collectivistic countries believe that the task to transfer knowledge belongs to the instructor who is a role model to emulate. Experiential learning is perceived to make an individual look imprudent; in these cases, the role of the instructor is to demonstrate and teach the correct approaches while the trainee listens and recalls important points (Marquardt et al., 2004; Waddill, 2010). Similar points of view were shared by Moroccan trainees in this research study.

In cultures characterized with a high degree of PD, individuals tend to learn better from passive methods rather than active methods (Rodrigues, 2005) and are at ease with approaches they are accustomed and familiar with, rather than be more inclined to explore new and innovative methods (Hassi, 2012). Empirically, organizations in Morocco and Singapore, which are both high PD cultures, were found to resort to authority and do not give

much leeway to participants when planning on use of teaching methods for a training; but with organizations from Canada and Germany, which are low PD cultures, the latter tend to adopt a more inclusive approach to selecting methods while giving more latitude to trainees when deciding about training methods (Hassi, 2015). Similarly, in tight structure cultures, training participants expect lucid and clear structured programmes that focus on the most effective ways to solving problems; by contrast, in cultures with loose structures where weak social norms and a high tolerance of deviant behaviour (Gelfand et al., 2011) are present, there are numerous ways to approach problem-solving issues as learning participants see innovative and original responses as a significant part of the learning process. In these situations, learners are more comfortable with training programmes that unfold in a fluid and flexible manner. Canadian responses revealed comparable characteristics in this study.

Learners from cultures marked by strong UA tend to learn better from passive methods, whereas trainees from cultures with weak UA learn better through active teaching techniques such as the business case study method (Rodrigues, 2005); for instance, open-ended training strategies targeting a good solution rather than a precise and exact response can be perceived as renunciation of trainers' responsibility by learning participants whose need for UA avoidance is strong (Hassi, 2012). In designing training methods, organizations in high UA cultures such as Germany and Morocco, show high level of rigidity as training methods were selected before the training delivery and non-planned training methods could be used during the training session; whereas Singaporean organizations, which belong to a low UA culture, do not exhibit rigidity as some training methods could be selected progressively during the training session (Hassi, 2015).

In individualistic cultures such as Northern European countries, participants' value independence and self-sufficiency and are comfortable working individually; however, in collectivistic cultures, learners tend to focus on group-oriented, collaborative, and

harmonious accord even if one may disagree on something, as with many cases in Africa (Weech, 2001). In this regard, Ndoye (2003) notes that discussions with other mature farmers are the most effective forms of learning in rural Senegal. In an empirical study, Hassi (2015) found that in collectivistic cultures such as Morocco and Singapore, organizations emphasized the collective needs with training methods favouring collaboration and progression as a group despite the risk of slowing down some learners throughout a training session (Hassi, 2015). Canadian insights in the present study are aligned with traits seen in individualistic cultures, and the responses from the Moroccan interviewees corroborated what unfolds in collectivistic cultures.

In the design phase and in respect to PD, approaches to feedback, participation, and contribution in the sharing of knowledge, self-directed sufficiency, and sources of learning preferences may differ by the degree of compassion and understanding in the relations with those who have power. Individuals from collectivistic cultures are more inclined towards group activities rather than gravitate towards independent-oriented activities that focus on individual values and goals (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Similar predispositions as presented in the literature surfaced in this comparative study.

The findings in this Canadian sample illustrate various learning methodologies are used to best meet the individual learning needs of training participants as opposed to traditional lecture style methods where knowledge is acquired by listening, remembering, and recalling information provided by a trainer. Additionally, trainees and external learning resources such as expert service providers contribute to the learning process in the Canadian sample. On the other hand, Moroccan responses show that learning by listening and retaining material is the prevailing approach as trainees described themselves as listeners who follow the training delivered by their consultants, trainers, or coaches attentively. Hence, the insights

shared in the current study are aligned with the cultural influences highlighted in the literature on the design phase of training activities for work-related purposes.

4.2.6.1 Globalisation and design

In relation to the design step of the learning process, Canadian participants mentioned two important considerations, namely the active, collaborative, and participatory role of the trainee in the design phase, and the use of preferred methodologies such as learning by doing. Contrarily, Moroccan respondents highlighted that the onus of designing adequate learning activities is a responsibility of the expert training providers and learning by listening and retaining material is the most prevalent approach to knowledge acquisition.

In a globalised world, globalisation has facilitated access to a wider range of learning resources from around the world. The latter includes online modules, e-books, access to videos, and access to expert advice and teaching from distinct cultures; factors that allow for a more comprehensive and diverse training experience. Nowadays, training programs include culturally sensitive training material that ensures trainee's awareness of and respect for the diversity they encounter at the workplace. With the explosion of IT in our lives, e-learning and remote training have become common training practices and options (Donnelly & Johns, 2021). This facilitates cross-cultural collaborations and learning while breaking down barriers based on geopolitical assumptions. More training programs are tailored-made to cater to the preferences and organisational needs of diverse groups.

Language options, cultural examples, and local case studies may be included in custom-designed training modules or programs created for the workplace. At present, many organisations, and companies have global teams which require collaboration and effective communication across cultures. Organisations are increasingly opting for training methods that adapt to cultural norms and values of diverse regional contexts (Yaghi & Bates, 2020).

This may require an adjustment to teaching styles, content material, and assessment methods. Globalisation has led to more adaptable and diverse training methods that are mindful of a trainee's cultural context. This approach aids organisations and companies to adequately prepare their employees to work efficiently in a globally dynamic world.

4.2.6.2 Agency and design

Individual agency influences learning methods regarding the choices of training programs, the learning pace, the teaching methods, the selection of resources, knowledge acquisition, feedback, self-directed learning, and overall motivation and commitment (Oliveira et al., 2021; Zacharias et al., 2021). As this study showed, in individualistic cultures, trainees may have more personal autonomy and freedom to choose their preferred ways of learning, whether it be self-directed learning, collaborative, formal modular based instruction, face-to-face, synchronous, or asynchronous. Individual agency and personal interests can impact the choices of subjects or skills learners want to further develop (Manyukhina & Wyse, 2019). In some cultures, pressure to follow traditional expectations may prevail, while other cultural settings may encourage trainees to pursue one's interests. Training participants exercising free will can be selective and choose modules, courses, or programs that align with their professional development interests and goals. Individuals that can exercise agency have the autonomy to decide what they want to learn, which can positively influence their motivation and engagement in the learning process. Moreover, cultural norms can influence the learning pace of a trainee (Canning et al., 2020). Individual agency allows learners to set their own learning pace. In cultures that value autonomy, trainees may have the freedom to set their own learning pace. Some trainees may prefer a fast-paced, intensive approach, while other learners may opt for a slower and more measured learning experience. A trainee's ability to make these choices can affect their ease and success in the training activity. In various

cultures, training programs may need to be adapted to various learning methods to accommodate different learning preferences. As illustrated in this comparative study, some trainees may take a self-directed learning approach where they take part in designing their own agenda, objectives, and learning plan. This elevated level of independence can lead to effective and personalised outcomes. In other cases, as was illustrated with the Moroccan insights, some trainees thrive with very authoritative teaching styles, whereas Canadian trainees prefer more facilitative learner-centred approaches. Training material and program content can also be custom designed to align with trainee's goals and personal interests (Oliveira et al., 2021). Learners can be empowered to exercise their individual agency in choosing what they want to learn within the broader training framework. Cultures also vary in how they engage and motivate training participants at work (Zacharias et al., 2021). Some rely on intrinsic motivation and personal goals, while others focus on extrinsic incentives or social pressure. Acknowledging these differences may influence the efficiency and effectiveness of training methods. Knowledge acquisition and how trainees apply knowledge at work also influences individual agency in workplaces. Free will allows trainees to decide what they want to do with their newly acquired knowledge. They may decide to apply it to their current work-related tasks, explore new career prospects, or use it for personal development and enrichment. Culturally sensitive evaluations and feedback processes are vital when exercising individual agency at work (Castanelli et al., 2022). This study showed that in some individualistic cultural contexts as Canada, direct and constructive critical feedback is appreciated and valued, while other more collectivistic cultures as Morocco prefer an undirected but supportive approach to feedback and evaluation. Respecting individual agency in how feedback is provided to trainees is very crucial. In some cultures, collective decision-making and group dynamics play a significant role in the training. As a trainer, I have observed that respect for individual agency within a group-oriented

environment enhances effective learning. In general, grasping the importance the influence of individual agency within diverse cultures is beneficial for designing inclusive and effective training programs that take into consideration the values, norms, and preferences of trainees from diverse cultural backgrounds. Free will helps to shape learning methods to achieve optimal learning outcomes. Agency empowers learners to make choices that are aligned with preferences, interests, organisational objectives, and personal goals, enhancing the overall learning experience and success.

4.2.6.3 Gender roles and design

Gender differences can be influenced by cultural and societal norms, with manifestations of patriarchy varying between developing and developed countries. In developing countries, patriarchal structures might be deeply engrained, impacting access to education and training opportunities for women. Traditional gender roles may also limit women's participation in certain types of training, and there may be fewer resources allocated for PD activities. While progress has been made in more advanced societies, gender disparities in workplace training can still exist. However, the nature of patriarchy might be more subtle with issues like gender bias, stereotypes, or unequal opportunities for career advancement. Advanced countries may also have more established policies and initiatives promoting gender equality, nonetheless, challenges persist. Addressing gender differences and dynamics of patriarchy in workplace training requires a nuanced understanding of each society's unique cultural and social context. This comparative cross-cultural analysis of the differences in learning for work explaining the *what* and the *how* of the participants insights provided for a granular view of the cultural context.

Promoting gender equality in training requires challenging and changing gender role dynamics. Issues such as access to training, teaching styles, stereotypes, aspirations, social

influences, and role models require consideration. In some cultural contexts, an individual's gender may limit access to training, with male colleagues receiving preferential treatment over female colleagues (Jayachandran, 2021). This often leads to disproportionate access to opportunities and outcomes (Cassad et al., 2021). Limited access can result in major disparities at work. Gender roles also affect teaching styles and content used during program delivery (Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020). For instance, in cultures where traditional gender roles are prominent, people may be taught differently, thus reinforcing stereotypical roles. Stereotypes and expectations can be influenced by gender (Kroese, 2022) in terms of what is appropriate or expected behaviour for men and women. The interactions between trainer and trainees and the types of activities an instructor assigns can be impacted. This study illustrated that the trainee-trainer relationship in the Canadian sample was described as a collaborative two-way rapport, whereas Moroccan respondents described the relationship as professional and formal.

Gender roles, in some cultures, may limit career paths or choices that individuals are advised to follow. The latter impacts the type of training and learning outcomes considered relevant for males or females. Over the years, I have observed that social norms and pressure from colleagues impacts learning. For example, male colleagues may be discouraged from participating in certain activities perceived as 'soft skill' development better suited for 'feminine' colleagues and vice versa. The absence or presence of role models of a particular gender in certain positions can impact employees' perceptions of what is achievable and desirable. Implementing gender-sensitive teaching methods at the design phase of a training, while providing equal access to training and promoting diverse gender role models in various fields including leadership and management is important in recognizing that the influence of gender on learning methods can vary across diverse cultures.

4.2.6.4 Power dynamics and design

Learning methods in training are influenced by power in terms of hierarchy and authority (Cardador, et al., 2022) collectivism and individualism, communication styles (Healy, 2023), training approaches (Fuentes et al., 2021) cultural norms (Brion, 2022), gender dynamics (Kroese, 2022), and more recently across technological access (Cassad et al., 2021). This study showed that training methods may be more structured and instructor-centred in cultures that value hierarchy and authority. In these cultures, trainees may be less likely to question or challenge the trainer; consequently, leading to a top-down flow of information as was found in the present study. Cultures that prioritize collectivism may focus on learning in groups and building consensus. Meanwhile, self-directed learning and personal achievement may be encouraged in individualistic cultures as was found in the Canadian sample. Power forces at work can also influence communication styles. In low PD cultures such as Canada, open dialogue may be encouraged, meanwhile, in places with high PD cultural tendencies, trainees may be hesitant to ask questions or speak openly in front of authoritative figures. Regarding teaching approaches, styles may vary significantly. Some cultures may value experiential learning and practical firsthand approaches, whereas other cultures may prefer conceptual and theoretical approaches. Teaching methods require regular re-alignment with cultural values and norms. To illustrate, cultures that value humility tend to prefer situations that are less confrontational but competitive learning environments. Some cultures may have strong historical connections to their traditions. Training methods should acknowledge and include trainees' stories and knowledge of traditions when relevant to the modules or training programs. Power dynamics need to be understood in relation to gender roles and trainees' expectations as this may influence learning methods. Some cultures may impose gender specific expectations for how a training should be conducted. Socio-economic factors also influence technological access and resources. At the training methods phase, stakeholders

should consider the digital divide to ensure inclusiveness. Considering the findings in this comparative study, cultural awareness for trainers and curriculum designers is crucial when adapting and tailoring approaches to align within a cultural context. This will lead to a more balanced and respectful training experience.

4.2.7 Executing learning experiences

In the previous section, questions six and seven focused on describing the findings based on the role of participants and the learning methods at the design phase of the process. Queries prompted in Q8 and Q9 of the interview protocol were carefully designed to elicit responses related to training techniques utilized by trainers, as well as, expected learning outcomes from professional learners. The Canadian sample showed that instructors and learners are responsible for implementing or executing their learning experiences. The findings prompted descriptive key words and short phrases labelled as: trainer-dependent; learning provider; seasoned instructors and coaches; professional consultants; expertise; well-structured modules; and ability to execute learned tasks.

Professional training providers are expected to deliver excellent service to professional learners in the workplace as an expectation of training outcomes. Interviewee C1 mentioned that:

“I think, it is all about the trainer. If you get an experienced and knowledgeable instructor, course objectives are met because they follow through the learning plan – especially private individual training – we decide that together - and they make sure the outcomes are achieved. That is how we assess them too, if outcomes are not achieved, we simply do not renew contracts with those learning providers.”

Most respondents rely on expert coaches, consultants, and instructors to ensure the learning objectives are met and outcomes are positive. Participant C3 stated that it *“Depends on the instructor they send us; professional consultants tend to meet objectives and the outcome is positive. An interactive and open exchange between two professionals usually leads to*

positive results.” Similarly, respondent C6 added that outcomes are met when specific criteria are followed: *“Custom-designed programs to best fit the participants’ needs for their specific requested training and seasoned consultants that are sharp and meet the training objectives.* Training experts must be very qualified to meet objectives and achieve trainee outcomes, respondent C17 cited: *“They were expert coaches, very qualified professional consultants.”* Lastly, interviewee C18 declared that knowledgeable instructors help attain learner outcomes: *“In my opinion, it is all about the professor; the more knowledgeable in the subject the professor is, the more learning outcomes are achieved by learners in the course.”*

The way instructors align objectives of a training with the participant’s expectations also leads to a positive outcome output claimed participant C7: *“It is all about the coach or instructor and how well they align the objectives of the courses with expectations of our desired outcomes. Experienced coaches can do this very efficiently.* Respondent C9 stated that *“Learning outcomes depend heavily on training methods.”* Motivation is also a factor as revealed by interviewee C8 when they cited: *“This is dependent on how efficient, knowledgeable, and motivating the instructor or coach is. Coaches that have an impact on the participants achieve the course objectives with ease.”* Applying what one learns also contributes to attaining constructive learning outcomes in a training: *“If we can apply what we learned from the modules effectively then in my opinion it has been an effective course and outcomes would have been met.”* Task-oriented activities when designing training programs are helpful: *“If the objectives of the course/seminar are achieved and the employee can identify and explain concepts they learned and transfer some of that knowledge towards task-oriented activities for work while enhancing competencies’ skills, then I think learning outcomes are met.”*

However, the Moroccan sample showed that interviewees mostly agree that the training methods utilized in their professional training are predetermined, inflexible and more rigid than not. This was confirmed by several respondents, for instance interviewee M1 cited: *“Seminars are pre-set from the beginning, they don’t change much, maybe minor modifications during the seminars but nothing significant.”* Additionally participant M3 mentioned that *“The training methods are both rigid and little flexible.”* Interviewee M9 on the question of flexibility versus rigid nature of the training, stated that *“We have short training from time to time and I do not believe they are flexible. [Why is that?] Because the trainer comes already prepared and delivers his seminar; yes, they make slight changes, but few.”* Likewise, other participants such as M10 added: *“They have mostly been rigid in order to avoid slack and stay focused”* and M25 specified that *“When a program is pre-set, it cannot be flexible.”* Also, a few respondents acknowledged there is some flexibility sometimes, interviewee M12 quoted: *“Both but more rigid”* and M6 said: *“A little of both. Some changes are made, but they are usually minor; the instructor decides how they want to deliver the information.”* Similarly, participant M17 noted: *“It was a combination of both, since you should follow the outlines or the plan of the training.”* Interviewee M13 mentioned that in her area, flexibility was not an option at all: *“Usually super rigid in my domain; we have no room for error, and we need to do things the only way they should be done. They cannot be flexible.”* Thus, the revealing data indicates that training methods are nonflexible, pre-planned and structured from the onset in the Moroccan sample of the study.

Furthermore, it emerged from the responses that methods are also characterized as instructor dependent as noted by interviewee M4: *“Training methods depend on the trainer, if you get a rigid person, they will deliver in a rigid way; if you get a more flexible trainer, the sessions will be better.”* In agreement, respondent M16 cited that they follow plans accordingly: *“In my experience, I am not lucky, I did not have the chance to get interesting*

training methods. During my training sessions, I had to follow my supervisors' instructions and only ask trainers questions for clarifications. [So, they are not very flexible?] Not at all, we do not decide about that. If we are lucky to have some training, we are grateful and follow instructions. Further, respondent M20 confirmed that "Training methods depend on who is giving the training." Interestingly, interviewee M19 expressed aversion to change: "I think if an instructor or consultant needs to make too many changes to the plan, there is a problem; in my opinion, it means he/she does not know what they are doing well."

When asked about training methods, respondent M8 commented that *"I trust professors have more experience in effective training methodologies. Participants should contribute with ideas for improvements and feedback."* Many respondents placed the responsibility on the instructor to make sure training participants meet the objectives of a training, respondent M9 said: *"In my views, outcomes are achieved if the instructor does a good job, and participants are happy with what they learn."* In a comparable manner, interviewee M11 cited that *"In my opinion, this also depends on the instructor; if they are specialist or experts, they will make sure that participants learn the material well, if not so experienced, unfortunately, learning objectives will not be met."* Furthermore, participant M2 believed that *"To achieve learning objectives efficiently depends on the instructor/consultant we get. Some are professional and good, others not so good."*

Studies show that the notion of implementation in learning encompasses the role of the trainers and participants involved in the learning, and effective techniques used in the process (Marquardt and Reynolds, 1994). In the US, both trainers and learning participants play an active role in the implementation of the learning process with learning by doing as the most effective and dominant technique. Canadian respondents in this study confirmed that learning by doing is what typically unfolds in training for work seminars and modules. In other cultures, the implementation of the learning rests with the trainers or subject area

experts; instructors elicit and model the way to do things for training participants to follow and imitate with experiential learning seen as risky and a way to expose learners to vulnerabilities that may make them feel foolish as adults (Marquardt and Reynolds 1994). Although there were no references to susceptibilities in the Moroccan responses that indicated inhibitions on the part of a trainee, an expectation of knowledge transfer from the 'expert' to the learner was often mentioned.

Learning styles include culture-bound cognitive schemes because of cultural socialisation and mental programming (Barmeyer, 2004). Short-term oriented cultures are motivated by the immediate application of the learning outcome (Dimitrov, 2006), favour pragmatic, experiential and practical forms of instruction rather than abstract, notional, and theoretical ones (Hassi, 2013). In feminine cultures, support by the group in terms of expectations and harmony with the team or organization are necessary; however, in masculine cultures, they are more purposeful with a focus on outcomes (Kim and McLean, 2014). As slightly patriarchal cultures, both the Canadian and Moroccan insights illustrated the importance of attaining outcomes upon completion of a training.

The cultural dimension of UA exerts influences on reflective observation (Kayes, 2005); with low UA cultures, as in Nordic countries, the opportunity for reflection and innovative ideas are recommended and encouraged to discover new differences among participants (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). But, in cultures with high UA, such as Middle Eastern countries, experts prepare well-thought-out plans and elicit ideas to the learning participants in formal ways (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Similarly, this study found that in the Moroccan context, trainers as directed by senior management, are responsible for the formal planning of the training to be provided. Trainee input has been found to be limited compared to their role in the Canadian sample which revealed that training participants play a more active role in the planning of their training programs.

In cultures with low UA, participants are at ease with problem questions without necessarily looking for exact answers; the idea of this style of acquiring new insights on issues is to encourage learners to seek and explore innovative approaches to problem-solving issues with intellectual disagreement regarded as a stimulant to the process (Hassi, 2013). Similarly, Barmeyer (2000) suggests that trainees inclined towards reflective observation illustrate a vigilant and meditative approach towards new insights, which is more aligned with behaviours exhibited among cultures with high UA. Instructional instructor-focused techniques are developed in high PD and in contexts with strong control of uncertainty (Deal, 2004) as in the Moroccan milieu. However, trainee-centred, and experiential techniques are commonly used and implemented in cultures with a low PD such the USA, Canada, UK, and Nordic countries, as well as, with low UA countries (Hassi, 2012). Weech (2001) suggests that in individualistic cultures that value independence, as in Northern Europe, independent learning is encouraged and learning participants are stimulated to engage in dynamic discussions that highlight individual expression of ideas (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009); however, in collectivistic contexts, mature learners grasp agreements and pacts in unison as seen with many communal tribes in Africa. To illustrate, Ndoye (2003) states that interactive talks with older farmers are the most effective ways to learn current information for rural Senegalese farmers. Insights in this study illustrated similar features for the Canadian sample as a low UA cultural context and Morocco as a high UA setting.

Regarding sources of learning, based on Flynn and Tannenbaum's (2006) empirical research on continuing education in China, Japan, Korea and the USA, a trainees' highest rank superior was a vital learning source for employees in all four countries even though formal education has more importance in the USA and China compared to Japan and South Korea. Personal life trajectories deepened the Japanese learning experience based on principles of trial and error and due to routine extensive reading on various subjects.

Similarly, Ndoye (2003) found that Senegalese mature farmers favoured acquiring knowledge from teachers they were familiar with rather than exchange ideas with external trainers because for them the knowledge of their own people is rooted and entrenched in the same collective farm. Further, in cultures with high PD, trainees are not actively expected to learn new things from their own individual experiences, but on the other hand, there is an expectation that learners in low PD cultures should seek their own “intellectual paths” (Jaju et al., 2002). In cultures orientated towards experiential learning such as many Nordic countries, professionals on training willingly seek new insights based on learner experiences; the latter embedded in principles of Protestantism which advance an education that grants individuals an active role in influencing their destined paths (Hassi & Storti, 2011). Contrariwise, in other cultures, learning from each other and favouring equal contributions of each member could be traced to the egalitarian character of their national culture which minimises inequalities (Weech, 2001) and plays down individual status. This research study further contributes to the literature by aligning Canadian and Moroccan insights with what occurs in low and high PD cultures.

Regarding the instructor role, cultures with low PD deliver training that focusses on learning with effectiveness interconnected with communicative exchanges between trainers and trainees and between trainees and their peers (Hassi, 2012). On the other hand, cultures with strong control of uncertainty expect the experts to have correct answers to any question they pose during a training session. Trainers are looked upon as knowledgeable experts and attempts at intellectual disagreement may often be perceived as ill-mannered and impolite (Hassi, 2012). To illustrate, Hassi (2013) found that Canadian trainees appreciate trainers that play the role of a facilitator, consultant, and organiser. Whereas, in Morocco, the instructor plays a key role in the training provided and is considered the introducer of new insights by training participants (Hassi, 2013). Furthermore, Moroccan trainees expect trainers to have a

lot of knowledge in their area of expertise and expect intelligent and quick responses to questions posed during a session. This trait, however, may stem from the wisdom held by the trainer who shares knowledge and expertise with the aim to obtain desired learning outcomes (Hassi et al., 2011). Training professionals are considered role models to be guided by and imitate, like the perceptions individuals hold about leaders (Hassi et al., 2011) which could inspire trainees to seek knowledge from the experts. The latter is a common attribute of cultures with a high PD which assume that wisdom resides in hierarchy and age and training is dependent on the knowledge of senior experts (Hassi and Storti, 2011). For example, in the Turkish setting, instructors, from the start are expected to tell learners about the challenging issues in the cases presented in a training session, rather than have trainees figure things out themselves (Apaydin, 2008). In cultures with high UA, such as the MENA countries, trainers elicit thoughts and ideas to the training participants (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Similar comparable characteristics surfaced in the current sample corroborating leanings in the Moroccan and Canadian cultural context; in this regard, Moroccan trainees perceive their trainers as experts that share their knowledge on subject matter and Canadian respondents revealed that trainers are perceived as facilitators.

In what concerns learners' role, American trainers have found that in efforts to support harmony among the group, Chinese learners tend to make decisions based on what is in the teams' best interest as opposed to expressing their individual preferences (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008). Trainees in the Chinese context are commonly referred to as passive learners that are very reluctant to engage in reviewing material from peers within their teams; consequently, they shy away from giving what may be perceived as negative feedback, albeit that it may be helpful and constructive information. Discussions with their instructors are also limited, particularly on topics related to their training peers (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008). Similarly, as participative learning has not been customary, Turkish learners' express

uneasiness when asked to question their instructors or colleagues (Apaydin, 2008). Hassi (2013) found that Moroccan trainees want the right answer and show frustration with the absence of a ‘correct solution’ to their questions; they enjoy learning in teams directed by an expert who they believe they should learn from as they follow the trainers’ structured plan regarding case-based training.

Cultures with a high PD in designing training tend to be more instructor-centred with effectiveness as the end-product of the trainer’s knowledge and expertise (Weech, 2001), placing the learner in a position of knowledge-receiver. Mature adult learners in the Moroccan context perceive themselves as apprentices working under the supervision of the ‘master’ until they are skilled in the subject area themselves (Hassi, 2013). In this setting, trainees are good collaborators working collaboratively rather than working things out by themselves, confirming the idea that learning constitutes a collective experience rather than an individual activity; this can be explained by the fact that the Moroccan culture is characterised as collectivistic. On the other end, Canadian training participants claim to play a pro-active role in the learning process with the former gravitating towards experiential learning techniques while considering trainers as facilitators (Hassi, 2013). In training sessions, mature Canadian learners showed an easiness working independently, are comfortable with conducting activities on their own, and making independent decisions (Hassi, 2013) which is due to the individualistic nature of their national culture; a national culture that values autonomy (Weech, 2001). The current study contributes to this body of knowledge as it confirms similar underlining cultural influences at play regarding training in general, and the role of the learner in a Canadian and Moroccan context.

4.2.8 Learning techniques

Learning by doing is an aspect of learning theories dating back to the Sophists; it is the process whereby people make sense of experiences through active engagement in exploring what is being taught; the latter may be applied to a wide variety of learning situations, and to training approaches in which trainers seek to engage learners in more hands-on creative ways of the acquisition of subject-matter (Bruce & Bloch, 2012).

In the Canadian sample, LBD is considered an effective technique when executing and delivering professional training for the workplace. Learner engagement was recognized in the findings, as illustrated in interviewee C2's response to the question about whether LBD was an effective method: *"100% yes, personally it is one of the most effective learning approaches for me. I learn best when I am engaged in the process of an activity."* Several participants mentioned a desire to be part of the process, participant C5 said: *"Yes, of course being part of the process and engaging in it is effective to internalize the material."* Respondent C10 also mentioned involvement: *"Yes, very much so because as a learner I don't forget the details if I am involved in the process."* Likewise, interviewee C18 summarised it concisely when citing, *"Yes, we learners need to feel part of the process of the exchange, otherwise, we forget quickly."*

On the other hand, when probed about the learning by doing technique, many participants in the Moroccan sample made similar remarks as interviewee M1: *"It's new for us here in Morocco."* Along the same lines, respondent M3 stated that *"LBD is very effective, but it is not common here yet. We still listen more and practice little."* Additionally, participant M6 held that *"LBD is very effective, but we are not used to this in our context. We need more practical training, hands-on work."* Furthermore, interviewee M7 stated that LBD was not common in workplace training: *"Not yet, we have some group discussions about what we*

learn but hands on practice, not in my training experience. [How do you practice what you learn in a seminar?] We do it ourselves at home or at work when we have time.”

A preference for working in groups was mentioned multiple times: *“when we work on exercises in small groups it is good. Doing it by myself, it is not efficient in my opinion. When I have questions, I need someone to help me. LBD can be frustrating if you are working alone”* (M2). Participant M9 said that *“LBD is good as an exercise in small groups. But I prefer to listen, remember, and understand first, then discuss the material in small groups. [What about hands-on exercises?] They are practical but time consuming for me”* A desire for solid theoretical knowledge before practical understanding was also mentioned by few respondents, M11 revealed that: *“We need to be instructed or taught the material first by an expert, and then we can practice”* similarly, M22 thought that: *“In my humble opinion, LBD is definitely not enough; theoretical knowledge before the doing is crucial for me to have more effective learning; so, for me a spot between experience, LBD, and theoretical knowledge is the most adequate.”*

Cultures with high PD, as Morocco, favour instructor-centred and learning guided by the trainer who is considered a subject area expert. In contrast, the ideal role of professional trainers that Canadian participants value most are those of a facilitator, consultant, and training coordinator (Hassi, 2013). Also, in low PD cultures, such as Canada and Nordic European countries participants prefer peer learning and collaborative approaches (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). From another point of view, cultures characterized by the degree of anxiety exhibited when placed in uncertain situations (low UA), such as Canada, the informal business approach to learning encourages participants to reflect and seek opportunities for new ideas individually outside typical formal assignments to effectively find solutions to problems and issues (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Nonetheless, didactic trainer-centred techniques that formally elicit ideas are preferred in cultures with a strong control of

uncertainty and high PD (Deal, 2004). Also, in individualistic cultures, trainees are comfortable with self-sufficiency and prefer independent work (Weech, 2001), whereas in collectivistic group-oriented cultures, training participants are inclined towards the concept of peaceful accord among the group (Hassi, 2012).

The extant work on the instructor-trainee rapport in diverse contexts complements the findings in the following research as Canadian responses illustrated that both trainees and trainers participate in the implementation process of a training activity, indicating involvement, supportiveness, and collaboration when executing and realizing learning practices. Likewise, expert-specialists delivering programs, workshops or modules are solely responsible for bridging objectives and outcomes, establishing clear-cut aims from the onset, and solving problems that they may encounter throughout a training session. Conversely, most Moroccan participants revealed that training methods commonly relied on for work-related training are pre-arranged and characterised as more intransigent rather than flexible.

The Canadian sample indicates that the learner is an integral part of the implementation phase. Learner engagement and direct practical activities are common practices for trainees to learn and process information acquired in CPD training as revealed by the interviewees. Meanwhile, Moroccan responses revealed that, in general, training techniques are perceived as static and inflexible approaches. The reliance on group-oriented methods also emerged in the responses; furthermore, training methods appeared to be more trainer-led, pre-planned and structured beforehand, and hence, unchangeable during or throughout a training session.

4.2.8.1 Globalisation and learning techniques

Regarding training techniques relied on by trainers, as well as, expected learning outcomes from trainees, the Canadian sample illustrated that instructors and learners are responsible for

realizing and completing their learning experiences. Contrariwise, Moroccan trainees mostly agreed that the methods trainers use are rigid, less flexible, and predetermined before the start of a training activity.

Learning techniques in training have significantly been impacted by globalisation. The latter impacts the implementation phase in terms of learning resources, cultural norms, values, and preferences, linguistic diversity, varying learning modes, compliance with international standards, and adaptation (Zajda, 2021). Organisations need to be cognisant of all these factors when designing and implementing programs in a more globalised workplace. Nowadays, learning resources are more accessible from around the world. Learning materials, online structured courses, and expert trainers are readily available in a globally more interconnected world, allowing for more diverse training options offered to trainees. As more businesses operate on a global platform, training offerings need to be culturally unconstrained and culture sensitive. The realities that have surfaced because of globalisation require training that is respectful and understanding of cultural values, norms and preferences of employees, trainees, clients, and customers in different regions (Yaghi & Bates, 2020). Training requires offerings in diverse languages, often with translations and/or transliterations accessible for trainees. The latter necessitates curriculum development of material to be multilingual and consideration for language barriers in training design is important at this phase. More recently, remote, and virtual learning technologies have been accelerated due to the forces of globalisation (Donnelly & Johns, 2021). At present, training for work can be offered and delivered to trainees worldwide, in flexible and accessible ways. Workforces are in constant flux with many businesses working with geographically dispersed human resources, this indicates the necessity to deliver courses or modules remotely to respond to employees working in different physical locations.

It is worthwhile to note that industrialised countries, have more stable, robust, and reliable infrastructure to deliver training for work activities as exemplified in the Canadian insights; however, developing countries face constraints such as limited technological resources, access to reliable electricity, and internet connectivity. Digital platforms and IT tools are required for effective program delivery. International standards and regulations require consideration (Kim et al., 2020) particularly in areas of security and privacy. Standardization training is a need in a globalised context. However, while the latter is important, they often need to be considered in the local cultural context. Programs should be agile and flexible to allow for custom-designed material that addresses specific regional challenges and regional needs. The forces of globalisation have reshaped how we implement learning techniques in training in many ways. An emphasis on accessibility, cultural sensitivity, use of IT to reach a globalised workforce by all stakeholders involved in a training may be beneficial for the design and delivery phases of a training program for the workplace.

4.2.8.2 Agency and learning techniques

Individual agency can influence learning techniques executed in a training program from various angles, for instance, across cultural norms and values, pedagogical approaches, motivation, and engagement (Canning et., 2020; Oliveira et al.; Zacharias et al., 2021). As highlighted in this comparative cross-cultural study, diverse cultures have different priorities, expectations, and varying values when it comes to educational training. Some cultures prioritize individual free will and independent learning while other cultures focus on conformity and collective goals. Understanding these different points of view helps training programs adapt to cultural norms and values. Distinct cultures have varying preferences of pedagogical approaches. As illustrated in this study, some trainees value more experiential learning with preferences for direct activities, while others prefer structured and lecture-

oriented approaches. Learning paces of trainees also needs consideration as some trainees prefer to learn at their own pace, whereas others need structured outlines with set timelines to follow. Training programs need to be custom-tailored to accommodate preferences for different pedagogical teaching approaches. Individual agency can also determine choices about learning objectives and goals that are important to the trainee (Manyukhina & Wyse, 2019). Programs can be designed to allow for trainees to set, design, and pursue their own learning objectives while fostering autonomy. Additionally, programs need to be adaptive and personalised to cater to a learner's strengths and areas for improvements. Free will can be exercised when trainees have a say in selecting or customizing content for their specific learning needs. A training participant's agency can also impact their motivation and level of engagement in a training (Zacharias et al., 2021). Some cultures encourage active participation, self-directed learning, and the development of personal learning goals. Contrariwise, other cultural contexts focus on external authority. Individual agency plays a role in a person's interest to learn. When trainees are free to choose topics of genuine interest, they are more likely to engage with the material, the instructors, and peer exchanges, all of which can enhance effectiveness. Cultural norms also play a role when exercising agency in a training for work situation. Norms can frame and shape how trainees exercise and perceive individual agency (Canning et al., 2020). As shown by the Canadian respondents some learners are encouraged to question existing norms, enhance critical thinking, and allow for one to challenge the training methods. Others categorically discourage dissent and strongly advocate for conformity and compliance. The latter characteristics were exhibited in the Moroccan insights of this study.

Adaptability and flexibility contribute to agency concerns. Stakeholders should allow for individual choice and self-directed learning while still respecting the local cultural norms and expectations. In general, individual agency influences the implementation of learning

techniques and requires a nuanced approach that considers numerous factors. Training programs should be well balanced and promote agency and individual autonomy while respecting the local culture in which they are operating.

4.2.8.3 Gender roles and learning techniques

Gender dynamics influence learning techniques of a training regarding subject matter, teaching methods, trainer's expectations, resources, aspirations, and peer interactions. Certain subjects, in some cultures, may be deemed more appropriate for women over men. This often leads to differences in the way instructors present material and embed topics in the curriculum. The latter potentially placing barriers and limiting opportunities for employees in general and trainees in particular to explore diverse learning interests. This study showed that teaching and learning methods vary based on the expectations in a culture (Tanis, 2020). In some contexts, there may be a focus on encouragement and collaborative learning in groups, as opposed to emphasising on individual achievement. The former was illustrated in the Moroccan insights of this study. These diverse methods may inevitably reinforce certain gender roles. Trainer's expectations of learners can be influenced by gender cultural norms with the latter consequently leading to biases in grading, trainee's engagement, and participation as well as encouragement of certain activities. As a result, a learner's self-esteem and training performance may be affected. Gender roles at the workplace can impact access trainees have to resources (Cassad et al., 2021). In some cultures, access to technology or professional development activities are intended for men not women, thus, hindering their learning opportunities. Cultural expectations of career paths also shape trainees' individual choices. In some cultural contexts, certain professions are still associated with one gender. Learners may be discouraged from advancing on the career ladder because they see that it will not align with their expected roles. Peer interactions can also be affected by gender roles.

Some trainees may conform to gender cultural norms to better fit in with their colleagues, which has an impact on a trainee's engagement and participation in a training activity. To address challenges related to gender roles' influence on training techniques, an equitable learning environment needs to be promoted. Stakeholders including trainers, policy makers, and training participants need to be culturally aware of the contexts they are working in and actively work to change and challenge biases and gender stereotypes that may be impeding learning. Acknowledging and advocating for diverse perspectives in an inclusive setting can aid in mitigating the influence of gender roles on learning techniques.

4.2.8.4 Power dynamics and learning techniques

Power dynamics impact both learning and training techniques. Those in positions of power may have greater access to training materials, resources, technological resources, and mentors (Cardador et al., 2022). Uneven learning opportunities are inevitable with trainees lower in the power hierarchy limited due to fewer resources available to them. Dynamics of power impact the content and structure of training programs (Fuentes et al., 2021). Those with more power may custom-design training to adhere to their preferred ideologies while maintaining the status quo. These calculated acts limit diverse perspectives and impede the sharing of knowledge. Power imbalances can negatively impact how training participants are assessed and provided feedback. Those with limited power face harsher scrutiny, subsequently resulting in unequal experiences. Additionally, who gets to participate in a training is also determined by the power structures at work (Schweiger et al., 2020) Those with more power have more influence in deciding who is included, potentially excluding marginalised employees from training. In this study, power dynamics in the Moroccan context rests with senior management who decide which employees in their departments or units have access to training, however the Canadian respondents mentioned that each public servant had access to

annual CPD training for the workplace. Decisions about learning goals, objectives, and content are often made by managers, directors, deans, and senior administrative officers as vice-presidents. This may result in offerings that are more aligned with their priorities rather than considering the needs of the training participants. This comparative study, however, showed that Canadian participants in the study played a collaborative role in the decision-making process, whereas Moroccan participants mentioned that it is their superiors that are the decision-makers when it comes to training for work activities and initiatives.

Power can manifest itself in subtle ways, as in biases by trainers or colleagues (Cassad et al., 2021). This leads to hostile and uncomfortable learning settings, all of which negatively impacts training effectiveness. Individuals with less power at work are less likely to speak and express themselves without inhibitions, or openly and freely ask questions. They also refrain from sharing valuable insights during a training hindering both training and learning effectiveness. To have more effective and equitable training, an awareness of power dynamics at separate phases of the learning process will help to mitigate the influence power exerts on the learning phases. This may require sensitivity towards designing inclusive programs, providing equal access to resources, and promoting diversity of voices and genders. Addressing discrimination and bias also aids with fostering a positive learning environment.

4.2.9 Evaluating learning outcomes

The last question of the interview protocol was about evaluating learning outcomes and probed research participants with the intention to seek insights about who conducts the evaluation, what is the assessment based on, and how is it administered to learning participants. According to Marquardt's (1990) comparative learning framework, under an American approach, assessment of learning outcomes is achieved collaboratively with the

support of both trainers and trainees working together throughout the numerous phases of the learning process. Also, diverse techniques to assess whether competencies and skills have improved are utilized.

Canadian respondents mentioned surveys, questionnaires, and flexible assignments related to work as evaluation tools used to assess learners and training outcomes. Surveys and questionnaires were the most common responses to the question about how they evaluated the training and instructor or service provider throughout the learning process. Research participant C2 mentioned that *“we had a brief survey on Survey Monkey to fill in with a few questions about the seminar and the trainer.* Respondent C7 said: *“Surveys and questionnaires are provided throughout the process to get our feedback and formative style assessments are part of the LD programs. We worked on various projects and team activities.”* Online surveys were often elicited in the sample: *“an online survey at the end of the session with a few questions to fill in the blanks and provide feedback comments”* Forms and questionnaires were mentioned by interviewee C9:

“Before the training session, we are usually given a form to complete which includes what we expect from training; at the end of the session, we are handed an almost similar form to assess the extent to which we learned the planned content. This approach of evaluation keeps checks and balances and allows making sure we do not waste our time.”

Participant C14 added that *“questionnaires and surveys were sent to us online.”* Respondent C15 also commented that:

“We had a questionnaire at the end of the networking module. [In your opinion, was this effective and sufficient?] Sure, I can comment in an honest manner about what was positive and negative and that’s good positive constructive feedback for the consultants who will likely rely on the insights to adjust or tweak their modules or programs.

Regarding evaluation, interviewee C17 mentioned that *“We gave regular feedback informally to the coach over the three-day period. At the end of Phase IV, we completed a*

satisfaction survey for the MDP.” Participant C13 alluded to the evaluation process when quoting *“at the end, she gave us MCQs with responses after each section to review independently at our offices.”* C20 revealed that *“there is no formal assessment; the online courses mostly include self-directed evaluation and simulations.”* Along similar lines, interviewee C18 mentioned that *“With GC Campus online courses that I have had experience with, there is rarely formal assessment.”* Participant C1 mentioned that interactive activities are included in course work: *“Evaluation depends on the type of training, sometimes it is done by the instructor and often during seminars there are interactive activities included in the presentation that allow us to see if we understand the concepts. In those training sessions, there is no formal assessment in the traditional sense.”* As illustrated, many Canadian learning respondents revealed the informal nature of evaluation for professionals at work.

The information related to evaluation of training outcomes for the Moroccan sample indicates that this part of the process is at times both informal and formal. The reference to the informal assessment was illustrated and cited by numerous participants: *“I have observed that trainers check to see if objectives are met during the seminar and after by asking us informally,”* revealed interviewee M1. Participant M6 added that: *“Evaluation during the seminars, in my experience has been done more informally by the instructor”*, likewise, respondent M7 commented that *“Evaluation of outcomes is done informally because the objective is to understand and apply concepts.”* As well, participant M20 confirmed that informal nature of how training is assessed when citing, *“Of course, he asked regularly about the course informally; every time we ran into him, he would ask.”* Some responses mentioned that evaluations are conducted in both an informal and formal way, interviewee M4 revealed that:

“Both informally and formally. [How do you assess the seminar informally?] We tell the trainer and our directors about the experience. [Do assessments include an evaluation of how the learning was acquired?] Yes, but not with the emphasis on the evaluation of knowledge; this could take away from the training. Professional

training should be fun with no stress; we have enough of that! [Should learning assessments be based on written tests? Is this effective for professionals?] No, especially when the recipient are professionals with a high mature level. Training should be enjoyable.”

Some respondents expressed lack of trust with evaluation mechanisms. Participant M3 claimed that *“For example, if we make comments about the course and what we write down is not private, this can create problems for us at work. [Would a survey or anonymous questionnaire be better for participants?] Yes, but we will not believe it’s anonymous.”*

Participant responses highlighted the use of school exam-like written tests which are still prevalent with professional training in the Moroccan sample setting. These tests assess the extent to which participants remember theoretical concepts. When probing on the use of written tests, some respondents claimed these outdated evaluation methods are not effective nor efficient for corporate training, interviewee M2 specified: *“We don’t need exams for professional training”* In the same line of thought, participant M7 stated that *“No, it’s not efficient because the majority of learners will just pass it to pass, they will memorize but not learn much.”* A mention of checklists as a measure to evaluate learning surfaced from respondent M12: *“We had a checklist and an in-class exam.”*

The fact that school exam-like testing is stressful was reiterated numerous times, for instance participant M8 revealed that: *“I don’t think these tests that remind us of exams we had at high school or university are necessary; they are very stressful”*; also, as noted in the M12’s quotation: *“I personally do not find them helpful, they are just stressful.”* Research respondent M13 added that evaluation of learning was conducted with, *“end of seminar tests that tests all of the knowledge we accumulated during the sessions. [How do you like them?] It is stressful,”* they concluded. Lastly, interviewee M14’s comment referred to participation: *“The instructor gives a mark for everyone who participated. Also, the manager is asked to observe the performance of his employees after the training.”*

Studies indicate that trainers in the United States seek regular feedback from training participants with the latter encouraged to identify ways to improve learning by assessing the content and providing constructive feedback (Marquardt, 1990). Change is encouraged throughout a training session to best meet training objectives. However, in diverse cultural contexts, recommendations, suggestions, and constructive critiques are often interpreted as disrespectful. Trainees are often cautious and sceptical about how the ideas shared could be interpreted and hence mostly provide neutral and positive feedback. Thus, evaluation of a training session is conducted by the training professional based on what trainees have retained in terms of content, skills, and results from written assessments (Marquardt and Reynolds, 1994).

Concerning the evaluation of employee training, Moroccan and Singaporean organizations, which both belong to a high PD cultures, are more dependent on authority within the organisation with minimum expectations from trainees when planning how participants are assessed; on the other hand, Canadian and German organizations, which are part of the clusters of cultures with low PD, the latter, resort to a more wide-ranging approach in regard to evaluation with latitude for participants as part of the evaluation process (Hassi, 2015).

In high UA cultures such as Germany and Morocco, organizations showed a greater level of rigidity compared to organizations from a low UA culture such as Singapore, during the planning of evaluation (Hassi, 2015); in the former, predetermined methods and criteria were identified to evaluate the training session; in the latter, the intended evaluation methods and/or criteria were to be selected progressively during the training delivery and training session was planned in favour of resorting to ad hoc evaluation methods.

Lastly, in individualistic cultures, Canadian and German organizations were found to emphasize individual needs regarding training evaluation and did not take into consideration the collaboration of the entire group as criterion to evaluate the training session (Hassi, 2015).

In the following study, informal practices of evaluating learning participants distinguishes the Canadian sample from the Moroccan one. In the former, learning outcomes of a training are conducted in a more collaborative way with the input of both trainees and trainers at various stages of the learning process; the latter informing on content, procedures, and role of the trainers. Various assessment modes are utilized in the Canadian sample. Conversely, the Moroccan sample showed that written forms of assessments are still common practices in workplace training. This form of evaluation does not appear to be outcome-based because it does not assess the skills or behaviours which the participants are able to perform after attending a training. Participation is at times assessed as part of the learning outcome. The evaluation of the outcomes is conducted by trainers based on acquired competencies and skills that trainees retain from the material provided to them.

4.2.9.1 Globalisation and evaluation feedback

In this study, trainees shared their thoughts about evaluating learning outcomes sharing insights about who conducts the evaluation, what is the assessment based on, and how it is administered to learning participants. Canadian respondents mentioned surveys, questionnaires, flexible and informal assignments as evaluation tools, whereas Moroccan participants mentioned that assessment is both formal and informal; exam-like written tests assessing theoretical concepts are still the most common evaluation method.

The impact of globalisation on evaluation and feedback is expansive with many challenges presented in diverse cultural settings; the former requires agility, flexibility, sensitivity, and cultural awareness to ensure that learning outcomes are target oriented and effective

outcomes. In a globalised world, training programs require cultural sensitivity, thus understanding cultural differences is crucial. This cross-cultural comparative study illustrated that evaluative feedback needs to consider cultural values and norms in their program delivery methods to help avoid misunderstandings and unintentional offences. Language barriers are a factor that is often discussed in respect to globalisation when providing constructive feedback, the trainees must understand what is being communicated. As the participants approached for the research were fluent in English, the Moroccan participants in this study opted to use English as the language of communication, however they were given the option to respond to questions in French.

With the advent of AI, auto-translations are now instantly available, hence facilitating even more effective outcomes. In some cases, multilingual training may be effective. Transliterations are also immensely helpful. Globalisation often depends on technological progress and accessibility (Stephen, 2022), with the latter varying from region to region thus impacting how assessment and feedback is delivered, whether online, via video conference, or across traditional methods. Learning styles differ in the realm of a globalised world. Training programs need to adapt to these differences and offer constructive feedback in ways that align with the preferred learning styles of trainees. As with other learning phases, globalisation requires adherence to legal and ethical international standards (Kim et al., 2020). This may affect the type of feedback that may be given to a trainee; for example, with performance evaluation or when addressing sensitive cultural aspects. Training across cultures requires agility and flexibility in scheduling evaluation and feedback to best accommodate trainees in various regions (Morrison et al., 2021). Diverse cultures also have unusual ways and norms to communicate affecting the tone and style of the feedback. For instance, directness may be valued in some individualistic cultural contexts, while others prefer indirect, ambiguous, and obscure feedback as shown with the Moroccan respondents.

Cultural variations in skill expectations and performance standards may need to be adjusted based on assessment criteria. Trainers would also benefit from cross-cultural training and evaluation can help to better grasp nuances of providing feedback in a globalised diverse context.

4.2.9.2 Agency and evaluation feedback

Individual agency as a cultural influence plays a role in the training phase of assessment and feedback. As illustrated with this cross-cultural comparative study, varying cultural norms and expectations exist. Some trainees when providing feedback about a training are more inclined to provide direct and honest feedback, while others take a more hesitant stance towards expressing criticism in a frank, genuine, and open manner. This impacts how feedback is received and provided (Castanelli et al., 2022). Cultural variations in power distance or the degree in which hierarchy is accepted, can influence the dynamics when providing trainees with feedback. In high power distance cultures, critical feedback is less likely provided to authority figures, while in low PD societies, trainers are more at ease with providing critical feedback to all employees or trainees regardless of rank. Diverse cultures also vary in their focus on individualism, which is the valuing of personal goals and autonomy versus collectivism which emphasises cooperation and harmony. In individualistic societies as Canada, individuals may be more expressive and assertive in requesting and seeking prompt feedback because they may have prioritised their own goals. Meanwhile, in collectivistic cultures as Morocco, precedence is in the groups' harmony which influences how, when, and why feedback is given and received. Differences such as high context which relies on context and non-verbal cues versus low context cultures which rely on explicit verbal communication (Hall, 1976) can influence feedback effectiveness and the clarity of the comments. Confusion and misunderstandings can arise if training participants from diverse

cultural backgrounds have opposing styles of communication (Godwin-Jones, 2019). This study highlighted that cultural attitudes towards constructive criticism are also affected by individual agency and affect how feedback is perceived and how individuals respond to it. Constructive criticism is viewed as helpful in some cultures, whereas in others it is perceived as disrespectful or inappropriate. Also, body language and facial expressions can impact interactions. Cultural variations in how gestures and expressions are interpreted can lead to misunderstandings. For example, a smile or a nod may convey a polite gesture in one culture, but agreement or consent in another. The value a culture plays on independence or autonomy can also impact how training participants respond and engage with the feedback (Castanelli et al., 2022). In cultures where individual decision-making is prioritised, trainees may have more agency in their acceptance or rejection of feedback. To navigate these cultural aspects effectively, training stakeholders should provide cross-cultural training and foster cultural sensitivity when designing feedback mechanisms that consider individual cultural norms, values, and preferences. This will ensure that assessment and feedback are effective, productive, appropriate, and respectful of individual free will across cultures.

4.2.9.3 Gender and evaluation feedback

Regarding how evaluation and feedback in training is influenced by gender roles, in some cultures, assertiveness may be encouraged in men, but discouraged in women, leading to different feedback based on our genders. Distinct cultures have varying cultural norms with different expectations, preferences, values, and norms (Kroese, 2022). The latter may affect how trainers and colleagues provide and evaluate feedback in a training. Stereotypes and biases based on culture also impact evaluations (Peterson, 2019). Training providers may unconsciously link certain skills and behaviours with a specific gender which can result in biased feedback, for example, considering male trainees more scientific and analytical, while

women are better at soft skills can result in providing skewed and unfair evaluations. As with other phases of the learning process, in some cultures, gender roles may limit training opportunities (Cassad et al., 2021) especially if certain programs are traditionally seen as more suitable for one gender. Communication styles also influence feedback in a training (Allen, 2023). As shown in this comparative study, a direct and assertive style may be appropriate in some individualistic cultures, while in other collectivistic cultures indirect and nuanced comments are acceptable. These varying preferences impact training evaluation and feedback outcomes based on how they are received regarding gender roles. The latter can impact an individuals' confidence as differing genders may approach training differently due to varying cultural expectations; consequently, impacting perception, performance, and feedback. Mitigating gender bias in training evaluation criteria should consider inclusivity and awareness of potential biases, stereotypes. and cultural diversity. In brief, cultural sensitivity, initiative-taking efforts, and awareness will ensure that training evaluation are unbiased, fair, and suitable for all learners regardless of their gender or cultural background.

4.2.9.4 Power dynamics and evaluation feedback

Power relations play a role when giving evaluative feedback to trainees at work. As illustrated in this research, in some cultures, there is a strong emphasis on authority figures and hierarchy. In these contexts, evaluation and feedback is given in a more formal form and could be influenced by a person's perceived status. Subordinates are likely to be hesitant and resistant when providing candid feedback to superiors. The latter impeding quality and honesty of the feedback. In collectivistic cultures as Morocco, group harmony and cohesion are valued most, individuals in general and trainers in particular are reluctant to share constructive and critical feedback. The latter could disrupt this harmony. However, in individualistic cultures as in Canada, self-expression and personal achievement results in

feedback that is constructively critical and potentially direct. In high context cultures (Hall, 1976), there seems to be a reliance on shared cultural knowledge and communication of content with feedback often subtle and embedded in the context with the latter necessitating a deeper grasp of cultural values and norms. Whereas, in low context cultures (Hall, 1976), trainees value more straightforward and explicit ways of communicating feedback. In a high PD culture, trainees are less likely to challenge authority or provide feedback, especially if the stakeholders hold a more senior position. In culturally diverse training environments language barriers can complicate the exchange of feedback. Misunderstandings and misinterpretations can occur, impacting the effectiveness of the feedback process. Thus, to navigate issues of power at the evaluation and feedback phase of a training, dynamics of power need to be considered and managed accordingly. It is vital to promote cultural sensitivity and diversity training within organisations. Training facilitators and trainees should be educated about the cultural norms and values of training participants to ensure that evaluation and feedback processes are respectful, effective, and constructive in culturally diverse contexts.

4.3 Learning for the workplace across the lens of national culture

In section 4.2, the findings of the research were described, compared, and discussed insights of the perceptions shared by the study participants and the extant work related to various phases of the learning process for the workplace. Additionally, the comparative insights of each learning activity were discussed in light of complexities of national culture such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power dynamics. The following section 4.3 attempts to further frame the discussion specifically across the lens of national culture with the overarching aim to respond to the research propositions of the study; the latter focuses on an analysis of cultural facets at play in learning for work as a plausible explanation for the

rationale of the findings in these two diverse cultural contexts. Cultural influences related to the power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, and the masculinity versus femininity cultural dimensions along with other cross-cultural explanations for the findings are discussed.

4.3.1 Learning and power distance

Many developing and emerging markets such as Latin America, the MENA region, Asia, India, Brazil, and Mexico, score high on PD. In these societies, issues related to hierarchy and inequality at the workplace are entrenched in early socialization in the family and school with children expected to obey their parents and older extended family members (GLOBE, 2004; Hofstede, 2010). Teachers assume the parents' dominant role as early as primary school, and it continues through their post-secondary studies. When these individuals take on roles in workplaces, the loyalty to their teachers gets transferred to their employers. Consequently, in high PD cultures, people will seldom question their supervisors, managers, or directors (Hassi, 2015). Contrariwise, countries such as the USA, Canada, and the UK have low PD scores. In these environments, employees do not expect vast power differences as people are considered more as equals despite their different professional roles at work.

SQ1: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the PD cultural dimension?

In the Moroccan context, which is a high PD culture, the study showed that the overall approach to employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low PD culture, the process is more decentralized. In low PD cultures (CA=39), decision-making power tends to be more egalitarian and democratic with cases of inequalities that arise at workplaces requiring reasons and explanations from more employees in those situations than not. Conversely, learning activities in the Moroccan milieu may be

centralized due to the high-power distance cultural traits associated with the country (PD Morocco Index=70). In high PD cultures, the unequal distribution of power is tolerable and unobjectionable with limited need for explanations for decisions made by their superiors. Hence, based on the comparative insights of this research, RP1 of the study has been established.

Traits of the instructor-learner role of Marquardt's' comparative learning framework (1990) were confirmed in this study as the findings revealed that Canadian trainees see the relationship as egalitarian and collaborative. Whereas the Moroccan results show that many Moroccan participants mentioned that instructors and trainees have a professional and formal relationship with trainers in respect to training for work-related purposes.

Insights on learning needs and assessment illustrate that Canadian trainees are guided by expert training providers that prepare learning needs based on required skills for their departments. Also, trainee input contributes to this step of the learning process. Competency-skills and standards of knowledge for specific work-related tasks are also taken into consideration with various stakeholders' input contributing to flexible changes as required. However, the learning needs of Moroccan adult trainees are decided by senior management; training service providers follow their instructions on what and how they want them to deliver the workshops or seminars to their employees. Needs assessments do not appear to be outcome based as they do not follow up with training participant needs nor identify expected tasks, they should be able to do after a given training session.

In respect to learning objectives, factors that the Canadian sample revealed were participant involvement; required skills for their units; needs assessment outputs; custom-designed objectives; agenda priorities; and projects. This objective-setting approach is fundamentally outcome-based. Whereas in the Moroccan sample, interviewees revealed that

objectives are predetermined by senior management. Trainee engagement is indirect, limited and conducted implicitly at this phase.

The findings about the design phase of training activities highlighted two major themes: one about the role of participants with the latter characterized as active; collaborative; interactive; independent; self-directed; pro-active, and participatory in the Canadian responses. Secondly, the findings revealed use of methodologies such as learning by doing as contributing to the design phase of the employee learning process.

Service training providers and trainees in the Canadian sample are both cooperatively involved, supportive and active trainees when executing learning practices. Expert-specialists establish clear-cut aims that are drafted jointly with their trainees from the onset; they also face and solve problems collaboratively throughout a training session and adjust their learning plans accordingly. Hence, Canadian participants revealed that the learner is an integral part of the implementation phase. Conversely, learning participants are active listeners at the design phases of the learning process in the Moroccan workplace sample. Learning by listening and retaining material are the most prominent approaches emerging from Moroccan participants in the study. In the Canadian sample competency-based and learning by doing methodologies are used to best meet individual learning needs and training objectives as opposed to traditional lecture style methods that focus on listening and remembering information provided by a trainer or coach. Moroccan responses revealed that training techniques, in general, are regarded as inflexible. Reliance and preferences for group-oriented exercises also emerged in the Moroccan findings. Moreover, methods appeared to be more trainer-led, pre-planned and structured well in advance, hence limited to modifications or open to changes if required during a seminar.

Informal evaluative practises distinguished the Canadian sample from the Moroccan one. In the Canadian sample, learning and training outcomes unfolded in a collaborative and shared way with the input of both trainees and trainers at each step of the process, each informing on content, procedures, and role of the trainers. Diverse flexible assessment modes are utilized in the Canadian sample. On the other hand, traditional written forms of assessments are still common practices according to this Moroccan sample. This evaluation mechanism does not appear to be outcome-based because it does not assess the skills, competencies, or behaviours the participants are able to perform or model after attending a training session. Training outcomes are evaluated solely by service training providers and based on what participants retain from the content material elicited.

In the Canadian sample, the task of planning learning activities is one prepared in a concerted and more supple manner with the contribution of participants' customary practice; the latter, seen as an integral part of the learning process. Insights indicate that Canadian trainees are responsible for their learning experiences. In general, Moroccan participants accepted the fact that the planning of their training activities is decided by their managers. The findings are aligned with Marquardt's (1990) comparative learning framework which highlights that the planning of activities in the Canadian context is a joint effort by trainees and service providers with the former responsible for steering their own professional learning. However, the Moroccan sample shows that the task of planning is an obligation of expert-trainers asked to deliver tailored-designed workshops or training seminars because as insights revealed, trainees are not expected to know how to identify the required needs to best meet training objectives desired by management.

In the literature, Scandinavian societies are characterized by egalitarian features; they value low PD, directness, consensus in decision making, and promote gender equity (Warner-Søderholm, 2012). In these Nordic cultures there is a tendency to restrict inequalities, and

trainees are expected to engage and share ideas to learn from peers, whereas, in hierarchical cultures, training participants expect to acquire knowledge from the experts (Weech, 2001). Along similar thoughts, Roberts, and Tuleja (2008) illustrated that participation in Eastern cultures demands that training professionals listen politely to their trainers.

In low PD cultures such as Canada, the United States, the UK, and Nordic countries, two-way reciprocal communication between service training providers (coaches, instructors, professors etc.), trainees, and fellow training participants is strongly encouraged; the latter are also stimulated and encouraged to actively participate in the planning of their own training activities (Hassi, 2012). Contrariwise, in high PD cultures as Morocco and Malaysia, wisdom resides with expert seniors. The Malayan approach to planning is based on the presumption of “with age, comes wisdom” (Kamis et al., 2006) indicating that decision-making is the sole responsibility of experienced and informed seniors who possess an awareness rooted in their lived experiences. These knowledgeable individuals hold embedded understanding and expertise of the inner workings of professional workplace practices.

Inclusive participatory approaches when setting training objectives characterize low PD cultures such as Canada, the UK, and Denmark. Nevertheless, in high PD cultures, knowledge is transferred via an expert or specialist as trainees’ consent to the exchanges provided by service training providers without questioning their expertise (Joy and Kolb, 2009). Similarly, Hassi (2015) found that in high PD cultures such as Morocco and Singapore, trainees accept hierarchy despite the latter restraining and limiting trainees’ latitude when setting objectives.

In cultures where fragile social norms and a high tolerance of divergent behaviour occurs (Gelfand et al., 2011), there are several approaches to problem-solving concerns as professional trainees see novel ideas as positive aspects of their learning process. In these

cultures, mature learners are at ease with changes to their training programs. By contrast, in strong PD cultures, trainees absorb subject material better when transferred in passive ways (Rodrigues, 2005); trainees prefer ways of doing things they are familiar with rather than explore new and inventive techniques (Hassi, 2012). Also, in such tight structure cultures, trainees have the expectation that they will follow structured plans that focus on developing their competency skills and knowledge to help them solve issues they face at their workplaces.

Trainers and participants are active contributors in the training implementation process in the American context with learning by doing as the leading technique. Conversely, in other diverse cultures as in the MENA region, the implementation of learning rests with the experts who are responsible for the demonstration of how things should be done. In these PD environments, experiential learning may expose one's weaknesses highlighting hasty behaviours (Marquardt, 1990).

Cultures that score low on PD, lean towards training practices that are participant-centred and rooted in experiential techniques (Hassi, 2012). On the other hand, instructive methods led by expert trainers are common in high PD cultures, as in Middle Eastern countries (Deal, 2004).

Professional trainers for workplace training in the Canadian context are seen as facilitators, coordinators, or consultants (Hassi, 2013). In cultures associated with low PD, as for instance, the UK, Germany, USA, Canada and Scandinavian countries, peer-learning and collaborative approaches are preferable learning styles (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). While, in high PD cultures as Morocco, Greece, Russia, and Bulgaria training participants tend to seek and embrace instructor-guided learning as wisdom resides with the experts.

With low PD cultures as in Canadian, and German organizations, trainees are more inclined towards evaluation practices that are flexible and characterized by active participant commitment (Hassi, 2015). However, Singaporean, and Moroccan organizations which are both high PD societies, training evaluation depends on hierarchy with little if any contribution from the trainee.

Based on the above, research proposition 1 of the current study has been established. It states the following: In the Moroccan context, which is a high PD culture, the overall approach to the employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low PD culture, the process is more decentralized.

4.3.2 Learning and uncertainty avoidance

The second cultural aspect behind employee learning in diverse milieus is uncertainty avoidance (UA), which is the degree that individuals in a society are comfortable with uncertainty, risks, and an unpredictable status quo. Employees in high UA societies (Morocco: 68) tend to avoid unpredictability, risks, and uncertain situations. Consequently, in these workplaces, employers try to provide stability and certainty through established rules and instructions. On the other hand, in societies with low UA scores such as Anglo and Scandinavian countries, individuals are at ease with taking risks, changes at work, and unpredictability. In these cultures, ambiguous and vague situations are less likely to impact diverse types of work-related activities related to learning and training; however, in many emerging and developing countries such as MENA countries, China, Brazil and Mexico which have medium to high UA scores, cultural traits illustrate opposing inclinations than Nordic countries.

SQ2: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts, through the uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension?

In the Moroccan context, which is a high UA culture, this study illustrated that the overall approach to the employee learning activities is more rigid, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low UA culture, the process is less rigid. The Cultural Dimension framework (Hofstede, 2010) indicated the Canadian culture has an UA score that is slightly less than half (Canada, 48); a low UA culture with training activities described by trainees as less rigid and more flexible. Whereas, in high UA cultures such as Morocco (UA68), individuals favour predictability and exhibit low tolerance for ambiguity with societies maintaining rigid belief codes. As illustrated in the following study, RP2 was established.

Insights reveal that planning activities are prepared collaboratively and flexibly, and they consider ideas and thoughts from training participants; these customary practices are a core aspect of the learning process in the Canadian sample. Indicators that surfaced also point to the fact that Canadian trainees are more responsible for their own learning. The findings on needs and assessment illustrate that Canadian training participant's work together with their trainers while guided by their expertise. Trainee input required competency-skills, and standards of knowledge for specific work-related tasks and responsibilities are all considered at this phase of the process. This step is adaptable with adjustments made accordingly throughout a training session.

Canadian respondents mentioned the agile nature of learning methods designed to best meet training objectives. The Moroccan sample revealed that an inclination towards traditional lecture style methods is still prevalent because knowledge is perceived to reside with the expert who transfers informative insights to learners; on their part, trainees absorb knowledge by listening and remembering details provided by an expert-trainer or coach. About training techniques, Moroccan participants regarded methods as inflexible learning approaches. Group-oriented methods as opposed to independent learning styles emerged from the Moroccan insights. Moreover, training methods were described as trainer-led, pre-

planned and structured from the onset. Thus, indicating little room for changes during a session.

In connecting insights from the findings with the employee learning literature and Hofstede's explanation of the UA cultural dimension, it can be observed that subject to disparities in the degree of UA, training participants may display indecisive intensities of stress and anxiety when working around inhibited sites. In UA cultures that are more resistant and resilient, explicit action plans may be indispensable and integral parts of learning activities, whereas autonomy, self-sustenance, and independence is the convention in low UA cultures (Kim and McLean, 2014).

In Singaporean and Canadian organizations, which are low UA cultures, there are less restrictions imposed on the learning process and unplanned objectives may spur up at any given time throughout a training session with adjustments made accordingly (Hassi, 2015). However, in high UA cultures such as Morocco, companies and organizations exhibit aspects of rigidity during the planning stages and when determining training objectives for their employees. Similarly, cultures with tight structures display facets of intolerance with trainees expecting clear-cut objectives from the beginning; however, in cultures with loose structures, learners are at ease with general goals set by the trainer (Weech, 2001).

Trainees from low UA contexts lean towards active teaching techniques; whereas mature learners in high UA cultures lean towards more passive teaching methods; (Rodrigues, 2005). To illustrate the latter, unrestricted training strategies that are purposeful may be interpreted as refusal of a trainers' duty to adequately teach and share information with trainees (Hassi, 2012). The UA cultural perspective influences insightful reflection (Kayes, 2005); with low UA cultures, as in Scandinavian countries and Canada, trainees are encouraged to seek and discover novel ideas (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Whereas in cultures with high UA, such as Middle Eastern cultures including the countries of North

Africa, expert specialists draft well-prepared and thorough module or seminar plans that they present to training participants in a formal and professional manner (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). In cultures with lower UA orientations, such as Canada, the UK, and Germany, participants tend to be more at ease with problem-solving questions without necessarily seeking a flawless perfect answer; the idea of this approach is for trainers to encourage learners to explore different ways to solving problems while embracing intellectual constructive criticism in positive ways (Hassi, 2013). Along similar lines, Barmeyer (2000) contends that learners that adhere to reflective observation tend to be more contemplative when exposed to new insights; a characteristic that is more aligned with high UA behaviours. On the other hand, low UA cultures that are characterized by a minimal risk aversion when placed in uncertain situations, as for instance Canada, informal learning encourages individuals to pursue innovative ideas aside from relying on common formal coursework to seek out solutions to issues and real-life problems (Phillips et al., 2009). Nonetheless, instructional trainer-centred techniques that provoke ideas in a formal manner are preferred in high UA cultures (Deal, 2004).

When designing training methods, in high UA cultures such as Morocco and Germany the levels of rigidity regarding training approaches are higher as predetermined methods and criteria were identified to evaluate a training session (Hassi, 2015). Thus, non-planned methods are unlikely to surface during a training session; conversely, in Singaporean organizations, which belong to the low UA cluster, the intended evaluation methods and criteria were expected to be selected and changed progressively throughout the session with programs designed on more ad hoc evaluation methods (Hassi, 2015).

In the following research study, RP2 is established. In the Moroccan context, which is a high UA culture, the findings indicate that the overall approach to the employee learning activities is more rigid, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low UA culture, the

process is less rigid. As the Canadian national culture has a cultural dimension score of uncertainty avoidance that is slightly less than half (UA 48), which is a low UA culture, the training activity process, as described by research participants, is less rigid and more flexible. On the other hand, in high uncertainty avoidance (UA Morocco=68) cultures, individuals favour predictability and exhibit low tolerance for ambiguity with societies maintaining rigid belief codes.

4.3.3 Learning and individualism vs collectivism

Individualism refers to the degree to which a society focuses on the relationship of the individual to the group, whereas collectivism focuses on the relationship of the group. In countries with high individualism and low collectivism, employees are valued, rewarded, and recognized for their hard work and achievements. In contrast, individuals working in societies with low individualism, people tend to work in groups. These in-groups include family such as relatives, colleagues, and people within their social class. In these collectivistic cultures, how people relate and interact within the group is considered important for their success. That said, one's success at work depends on how others within their in-groups' support and view them. Nordic Anglo cultures such as Canada, the UK, and USA are considered individualistic cultures. In contrast, Asian, Latin American, MENA region countries, and most developing cultures tend to have cultures that are neither on the medium or low range of the individualism dimension. The effects of some managerial practices are determined by whether they are done at a group or at the individual level. For instance, in collectivistic cultures, employees may be hired and promoted based on their association with a larger group; in these societies, loyalty, seniority, and age are paramount when making decisions. To function effectively and smoothly in these national spaces, companies need to appreciate how important the social group is. In low individualistic societies rewarding individual

employees may be branded or become stigmatized; in such cases, rewarding the team or group may be more effective.

SQ3 How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension?

In the Moroccan context, which is a collectivistic culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centred on the group of training participants, whereas in the Canadian setting, which is an individualistic culture, the process is centred on the individual learner. The Canadian sample indicated contrasting findings. Cultures with individualistic preferences (CA=80) exhibit traits of an independent mind-set and connections among groups are fashioned in relaxed and loosened ways. Contrariwise, Moroccan trainees in this sample prefer working in teams throughout the learning process. Based on Hofstede's Cultural Indices (2010), Morocco is considered a collectivistic culture as opposed to individualistic (MA IND46/CA IND80). The former traits indicate a preference for tight-knit ties within their social groups. Canadian responses revealed individualistic learning styles illustrating that trainees are prone towards independent work. Lastly, the Canadian sample illustrated that training activities were outcome-based. Considering the findings in this study, RP3 is established in the thesis.

It is noted in the literature that in collectivistic countries such as Mexico, significant importance is placed on ones' status and hierarchical position when conducting needs' analyses for employee training at work (Deal, 2004). In such cultures, organizations consider employees' collective needs when planning and designing training objectives. Whereas, in individualistic cultures, such as Canada and Germany, the tendency is to propose outcome objectives based on individual trainees' needs; for instance, organizations in the Canadian

and German context, have been found to emphasize individual needs and objectives when planning content for employees (Hassi, 2015).

In individualistic countries such as Nordic European countries, trainees value self-support, autonomy, and self-efficacy with trainees at ease when working independently, whereas in collectivistic cultures as with many cases in Africa and the MENA region, participants rely on the groups to work together collaboratively despite disagreements among team members or colleagues (Weech, 2001). To illustrate, Ndoye (2003) found that dialogs with senior farmers in rural villages of Senegal were favourable forms of learning. In the Hassi (2015) study, it was found that in collectivistic cultures such as Morocco and Singapore, companies focused on the needs of the group with employees opting for training methods that included collaborative team-oriented tasks.

North American trainers have found that Chinese trainees make decisions based on the interests of the group, as opposed to communicating their individual preferences (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008). Training participants in China, described as passive learners, expressed reluctance when going over their teammates' work and they shy away from sharing negative feedback with fellow peers, even if constructive feedback may be helpful. Also, trainee-trainer relationships are limited when exchanges touch on issues related to work from their peers among Chinese training participants (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008).

Mature trainees in the Moroccan workplace consider themselves as apprentices who want to learn from the skills and competencies of a 'skilled expert' until they can master the material on their own (Hassi, 2013). With this backdrop, Moroccan professionals on corporate training are team units that work as a group rather than alone, validating the view that acquiring knowledge is part of a collective experience rather than an individualistic undertaking. On the contrary, Canadian trainees in this study illustrated a more pro-active role in the learning process with participants opting for experiential learning with trainers

who play the role of facilitators or coaches (Hassi, 2013). In training for work purposes, studies indicate that Canadian trainees prefer working independently and are fine with conducting tasks on their own while taking on initiatives related to their learning (Hassi, 2013); the latter due to the individualistic nature of their national culture which values autonomy (Weech, 2001).

In individualistic cultures, trainees are comfortable with the idea of independent work and prefer self-efficiency (Weech, 2001); conversely, in group-oriented cultures, training participants maintain peace and harmony with their fellow co-workers (Hassi, 2012). Also, trainees prefer group activities rather than independent learning tasks (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009).

In Canadian and German organizations which fall under individualistic cultures emphasis is placed on individual needs during the planning phase with little concern for progression as a criterion to evaluate the training (Hassi, 2015). For cultures that value independence, as in Northern Europe, Weech (2001) found that learning occurred independently. In individualistic cultures, trainees are also encouraged to engage in debates and to freely express their ideas and thoughts (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009); whereas in collectivistic cultures, mature and professional learners unify as a group as seen in the African context. Ndoye's research in Senegal (2003) highlights the importance of discussions with the wise older farmers to understand how things really work; the study identified these unique methods as effective forms of knowledge transfer.

As illustrated in the findings, RP3 in the following thesis is established. In the Moroccan context, which is a collectivistic culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centred on the group of training participants, whereas in the Canadian context, which is an individualistic culture, the process is focused on the individual learner. The

Canadian sample indicated contrast and divergent findings. Cultures with individualistic preferences (CA=80) exhibit traits along the independent mindset and ties within groups in general are formed in unfastened ways. On the contrary, the findings in the Moroccan sample illustrate a gravitation towards group-oriented activities at various steps in the process. Based on Hofstede's Cultural Indices (1980; 2001), Morocco is considered a collectivistic culture as opposed to individualistic (IND=46). The former traits indicate a preference for tight-knit ties with their social groups.

4.3.4 Learning and masculinity vs femininity

Masculinity refers to the degree to which a society focuses on traditional masculine qualities such as wages and advancement at work. In high masculinity cultures, work is especially important to people and gender roles are clearly established; work takes priority over other aspects of people's lives including family. According to Hofstede's national culture framework (1980; 2001), Anglo cultures such as Canada, USA, and the UK, tend to have high masculinity traits. In contrast, Latin European countries have lower masculinity as reflected in the value of a work to live lifestyle in these societies. Nordic cultures such as Scandinavian societies also reflect low masculinity, a feature that is aligned with the importance for quality of life in such countries. Many emerging societies have medium to high masculinity.

SQ4: How do employee learning activities vary in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts through the MAS cultural dimension?

In the following research, RP4 is partially established. In both the Canadian and Moroccan contexts, which are slightly patriarchal cultures, the overall approach to employee learning activities is outcome-based. Although Canada's score in Hofstede's masculinity dimension is 52, which is about mid-point between masculinity and femininity, training-

activities, as described by the respondents, are outcome-based as it should be in a fully-fledged masculine culture. Conversely, the Moroccan sample showed that training-activities were not outcome-based. It is noteworthy to mention that Morocco's score in Hofstede's masculinity dimension is 53, which is also mid-point between masculinity and femininity.

Regarding the masculinity/femininity orientation, limited studies emerged from the literature highlighting the influence of this national culture on professional learning. What surfaced was that contrary to masculine societies, feminine cultures are characterised by social approval through the importance of expectations and positive dynamics among team co-workers; whereas, in masculine cultures, individuals tend to be more goal-oriented and focussed on training outcomes (Kim and McLean, 2014). Despite the dearth of studies highlighting this dimension, the Moroccan findings showed that training activities were not outcome-based because they do not address tasks or behaviours which training participants are expected to perform and do after having attended a training session. For these reasons, RP4 is partially met in the study; insights show that it is outcome based for the Canadian sample and not outcome based for the Moroccan sample.

4.4 Summary of cross-cultural comparative insights and secondary analysis

The findings in this section were discussed in relationship to the research questions of the cross-cultural comparative study. Section 4.2 described and presented a comparative analysis of the Canadian and Moroccan insights under themes related to learning activities for workplace training. The nine categories were generated based on Marquardt's comparative learning framework (1990) from the HRM literature. The insights were bridged to scholarly work related to employee learning from a CCM perspective as discussed in Chapter 2. Additionally, comparisons between Canada and Morocco were drawn out in discussions about complexities and the learning activities under each category.

Section 4.3 delved further into the insights by explaining aspects of national culture behind the contrasting differences revealed in both diverse samples. References to various cross-cultural experts such as Hofstede (1980; 2001), and other cultural thinkers' views from a cross-cultural management perspective were discussed to provide purposeful insights to the main question of the study. The sub-questions, which were carefully designed with the intention to describe influences of national culture in learning for work helped to explain the role national culture plays in answering the research question and to verify the research propositions. A summary of the outcomes of the comparative study are:

- ❖ RP1 is established. In fact, in the Moroccan context, which is a high PD culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low PD culture, the process is more decentralized. The Canadian sample illustrates that in low PD cultures (CA=39), decision-making power is more egalitarian and justifications for inequalities are necessitated. Conversely, learning activities in the Moroccan context may be centralized due to the high-power distance cultural traits that characterize the country (PD Morocco Index=70). In high PD cultures, the unequal distribution of power is acceptable with no need for justifications for the decisions made by senior management.
- ❖ RP2 is established. In the Moroccan context, which is a high UA culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is more rigid, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low UA culture, the process is less rigid. As the Canadian national culture has a Hofstede score of uncertainty avoidance that is slightly less than half (UA 48), which is a low UA culture, the training activity process, as described by research participants, is less rigid and more flexible. On the other hand, in high uncertainty avoidance (UA Morocco=68) cultures, individuals favour predictability and exhibit low tolerance for ambiguity with societies maintaining rigid belief codes.

- ❖ RP3 is established. In the Moroccan context, which is a collectivistic culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centred on the group of training participants, whereas in the Canadian context, which is an individualistic culture, the process is focused on the individual learner. The Canadian sample indicated contrast and divergent findings. Cultures with individualistic preferences (CA=80) exhibit traits along the independent mind-set and ties within groups in general are formed in unfastened ways. On the contrary, the findings in the Moroccan sample illustrate a gravitation towards group-oriented activities at various steps in the process. Based on Hofstede's Cultural Indices (2020), Morocco is considered a collectivistic culture as opposed to individualistic (IND=46). The former traits indicate a preference for tight-knit ties with their social groups.
- ❖ RP4 is partially established. In both the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, which are slightly patriarchal cultures, the overall approach to employee learning activities is outcome-based. Although Canada's score in Hofstede's masculinity dimension is 52, which is almost mid-point between masculinity and femininity, training-activities, as described by the respondents, are outcome-based as it should be in a fully-fledged masculine culture. Conversely, in the Moroccan sample, training-activities were not outcome-based as it should be in a masculine culture. It is noteworthy to mention that Morocco's score in Hofstede's masculinity dimension is 53, which is mid-point between masculinity and femininity.

4.5 Complexities of national culture: A secondary analysis

Sub-questions on complexities of culture that developed from the comparative study were:

- ❖ *MAQ1: How can a qualitative analysis include a more nuanced detailed perspective and granularity to address complexities of national culture?*
- ❖ *MAQ2: How does globalisation influence national culture and learning for work?*

- ❖ *MAQ3: How do individuals in diverse cultures use agency to respond to cultural structures and how does agency influence learning activities for work?*
- ❖ *MAQ4: Do both samples reflect gender in employee learning?*
- ❖ *MAQ5: What are the factors that construct agency, change, and development in learning for work? How do advanced cultures affect people's actions in developing countries? How do they manifest in the study?*
- ❖ *MAQ6: How do power relations in diverse cultures impact national culture? What are the implications for learning and training for the workplace?*

A meta-analysis based on existing critiques and the extant literature was conducted to respond to MAQ 1 to MAQ 6 regarding complexities of culture. These sub-questions arose upon reflection of the comparative analysis and have been addressed in sections 2.5 to 2.7, 3.3 to 3.4 and are discussed further in the proceeding sections 4.2 to 4.9.

4.5.1 Introduction

With this backdrop, the meta-narrative explored research that has investigated national culture from diverse points of view. The discourse is drawn from academic articles in the field of CCM. The analysis looked at current debates about national culture and non-cultural concepts such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power. The aim was to seek answers to additional questions that emerged after the comparative analysis. Questions that focused on complexities that question *why* such things may be happening as opposed to just describing and explaining the *what* and *how* of participants' insights. Additionally, reflective observations from my teaching experience are also shared. In other words, as *why*-questions arose during this study, readings based on other perspectives than CCM views were added to complement the traditional approach used in the first reading of the insights. This shed light on emerging sub-questions that took into consideration contextual factors that may play a role in the wider picture. Understanding and analysing emerging questions that consider non-

cultural factors across the lens of different approaches helps to inform the study in theory and practice. This analysis zooms in and discusses how complexities influence national culture in this cross-cultural research. A view of the issues from different perspectives allows for an assessment on whether the primary analysis may have taken things for granted.

4.5.2 Different approaches to complexities

In this research, participants' insights of the cross-cultural comparative study were meticulously described and analysed to examine the influence of national culture on learning for work from a CCM perspective. A secondary meta-narrative based on existing critiques in the extant literature was conducted after the comparative analysis with the objective to delve deeper into underlying subtleties of national culture and learning. Connecting the insights from different perspectives provided more understanding on the impact that national culture can have on learning and training for the workplace.

To begin, a critical understanding of dualistic approaches acknowledging limitations aided in avoiding the pitfalls of oversimplifying complex cultural phenomena, essentializing cultures, and reinforcing stereotypes. Critiques of the use of comparisons have raised concerns and limitations as frameworks based on duality tend to oversimplify complex phenomena by reducing them to binary oppositions. Cultures are often presented as mutually exclusive categories, falling short of capturing the rich diversity of each culture leading to stereotypes and generalizations. By emphasizing dichotomies, such as individualism vs collectivism, or task-oriented vs relationship-oriented, dualistic frameworks may overlook the complexity and variation within a cultural group, maintaining distorted and simplistic views. Such frameworks may also perpetuate essentialist views by assuming that differences are innate and static. Critics argue that the dynamic nature of culture and other social, political, historical, and contextual factors are overlooked leading to essentializing cultures and

reinforcing stereotypes, while inhibiting a nuanced and granular understanding of cultural variations.

On the other hand, frameworks based on dualistic comparisons provide an ideal starting point for researchers to examine and analyze cultural differences in a lucid and effective manner. In this study, this strategy served as a jumpstart to generate the propositions, develop the main research question, and reflect on sub-questions for the cross-cultural comparative analysis. The dualistic approach initially helped identify areas for further exploration about the influence of national culture and learning for work. After the primary analysis, this strategy also guided and framed the secondary meta-narrative leading to a more nuanced and granular analysis of complexities of national culture. An analysis based on dichotomies, such as collectivism vs individualism, or high-power distance vs low-power distance also assisted in examining cultural variations from a pragmatic stance. The practicality of relying on dualistic models is constructive in international business, education, health care, and diplomacy. Understanding differences in communication styles, for instance, can result in effective cross-cultural communication and negotiation strategies. The duality provides the organizational structure needed to facilitate understanding and generate discussions about cultural complexities.

Comparative analyses require comparing insights of participants in a systematic way; thus, by examining distinct cultural dimensions or culture-value orientations of diverse cultural groups, differences, and patterns between them can be identified allowing deeper insight into underlying cultural factors that influence social norms, attitudes, and behaviors. This raises awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences reminding people that individuals or learners from diverse cultures may perceive and approach the world in unique and diverse ways. Grasping the differences allows us to navigate the intercultural landscape and engage in interactions with more compliance, responsiveness, and acceptance of others.

Characterising nations in terms of dimensions has been questioned by academics; but many scholars still believe in the crucial importance of dimensional analyses of organisational and national culture for the purpose to highlight cultural differences between diverse contexts. The debate in the CCM literature seems to be about actual meanings embedded within these cultural dimensions that scholars bicker about. An ideal approach to study a complex phenomenon such as culture and the notions of complexities that it carries such as representation, the *us* versus *them* debate, agency, globalisation, and gender is to be cognisant that there are different approaches to examine non-cultural factors to complement a CCM view. Rejecting ideas from traditional views that have dominated studies for over four decades and which continue to be the most cited approaches used in empirical comparative studies of culture may be unwise. The culture debate is about preferred ways of scholars in how they define concepts and represent culture; about how many dimensions should be studied, and the levels of analysis (Smith, 2006). Hofstede's legacy is carried forward by scholars that accept that national culture may be characterized in terms of shared values (Schwartz, 2004; Smith et al., 1996; Smith, 2006; Inglehart, 1997) and shared beliefs (Bond et al., 2004).

Scholars have posed questions such as how can an individual make a valid judgement as to what is or is not part of their society? Smith (2006) points out that "there's little doubt that persons do feel that they are able to characterize both their own and other's nations". (Smith, 2006).

Studies from cross-cultural scholars (i.e., Hofstede, 1980; 2001; Globe, 2004 etc.) have without a doubt opened the floodgates on complexities of national culture and the methodological challenges critics focus on remain significant to researchers in CCM. Culture is a complex phenomenon with no simple criteria to follow for people to grasp its complexities. Researchers have attempted to address challenges while still focussing on

national-level analysis. Individual level analyses are informative too; but this may lead scholars to ignore contextual elements and fail to see cultural changes in general. More studies that focus on national-level dimensions of culture will help scholars navigate in cross-cultural landscapes as we face forces of globalisation. Notwithstanding the challenges, Hofstede's (1980) study of national culture to understand differences remains the reference point for many researchers who have yet to find a comparable framework when examining national cultural differences (Smith, 2006). Notions of complexities of national culture have led to pressure for paradigmatic shifts in the culture area of CCM. Culture research continues to be dominated by the traditional approaches; nonetheless, culture as a phenomenon is complex because it is dynamic and often influenced by contextual elements (Riffler & Zang, 2016). Considerations calling for a change in directions on how we examine culture stem from the concepts of representation (West vs Asia) and how to integrate these issues in the culture debate, the relationship between convergence and divergence in the globalisation debate, and the dynamic vs static views of national culture.

In this study, the meta-narrative based on the extant literature delved deeper into these important questions complementing the established traditional CCM perspective relied on for the primary study and examined how newer approaches to culture may contribute to this research study and the CCM field in general. This critical view provided answers to newly emerged questions, circumstances, and positioning of the researcher. The meta-analysis attempted to bridge a traditional CCM approach of examining cultural differences with more recent critical perspectives to better ground theory and practice and to widen the scope of this research study.

Another prominent issue is to reflect on the idea that the homogenization of diverse cultural groups may occur if researchers highlight the most salient and noticeable differences between two groups; thus, ignoring internal variations within each cultural group as well as any

subcultures or regional differences that may influence behaviours and attitudes in significant ways. Nevertheless, Western societies of Europe and America differ significantly from Chinese, Arab, and Russian societies. Research indicates that although intracultural differences exist within dominant cultures, intracultural differences are less compared to intercultural variations observed (Schrauf, 2009). For instance, when comparing national culture and learning in Canada and Morocco, despite the effects of sub-cultures within each dominant culture, the intracultural differences are smaller within each nation compared to the intercultural differences observed between both countries.

Ethnocentric bias is another limitation of dualistic comparisons in cross-cultural studies, where one culture is explicitly or implicitly positioned as inferior or superior to the other. This often leads to cultural imperialism, marginalization, and power imbalances in certain cultures. The influence of situational or contextual factors also tends to be overlooked when using dualistic approaches to comparative CCM studies. It is important to keep in mind that culture is not the only determinant of individual's behaviours, as people are influenced by socio-economic conditions, globalisation, agency and cultural structures, gender, power relations, and firsthand experiences. In this research, the meta-narrative allowed for a secondary analysis delving further into complexities of national culture which provided more insight to the research study.

4.6 Nuances and granularity

MAQ1: How can a qualitative analysis include a nuanced perspective and granularity?

Various approaches and techniques can ensure that a qualitative analysis includes nuances and granularity. It requires a deep engagement with the data, an openness to the emergent themes, as well as a willingness to examine that data from multiple perspectives. In this study, the interpretive phenomenological cross-cultural analysis of the primary study relied

on content analysis which allowed for rich descriptions of shared insights explained across frameworks of national culture in CCM, and a meta-narrative based on secondary data delved further into complexities of non-cultural factors such as globalisation, gender, agency and cultural structures, and power relations to achieve more granular and nuanced insights. Details have been presented in the previous chapter.

4.7 Globalisation and national culture

MAQ2: How does globalisation influence national culture?

There are various perspectives to examine the relationship between national culture and globalisation. Across its expansion over the decades, globalisation has come to include the spread of culture around the world. This process of globalisation connects intricate and complicated exchanges and interactions at intersecting meeting points with constant movement flowing on a global scale (Jackson, 2018). Metaphorically, globalisation can be imagined as a multifaceted operating system of arteries that carries oxygen to each vital organ or node of the body. A globalized system consists of many organs; culture is its heart; the core of an individual's existence rests in the heart of one's national culture. Embedded within this internal apparatus, multiple linkages exist, interfaces at the points of interaction (Jackson, 2018). A vital crossroad of these interactions where we can lucidly observe the manifestation of globalisation is with the cultural relations between diverse nations. At the intersections, various individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds make contact and exchange ideas, money, goods, services, and other commodities. People connect through these human exchanges. Consequently, the cultural effects of the outcomes of these relationships are often contested and misunderstood.

Hence, to better grasp the relationship between culture and globalisation, researchers need to understand prevalent points of view relied on that inform about intricacies behind these very

two complex phenomena. Paradigms used to guide the globalisation debate include the homogenization or convergence perspective, the cultural imperialistic view, the heterogenization or differentiation view, the hybridization paradigm, and the polarization debate.

4.7.1 Homogenization model

The Americanization of the world has been described as globalisation (Ritzer, 2010) which is a process needed to get the wheels in motion. The process needs to exert its force for the system to ignite and start working. As a result, the global forces will exert their power and diffuse it across the entire system from the starting point of a single global and dominant culture (Brown, 1999). Thus, globalisation is not only about interactions and interconnectedness, but also about influences that promote and advance a dominant monocultural global culture.

There are many reasons why globalisation undermines national culture and diversity around the world. First, transactional businesses that advance a consumer culture and western lifestyle with standardized goods and services are advocates for a homogenized culture; the latter is has been referred to as Coca-colonization (Wagnleitner, 2000). National culture is also undermined across 'cultural imperialism' with Western values and ways of doing things advanced as universal norms and traditions. This implies the idea of imposing a dominant Western culture in general and particularly an American one. Nowadays, cultural imperialism tends to penetrate, control, invade, and undermine other cultures across media, MNCs, IT, and Western foods, films, music, and fashion (Tomlinson, 2006). Cultural imperialism weakens cultural identity, eroding traditional national values, and debilitating the pride and dignity of an individual. Globalisation also affects multiculturalism. The McDonaldization theory argues that the spread of the fast-food culture secures Western organizations and

institutions' entry to advance western soft power (Ritzer and Malone, 2000). Lastly, the notion of Americanization with the USA promoting its customs, values, goods, services and western lifestyles deteriorates national culture. It is across the vehicles of McDonaldization, Americanization, coca-colonization, and cultural imperialism that globalists advance a monoculture that converges with non-cultural elements with dominant forces mixing and homogenizing as many aspects of local culture as they can.

4.7.2 Heterogenization model

The points of contention between the processes of cultural differentiation and homogenization impact global interactions (Appadurai et al, 2008). Cultural differentiation, also referred to as cultural heterogenization argues that the notion of globalisation is not only about the blending or diffusion of American and European lifestyles, values, norms, and traditions. Differentiation holds that despite the forces of globalisation, one's core national culture remains intact and unique; globalisation does not always have to be about cultural standardization and homogenization (Sotshangane, 2002). In fact, globalisation, when examined actively promotes the cooperation and coexistence of diverse cultures, thus enhancing cultural identity (Wang, 2007). Individuals exercise the free will to reject or internalize aspects of a culture that they choose, they are not mere entities of cultural forces. Said differently, to be influenced does not mean one rejects one's core values. Nowadays, technological advances have brought people closer together and this togetherness is not necessarily conflictual with diversity (Wang, 2007). In fact, when we are in a culturally diverse space, we are more concerned with the uniqueness of our own native national identity. Globalisation can be seen from a lens that promotes cultural differences, and which does not erode the core layer of one's national culture.

Globalisation promotes diversity in many ways (Lechner, 2001) fostering multiculturalism from a pluralistic view which occurs when individuals make contact through exchanges and interactions across borders, the latter fuse and weave cultural particularities together. Second, culture flows in various directions at different paces; this movement is characterized as differentiation. Globalisation also fosters diversity because individuals are more conscious and concern about their cultural roots is heightened; thus, while they are learning about new cultures, they are also tightly gripping onto their national cultural identity. Cultural differences remain at the core of one's identity as globalisation means togetherness and interconnectedness (Wang, 2007). Subsequently, the globe is more unique and interconnected, and a diverse global landscape.

Globalisation in the Moroccan context has provided a platform for Morocco's culture to be recognized globally, but certainly not at a balanced level. Unbalanced imports and exports of cultural items between Western countries and developing nations like Morocco are inevitably normal, and it is vital and realistic to understand that in the grand scheme of the global playground the interactions of an elephant are not those of a mouse and vice versa. Furthermore, Western domination in the fields of IT, education, media, business, and research places emerging economies in dimmer positions on the global chess board. Scholars have stated that this cultural invasion may be observed as a modern form of cultural imperialism (Wang, 2007). We need to examine notions of national culture and globalisation within boundaries and limitations of what is factual and truth to the reality being observed. In the Moroccan cultural milieu, the heterogenization scenario is not the most optimal fit to contextualize the cultural consequences of globalisation from the western points of view as the latter does not acknowledge that the modern forms of western encroachment are deteriorating Moroccan national culture as diverse as it is from the onset.

4.7.3 Hybridization model

Holton (2000) states that a hybrid approach to understanding the cultural effects of globalisation is the most optimal way to grasp the relationship between national culture and globalisation. Although hybridization recognizes that the exchanges and interactions may not be evenly balanced (Crothers, 2013), this model implies that the effects of globalisation are neither unidirectional standardizations of Western norms, cultural values, nor polarized dichotomies of opposing forces (Ozegin and Arioiz, 2014). The hybrid paradigm reflects an openness to a two-way process in the exchange of ideas, values, norms, and traditions; a reciprocal process between Eastern and Western cultural exchanges (Pieterse, 2009). This implies the continuous mixing of diverse cultures which will consequently lead to the creation of new, eclectic, and more dynamic cultural flows; thus, shaping the interactions between diverse cultures (Appadurai, 2008). These new landscapes have been termed as ethnoscaapes, technoscaapes, financescaapes, mediascaapes, and ideoscaapes (Appadurai, 1996).

Appadurai (1996; 2008) identified factors that facilitate the flow of cultural exchanges and interactions to include ethnoscaapes which are the international flows of people. The movement of information across IT technologies are the technoscaapes. Financescaapes are the cross-border flows of financial items such as capital, loans, and investments. Mediascaapes refers to the dispersion of print media around the world, and lastly, ideoscaapes is the movement of political ideologies such as human rights, freedom, and democracy (Appadurai, 1996). Movements of all these 'scaapes' become the catalyst for the creation of a new and unique culture (Husted, 2001). This two-way exchange process is one where Eastern society is impacted by Western values, lifestyles, customs, and traditions and westerners absorb the influences of the Eastern languages, foods, and fashion styles (Crothers, 2013). As a result of this double fold reciprocity between the East and the West, the mixing and blending cannot be expressed as cultural sameness or difference (Steger, 2017).

The premise of the hybrid view is that the blending results in a synthesized culture where people do not completely abandon nor neglect their core national cultural practices as they mix within encroaching Western or other foreign cultures. People will hold on to the most valuable, meaningful, and unavoidable aspects of their national culture and inherited cultural practices as they embrace and adopt aspects of other cultures they want to consciously possess and internalize (Hassi & Storti, 2012). Cultural hybridization is various cultures amalgamated together without totally alienating one's core cultural identity (Pieterse, 2009). In the same vein, it is about absorbing the benefits from other cultures and combining newly acquired knowledge with existing prior information side by side without completely losing one's identity. Hybridization blends African, American, Asian, and European cultural values, norms, and traditions to get a global *mélange* (Pieterse, 2009). Notwithstanding the positive aspects of this paradigm, this model also has its limitations. The notion of hybridity fails to focus on the fact that global exchanges and cultural interactions are often not displayed on a balanced foothold, and consequently Western cultural values continue to remain dominant in the process of intercultural mixing as it by nature contributes more elements to the new cultural concoction. Thus, the hybrid lens may be well suited to contextualize the relationship between national culture and globalisation in both the Moroccan and Anglo-Saxon Canadian context.

4.7.4 Polarization perspective

The polarization view of culture and globalisation implies that globalisation results in intense cultural conflicts between contradictory forces working at opposing directions (Holton, 2000). In the book *Jihad vs McWorld* (Barber, 1995), the author asserts that globalisation leads to brutal and ferocious collision between 'Jihad' and 'McWorld'. The former a reference to conflict on ethnic, cultural, and religious grounds for the protection of national identity that needs to be defended, whereas McWorld is a homogenization of a world across

the working of MNCs, industries, and information technology. Barber (1995) counterpoises cultural violence and tribalism against cultural imperialism which he terms as McWorld. Thus, cultural relations in diverse global landscapes will inevitably be conflictual because members of each group will seek to eliminate the other (Crothers, 2013).

Similarly, Samuel Huntington (1993), argued that cultural interactions are rooted in conflict as history illustrates with the events of the French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian Revolution of 1917 albeit with the latter, a shift from warfare between nations to ideological conflicts. Since WW1, the shift in frictions have focused on ideologies, hence the source of conflicts in international relations has been about religions and people's cultural identity. However, Huntington on culture held a conservative view and argued in his book *The Clash of Civilizations* (1995) that culture matters referring to it as 'civilizations' that are both durable and remarkably different from one another. In the same line of thought, Edward Said (1995) held that cultural dichotomies exist between Western and non-Western ways of life. Huntington (1995) polarized ideological views about global conflict arguing that the latter rests on cultural identities which he referred to as a 'clash of civilizations' because members of each group seek to defend and expand their own culture (Crothers, 2013).

The polarization view rests on the premise of cultural violence and extreme forms of fragmentation which place the West against the East. This perspective is the most far-fetched, illogical, and naïve view on a culture's consequences and globalisation. How can small developing countries in the world be capable of challenging the mammoth developed countries with the latter encroaching Western cultural values from multiple spheres? That said, this point of view of culture and globalisation would not be relevant to explain the cultural consequences of globalisation in Morocco and Canada.

4.7.5 Summary

Globalisation impacts national culture in contentious ways. The relationship of these two complex phenomena requires thorough examination and consideration for complexities such as representation, identity, agency, and power relations they encounter. Scholars rely on different perspectives for guidance in attempts to understand culture's consequences on globalisation. To better grasp how globalisation impacts national cultures, researchers count on four established paradigms used to help scholars explain what occurs at the points of interactions between these two fascinating yet intricate phenomena.

The homogenization view asserts that the forces of globalisation promote a standardized monoculture global culture, particularly the European Western and American dominant culture. Forces driving the globalisation process include instruments such as MNCs, educational institutions, the food, film, media, and fashion industries and more. In its' most extreme form, the cultural consequences of the interactions and exchanges that occur is cultural imperialism, which subsequently deteriorates one's national cultural identity. Contrarily, proponents of the heterogenization model believe that globalisation does not lead to a blended or homogenized culture. On the contrary, globalisation as a process enhances and reinforces one's cultural identity across the dynamic exchanges which promote mutual co-existence of various cultures. In this view, one's core national identity can resist and sustain the strong forces of globalisation and individuals not only maintain their embedded cultures' particularities, but they safeguard tightly their uniqueness and difference. The hybridization paradigm is a two-way approach to understanding globalisation's cultural consequences. It does not accept the cultural uniformity principle nor the cultural uniqueness premise. Acknowledging that cultural exchanges between nations inherently cannot be balanced, the cultural flow from these interactions and exchanges on the global sphere is a two-way reciprocal process. Westerners learn from the East, and ideas from the latter are

informed by Western values, norms, and traditions. This view embraces a melange of cultures (Pieterse, 2009) that affect each other interchangeably and as a result form a mosaic of unique and blended cultural aspects without necessarily having to give up one's cultural identity in its entirety. From this viewpoint, the individual is a part of the 'patchwork,' a unique piece of an intricate, eclectic, and multi-coloured mosaic quilt. Together, the assortment of cultural identities is seamlessly weaved into a bright and vibrant mosaic masterpiece. Barber, Huntington, Fukuyama, and Said, associated the effects of globalisation on culture from polarized perspectives. The polarization approach is that cultural interactions and exchanges are faced with fierce cultural clashes between paradoxical forces, as with the West vs East debate which presumes that both move in opposite directions. This view sees tension, fragmentation and disintegration resulting from ethnicity and people's cultural identity. The process of globalisation is a form of cultural imperialism or colonisation that spreads its Western ideologies, imposes its colonized practices, and culturally invades a nations' psyche to the point where it deteriorates and erases one's cultural identity.

4.8 Agency, change and development

MAQ5: What factors construct agency, change, and development? How do advanced cultures affect people's actions in developing countries? How do they manifest in my study?

Agency, change, and development are complex phenomena that are influenced by a wide range of factors, including individual characteristics, social and environmental contexts, and life experiences. The physical, social, and cultural environment in which a person is raised, grows up, and lives can significantly affect their agency, as well as their ability to change and develop over time. Personal characteristics such as temperament, personality, and cognitive abilities can also play a role in agency, change, and development. For instance, individuals with an intense sense of self-efficacy may be more likely to take on challenging tasks and work towards personal goals. Relationships with family members, family, and other

important individuals can provide social support and influence personal growth and development. Positive relationships can help individuals build agency and work towards change, while negative relationships may hinder progress. Access to resources such as education, healthcare, and economic opportunities can also impact agency, change, and development. Individuals with greater access to resources may be more likely to pursue their goals and make progress towards positive change. Life experiences such as trauma, illness, or major life events can also shape agency, change, and development. These experiences can either hinder or catalyse personal growth and development, depending on how individuals process and respond to them. In sum, complexities of agency, change, and development are due to a myriad of factors including individual features, social, cultural, and environmental contexts, and lived experiences.

Advanced cultures can significantly influence people's actions and behaviors in developing countries with the adoption of new cultural norms, education and skills, economic impact, and globalization (Change and Lee, 2007). Individuals in developing countries holding managerial positions tend to adopt the cultural norms of the advanced cultures they are exposed to and mimic the behaviour of their foreign masters such as individualism, consumerism, and materialism; inclinations that lead to changes and alterations of their national cultural values and behaviour, as for instance, increased consumption of Western goods, changes in dress and appearance, and changes in their social norms (Bhabha, 1984).

In respect to training and learning for work, I have observed that in some cases, trainees from developing societies who receive training or education in advanced and developed societies are exposed to current ideas, technologies, and practices that help them improve their skills and knowledge. In developing societies, exposure also occurs when transmitted by foreign instructors. The exposure leads to changes in their actions and behaviours as they internalise and adopt the latest ideas and practices which may significantly differ from their native

cultural references. Advanced cultures often have more developed education systems and can provide opportunities for people in developing countries to acquire knowledge and develop specialized skills. Introduction to these opportunities can lead to changes in behaviours such as increased aspiration for higher education and changes in career choices. Nonetheless, there can also be negative consequences to this foreign exposure. For example, trainees may adopt behaviours and practices that are not culturally appropriate or that conflict with local norms and values. Also, they may become overly focused on individual achievement and success which undermines collective efforts and social cohesion in collectivistic societies. Moreover, the impact of developed countries can depend on a specific area of study. For example, trainees in business and finance may be more likely to adopt practices that prioritize profit-making and individual success, while trainees in fields such as education and public health are more focused on the well-being of the community and social justice.

Additionally, economic impacts and forces of globalisation also can have considerable impact on developing countries through foreign investment and trade; consequently, leading to changes in behaviour such as increased entrepreneurship and changes in consumer behaviour. At the forefront of advanced cultures, global forces can be observed with the spread of ideas and information across borders leading to changes in values and behaviour, such as changes in attitudes toward gender roles and sexuality, changes in religious beliefs and practices, and changes in political views.

The impact of advanced and developed countries on trainee's actions and behaviours in developing countries is complex and multifaceted and depends on many factors. It is vital to acknowledge the potential benefits and risks of exposure to innovative ideas and practices, and to ensure that trainees are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate these complex dynamics in a culturally sensitive and socially responsible manner.

4.9 Diverse cultures, agency, cultural structures, and gender

MAQ3: How do individuals in diverse cultures use agency to respond to cultural structures?

MAQ4: Do both samples reflect gender in employee learning for work?

Cultural structures are shared beliefs, values, customs, and norms that define a particular culture shared by a particular group of people (Hall, 2000). When people from diverse cultural backgrounds encounter these cultural structures, they may respond in diverse ways based on their knowledge of agency and how it can be exerted within the culture. Means individuals in diverse cultural settings may resort to in effort to exercise their free will depend on a range on factors such as negotiation, resistance, adaptation, and creativity (Cardenas, 2022; Cohen, 2012; Tan et al., 2019). An understanding of the values, beliefs, and challenges individuals may face in circumventing a particular cultural context help to navigate a context more efficiently.

4.9.1 Agency and negotiation

In some cultures, people may negotiate with the cultural structures they encounter to preserve their sense of agency. When doing so, it is important to avert cultural conflict by avoiding stereotypes when negotiating across cultures (Shonk, 2022). This may require finding ways to modify or challenge existing cultural norms or traditions that one feels are limiting while still respecting the broader national cultural context. When faced with cultural differences, people rely on stereotypes which are often pejorative and can lead to misleading expectations about a trainee's behaviour for example. Thus, assuming cultural stereotypes going into a negotiation could lead to negative effects. Shifting focus from stereotypes to prototypes which are cultural averages on dimensions of behaviour or values, may be a way to modify existing ways of doing things (Cardenas, 2022; Shonk, 2022). For instance, albeit some variations within each culture, when negotiating with Japanese learners, it is understood that they require more quiet time during their exchanges than, say Italian learners. However, we should

not expect Japanese negotiators to be reserved, but if they are especially quiet, stakeholders might better understand the behaviour and change the negotiating approach because of the prototype. Based on my personal teaching experiences in diverse cultural settings, an awareness of a trainers own cultural prototype, or model can help anticipate how a counterpart might interpret negotiation behaviour, so it is not only about understanding how people do things in other cultures, but also to consider how your own culture may be perceived.

Cross-cultural misunderstandings also occur because often we interpret people's beliefs, values, and behaviors across the lens of our own culture. To prevail over these tendencies, trainers need to educate themselves about the other culture by researching on the culture's customs and behaviors and understand the reasons why people in these diverse cultures follow these customs and exhibit these types of behaviors. Hence, we need to grasp the context and the stakeholders when negotiating training activities for the workplace including the national cultures they belong to. Consideration of the cultural iceberg or cultural onion (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 2005; Schein, 2004) will help to better know the training participants and other stakeholders involved, leading to more effective and efficient negotiations. Thus, research about the ideal training participants in a diverse culture can result in adjusting negotiation strategies that will be more valuable for all stakeholders. Cultural differences can be barriers to reaching agreements in negotiation, but they can also represent valuable opportunities. The implications suggest that negotiations blurred by cross-cultural conflict may be rife with opportunities to capitalize on regarding different preferences, values, priorities, and beliefs.

4.9.2 Agency and resistance

In other cultures, individuals may choose to reject or resist certain cultural structures that they perceive as oppressive, damaging, or hindering their ability to exercise their free will (Hay, 2011). This may involve efforts to change cultural practices or advocate for alternative approaches to understand issues in diverse ways. A person's free will can challenge cultural structures by questioning the validity of some cultural beliefs and practices. For instance, if a person disagrees with a particular aspect of their culture, they may choose to act in opposition to it. For example, in a professional training context, if a culture practices gender segregation but a learner does not want to participate in this tradition, they may choose to collaborate with both men and women. Another example is if a group of individuals in a society collectively decide to challenge the dominant cultural beliefs and practices, they can create change through their collective agency. Their actions can challenge the status quo and contribute to the evolution of cultural structures. On the other hand, cultural structures can also restrict individual agency. For instance, cultural values, norms, and beliefs that uphold discrimination, and inequality can limit the agency of certain groups, making it harder for them to act in their own self-interest or make choices that go against the cultural norm. As a trainer in Morocco, I have observed both, learners that challenge and question taboo topics openly and freely, and others that choose to avoid some topics by keeping silent when discussing controversial issues. On the other hand, in Canada as an individualistic society, people would innately reject oppressive or harmful cultural structures.

Another way individual's agency can challenge cultural structures is by forming subcultures within a larger dominant culture (Boisner & Chatman, 2013). When people hold divergent beliefs and values from the dominant culture, they may form their own subculture. This can lead to the creation of new practices and the evolution of existing ones. When a subculture is at odds with the dominant culture at the national or organizational level, countercultures form

(Cooks-Campbell, 2021). The latter when compared to the dominant culture are confrontational by nature and undermine each other's presence. An example of a counterculture movement unfolded in the sixties in the US when many aspects of mainstream culture, including traditional gender roles and American social norms were challenged.

As discussed in the meta-narrative of this study, individual agency can both challenge and shape cultural structures depending on how people choose to exercise their free will or autonomy. Cultural structures are not unchanging and static; they are influenced by the choices and actions of people within them.

4.9.3 Agency and adaptation

Adaptation is the fit between the individual and the environment, an adjustment of the individual to external conditions (Cohen, 2012). In some cultures, individuals may adapt to social and cultural structures by finding ways to align their agency with the expectations and norms of their cultural context. This may involve developing skills or strategies that allow them to navigate and succeed within their cultural environment while still maintaining their independence. The interplay between individuals, culture, and the environment is vital to understanding creativity. Culture impacts creativity in limiting acceptable boundaries, yet providing the artifacts used in creating (Tan, 2019). Culture is impacted and changed by creative efforts. Tight conformity to confining environments or cultures can stifle (Tan, 2019). Awareness of cultural values guides us to not overstep boundaries.

4.9.4 Agency and creativity

In many cultures individuals may use creativity as a means of expressing free will and responsibility to cultural structures. This may involve forms of expression of ideas that challenge or subvert cultural norms and expectations, while also offering a new perspective on the culture itself. How culture influences creativity across countries is still a point of

debate and how creativity is achieved in organizations varies significantly across cultures (Loewenstein and Mueller, 2016). The extant research has examined how creativity differs in terms of efficacy across cultures focusing on the individualism dimension to explain these differences (Kormi-Nouri et al., 2015). Recent studies have explored how specific cultural values interact with the cultural norms that enforce values such as cultural tightness (Gelfand et al., 2011). Gelfand (2006) refers to tight and loose cultures as tightly or loosely enforced through norms. Culture, on the other hand, is a multifaceted concept. Studies have shown that cultural dimensions may not necessarily function independently from each other (Kirkman et al., 2006). Some scholars have responded to this by focusing on the East vs West debate (Morris & Leung, 2010). Nonetheless, nuances regarding the effect of cultural differences may be neglected since both East and West embody differences within them. For instance, cultural dimensions differ between the Chinese and Indian cultures or the British and Spanish one (Hofstede, 1980; 2010). Furthermore, these approaches do not specify which cultural dimensions drive intercultural difference in fostering creativity; hence, scholars have suggested that to grasp the moderating effect of culture on creativity, the multidimensional aspects of culture need to be considered (Aktas et al., 2015). In doing so, focus should be on the interconnectedness of cultural value dimensions of a given country and on the strength of the norms enforcing these values. This would include an examination of the four main cultural dimensions of individualism, power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede et al., 2010) and the cultural tightness of each country (Gelfand, 2011). When examining cultural dimensions or cultural tightness independently, studies show it did not explain much in terms of differences in creativity across countries (Aktas et al., 2015). However, differences were identified when examining culture and creativity from the cultural bundle lens. Gelfand (2011) defines a cultural bundle as a set that includes both cultural values of a country and the strength of the norms which enforce the values or “cultural

tightness.” Cultures are not more or less creative than one another, instead it is their cultural values and the enforcement through cultural norms that indicate if a country recognizes its creativity across skills, motivation, or relevant knowledge (Yong, Mannucci, & Lander, 2020). For instance, strong relationships were found in culturally tight countries such as Mexico and Saudi Arabia with collectivism, power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance making knowledge enforced through norms particularly important for creativity. On the other hand, a weak relationship between knowledge and creativity was found in Sweden, a country characterized by individualism, low power distance, femininity, and low uncertainty avoidance (Yong et al., 2020). In the USA and France which are culturally loose countries, knowledge matters when considered with other cultural values. Thus, creativity can be achieved in both countries with a tight or loose culture, but the cultural dimension through which creativity is achieved best is determined by the cultural values present in the cultural bundle (Yong et al., 2020).

The approach to examining the impact of culture on creativity from a single dimension perspective to the notion of cultural bundles provides a more fine-grained analysis of the moderating effect of culture on creativity (Aktas et al., 2015). Also, studies would illustrate how cultures achieve creativity in diverse ways (Simonton and Ting, 2010) and that aspects of individual creativity are contingent on culture (Anderson, Potocnik, & Zhou, 2014).

4.9.5 Agency and gender

Structure and agency are recognised as phenomena that is multifaceted and interrelated (Hays, 1994). Structural forces exert conflicting effects on the lives of women in distinct cultural settings globally, at times facilitating empowerment and free will on some cultural dimensions or marginalizing others. Nowadays, globalization has brought new opportunities but also made the lives of women more vulnerable (Cabezas, Reese, & Waller, 2015).

Cultural and socio-political changes associated with globalization have created new standards for women's rights, helping them voice their appeals beyond local national boundaries (Ferree & Tripp, 2006). At the same time, women face long standing and new obstacles in terms of access to economic, social, political, reproductive, and sexual rights. Studies have called attention to the complexities of national interests, power relations, and gender (see Htun, 2003; Jacobson, 2006; Charrad, 2010).

Based on personal observations teaching in diverse settings, I have seen women manoeuvre within the structural hurdles circling around them and have seen them resiliently tackle day to day problems, needs, and concerns as they come at them. Sometimes the strategies they rely on result in meaningful change and at other times women are just suffocated by the politics they subject themselves to. I have also observed continuous struggle but no change unless they conform to what their superiors want. For instance, in the training context, I have collaborated with individuals in Morocco that were selected to attend professional training because management thought they deserved it more than other more qualified colleagues who needed the specialised training.

The complex, contradictory, and multifaceted aspects of gender agency are partly connected to the fact that women use their agency within the limits of existing rules and resources. Women consider the social values, meanings, and norms when they act and initiate change (Starmasky, 2015; Giddens, 1979). My observations having lectured in both developed and developing countries confirms this as well. Hence, women's agency needs to be examined in respect to existing and entrenched power hierarchies that are present in all societies around the world including consideration of factors such as class, religion, identity, and ethnicity. We need to look at the dominant rules constraining women's agency which are embedded in institutions as the family, religion, state, and the workplace. Thus, power hierarchies, economic and political structures, as well as interpersonal relations that exist in all societies

around the world need a highly detailed analysis. The subordination or free will of women cannot be envisioned without observing gender hierarchies and their structural contexts.

4.9.6 Power relations and national culture

MAQ6: How do power relations in diverse cultures impact national culture? What are the implications for learning and training for the workplace?

Power relations play a significant role in shaping national culture, and the way they impact culture can vary depending on the diverse culture in question. In many cultures, there is a dominant culture that holds more power and influence than others and can impact national culture by setting norms, values, and traditions reflected in various aspects of society such as language, art, and education; on the other hand, marginalised cultures may have less influence on national culture, but they still contribute to it in their own ways (Reisinger & Turner, 2012). They may preserve traditions, languages, and values that are distinct from the dominant culture, and these can enrich national culture (Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada.ca). When dominant cultures attempt to assimilate or impose their values and beliefs on marginalised cultures, it can lead to a loss of diversity and cultural heritage leading to a homogenization of cultural expressions (Berry, 2005). Marginalised cultures may also resist assimilation and assert their identities in several ways such as through art, literature, music, and activism (Sardar, 2015). Resistance can also impact national culture by challenging dominant values and norms and highlighting the richness of diverse cultures (Chua et al., 2015). It is also important to note that power relations can intersect with other social identities, such as race, gender, class, and sexuality (Warner & Shields, 2013) which can further complicate the impact of power relations on national culture, leading to complex and diverse cultural expressions.

Power relations in diverse cultures can also have significant impact on national culture and training in several ways. Interactions and associations of power within a culture can shape its national culture (Eroglu & Picak, 2011). For instance, in cultures where power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or groups, that national culture may reflect this hierarchy through symbols, rituals, and traditions. This can lead to a culture that values authority, obedience, and conformity. On the other hand, in cultures where power is more diffuse, the national culture may reflect this through an emphasis on individualism, egalitarianism, and independence. This can lead to a culture that values personal autonomy, creativity, and motivation. Over the years, in Morocco, I have observed hierarchal tendencies with trainees and employees; the latter are cautious of authority, obedient, and ready to conform to the directives of their superiors. Contrariwise, power relations are more dispersed with autonomy and creativity valued from employers in a Canadian training milieu.

Dynamics of power can also affect the training and education systems in a culture. For instance, in cultures where power is centralised and authority figures are highly respected, training programs may emphasize conditioning, memorisation, and obedience to authority. In contrast, in cultures where power is more evenly distributed and individualism is valued, training programs may emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. These programs may encourage learners to question authority and challenge the status quo. Power relations can also impact social mobility within a culture. In cultures where power is concentrated in the hands of a few, social mobility may be limited to those who are already part of the ruling elite. This can lead to a culture of nepotism, favouritism, and cronyism. In contrast, in cultures where power is more diffuse, social mobility may be more open to individuals from divergent backgrounds and social classes.

In brief, power relations in diverse cultures can have a significant impact on national culture, and it is essential to recognize and celebrate the diversity of cultural expressions and the

value they bring to society. Understanding power dynamics in respect to national culture and learning for work is important for designing effective education and training programs that reflect the values and aspirations of a culture, while also promoting social mobility, adaptability, and equity.

Chapter 5 of the thesis will focus on contributions and limitations of the study, theoretical and practical implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, Contributions, Limitations and Future Research

Chapter 5 Conclusions, implications, contributions, limitations, and future research

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of this cross-cultural comparative study was to conduct and present a comparative, exploratory and interpretative analysis of how national culture influences employee learning in diverse workplace contexts. While examining the influence of culture on learning in the comparative study, questions arose about complexities of culture such as globalisation, agency and cultural structures, gender, and power relations. Consequently, a secondary analysis of the extant literature delved further into current debates about various approaches used when examining complexities. Reflective observations from my teaching experience in both countries have also been shared throughout the study. Addressing questions that developed after the cross-cultural comparative analysis allowed for a more granular view of the influence of national culture on learning for work. These in-depth insights helped to broaden the scope of the study and further bridge theory and practice.

There is a dearth of literature on national culture and employee learning albeit few studies that have discussed planning (e.g., Chang 2004; Hassi, 2012), objectives (e.g., Hoff, 2002; Weech, 2001; Hassi 2016), content design (e.g., Joy and Kolb, 2009; Jaju et al., 2002), and implementation (Barmeyer, 2004; Apaydin, 2008; Dimitrov 2006; Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). A lack of research in this area has been apparent in the literature for the past few decades, even more so, there are limited contributions regarding the impact of national culture on climate setting, needs assessment, and evaluation of training outcomes. This research adds to the body of knowledge as the study sought insights on various aspects of learning activities, specifically on all the phases of the learning cycle from the initial step of

climate setting to the last step of training evaluation (see Marquardt, 1990). Also, studies in the literature have yet to provide a comparative analysis of Canada and Morocco. In addition, considerations for complexities of culture have provided for a more in-depth nuanced view of a complex phenomenon.

An analysis of the findings provided a landscape view of how things unfold in learning for work in two diverse cultural contexts. When comparing the insights, differences were presented, described, and analysed in Chapter 4 from a cross-cultural management perspective to explain cultural differences. The findings were compared with notable contributions of cross-cultural theorists discussed in Chapter 2. A meta-analysis responded to questions that emerged from the CCM comparative analysis that focused on other approaches to understanding how complexities of culture such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power relations may also influence culture and learning.

This chapter summarises the key findings of the research in relation to the proposed conceptual frameworks and literature. It also presents key conclusions, implications in theory and practice, contributions, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

5.2 Summary of cross-cultural comparative study and key findings

The findings of this research indicate that traits inherent in a national culture may be used to explain patterns of behaviour by examining what occurs at various steps of a professional training. An understanding of these tendencies may be helpful for training and development managers and trainers to plan and manage learning activities appropriately across cultures that are similar to the Canadian and Moroccan contexts. The objectives of this cross-cultural comparative research study were met, and a summary of the key findings is presented in table 5.

Table 5 Summary Chart: A Cross-Cultural Comparative Study

Research questions	Research Propositions	Research Findings
<p><u>Main research question</u></p> <p>MRQ: How do employee learning activities for the workplace vary across national culture in the Canadian and Moroccan contexts?</p> <p><u>Sub-questions</u></p> <p>SQ1: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the PD cultural dimension?</p> <p>SQ2: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the UA cultural dimension?</p> <p>SQ3: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the IND cultural dimension?</p> <p>SQ4: How do employee learning activities vary in the Moroccan and Canadian contexts through the MAS cultural dimension?</p>	<p>RP1: In the Moroccan context, which is a high PD culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low PD culture, the process is more decentralized.</p> <p>RP2: In the Moroccan context, which is a high UA culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is more rigid, whereas in the Canadian context, which is a low UA culture, the process is less rigid.</p> <p>RP3: In the Moroccan context, which is a collectivistic culture, the overall approach to employee learning activities is centred on the group of training participants, whereas in the Canadian context, which is an individualistic culture, the process is centred on the individual learner.</p> <p>RP4: In both the Moroccan and Canadian contexts, which are slightly patriarchal cultures, the overall approach to employee learning activities is outcome-based.</p>	<p>RP1 is established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ In the Canadian culture (PD=39), decision-making power is more egalitarian and justifications for inequalities are expected. ✚ Learning activities in the Moroccan context may be centralized due to high PD cultural traits that characterize Morocco (PD 70). In high PD cultures, the unequal distribution of power is acceptable with justifications not required for decisions made by senior management. <p>RP2 is established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The study showed that learning activities for work are less rigid and more flexible in the Canadian culture (UA 48). ✚ In Morocco (UA 68), individuals favour predictability and exhibit low tolerance for ambiguity with societies maintaining rigid belief codes. <p>RP3 is established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ In collectivistic Morocco, the approach to employee learning is group-centred, whereas in Canada, the focus is on the individual learner. ✚ Canadian individualistic traits (CA=80) highlight an independent mind-set, whereas Moroccan trainees prefer group-oriented activities. <p>RP4 is partially established.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Both sample cultures score as slightly patriarchal with an approach to employee learning as outcome based. ✚ Although Canada scores midpoint (MAS52), between masculinity and femininity, training-activities, are outcome-based as it should be in a fully-fledged masculine culture, but in the Moroccan findings (MAS53), training-activities were not outcome-based

5.3 Learning activities for work-related training

In this cross-cultural comparative study, it was found that climate setting for Canadian training participants is aligned with similarities seen in Nordic cultures and is considered significant, whereas, for Moroccan respondents, climate setting was deemed less of an issue to be explored. Climate setting considers environmental, interpersonal, and organizational aspects of the learning environment in an informal and relaxed learning space; the latter elements are deemed relevant in the American approach to adult training (Marquardt, 1990). In this research, the Canadian sample illustrated that learning environments matter and preferences for the delivery of training lean towards professional milieus such as offices, conference rooms, or university classrooms. The Canadian insights support the literature on the importance of setting which suggests that mature learners acquire knowledge and learn if the climate promotes learning. This finding confirms the work of Knowles (1975).

In workplace learning milieus that necessitate conducive learning climates, the latter cannot be fully recognized without exploring the cultural viewpoints that are associated with the setting where learning takes place (Felstead et al., 2009). For example, methodical variations found in the way in which teaching spaces function in diverse parts of the world have been connected to cultural differences (Charlesworth, 2008). Therefore, an increasing necessity for reflection of cultural influence in training (Merriam et al., 2007). In the American context, the training setting requires harmonious arrangements between trainees and trainers from the onset; on the other hand, the latter may be less important in regions where traditional classroom style settings are customary and formal relations between trainers and trainees are the norm (Marquardt, 1990). Dependent on the degree of UA, professional learners may show varying levels of stress in self-restrained learning environments. In resilient UA cultures, more explicit guidelines may be useful, while more self-sufficiency is predictable in low UA cultures (Kim and McLean, 2014).

Previous research that examined and compared aspects of training and national culture present no studies that highlight the importance of setting in learning for work. The findings from this study provide insights into trainees' perceptions about the significance of climate setting. Additionally, no studies were found in the literature that compare insights about the setting phase in geographical regions such as Canada and Morocco. At this initial learning activity, the study describes shared insights linking plausible explanations to cultural factors that influence learning for the workplace. From a researcher perspective, a more lucid portrait of cultural differences and climate setting would be most beneficial as these cultural considerations can provide guidance to trainers and program developers as well as help to custom design programmes that are accurate and effective.

The extant literature on national culture and physical setting in training is limited with very few references attributed to this phase of a professional learning activity. A rationale

behind this could be that aspects of physical setting may be perceived as less about a particular culture but more specific to the actual circumstances of a particular training. Nonetheless, this study provided a glimpse into the differences from a Canadian and Moroccan cultural lens. Given the dearth of published material on climate setting and training, details of culture specific information can provide valuable insights to scholars and practitioners, and ideally, professional training providers would be able to take these considerations into account.

The relationship between the instructor and the learner are an important aspect of the setting. In this study, Canadian participants described the rapport as reciprocal and collaborative. Contrariwise, Moroccan insights highlighted a formal relationship with trainers. The findings supported the cross-cultural tendencies reviewed and detailed in Chapter 2. For instance, in the literature, Scandinavian societies are characterized by egalitarian features; they value low PD, directness, consensus in decision making, and promote gender equity (Warner-Søderholm, 2012). In these Nordic cultural surroundings, there is a tendency to restrict inequalities, and trainees are expected to engage and share ideas with colleagues. Similarly, the Canadian sample showed cultural traits aligned with the Nordic culture as respondents revealed that the trainer-trainee relationship is collaborative, equal, and a two-way exchange. Conversely, in hierarchical cultures, trainees expect to acquire knowledge from experts (Weech, 2001). Similarly, in Eastern cultures such as Türkiye, trainees listen respectfully to their trainers (Roberts and Tuleja, 2008). In this study, Moroccan respondents suggested similar leanings in that they perceive knowledge because of shared information transferred from their trainers. Whereas the Canadian findings show that trainers are considered facilitators and trainees are perceived more as clients than students; conversely, the Moroccan insights support the idea that the position of trainers is one of

knowledge transferor and they are perceived to hold an important and esteemed position of power in exchanges between trainer and learner.

Another crucial factor related to the instructor-learner rapport is the communication style between the trainers and trainees. Reciprocal communication in low PD cultures such as Canada has been found between training providers and trainees with participants encouraged to be pro-active with their training activities (Hassi, 2012). On the other hand, in high PD cultures as Morocco and Malaysia, wisdom resides with seniors; the principle in the Malayan context rests on the idea of “with age, comes wisdom” (Kamis et al., 2006) indicating that decision-making is the responsibility of experienced seniors who are enlightened because of their lived experiences. These wise leaders possess a deep understanding of workplace practices. Contrary to the Canadian insights, Moroccan responses in this study showed that decisions about employee training are made by senior members within their departments. With these insights, international stakeholders working in these contexts may be able to avoid some less helpful aspects of the Moroccan and Canadian learning context and focus on the more advantageous dimensions of the cultural setting. The study helps us to see that in low IND countries knowledge is important. Stakeholders in training and development should be aware of the need to moderate feelings and emotions that may endanger harmony of the group and be mindful of the fact that constructive feedback may not be well received in low IND cultures, so, it may be helpful to avoid giving negative feedback in these cultural contexts.

The findings in this study may also help training providers and other stakeholders’ frame training and professional learning strategies that convey effective communication. As a trainer in Morocco, I have learned not to expect direct communication from training participants, for example, it is unlikely to see trainees pose direct questions in a workshop or training session. An awareness of what is not being said by paying close attention and

observing the non-verbal signs would be helpful information for trainers. Instructors and/or trainers should feel at ease with making informed presumptions throughout a training and avoid attempts at trying to be sure about what is really happening with the participants. With high PD training participants as in the Moroccan context, it may be helpful to establish distance between the instructor and trainee as this helps to reinforce credibility.

Regarding the informal and formal nature of the interpersonal setting, in hierarchical cultures, learners expect to acquire knowledge from professionals (Weech, 2001); while, in more egalitarian societies, as seen in the Scandinavian context, learners are supposed to exchange ideas and learn from each other. The findings in this study showed that formal ways of doing things are not customary and relations are more egalitarian with the Canadian participants. Whereas Moroccan learners expect a professional and formal rapport with their trainers and a top-down approach is acceptable. Similarly, empirical evidence (see Forster and Fenwick, 2015) shows that patriarchal and authoritarian leadership styles are expected within the Moroccan workplaces. Moroccan organisations have also been found to be hierarchical with authoritative figures not involving subordinates in the professional learning-related decision-making process (Weir, 2006). Albeit Hutching and Weir (2006) drawing parallels with loyalty, the authors argue that as mentioned in the literature, managers' behaviour is accepted by their subordinates because it is part of their national culture. Consequently, this restricts implementing practices that empower trainees and impedes innovative ideas for learning and development in high PD cultures such as Morocco. The current research validates managerial behaviour in the Moroccan context described in the literature, while contributing insights about national culture and employee learning to the extant literature.

The justifications for cultural phenomenon as explained by cross-cultural theorists have been confirmed in this comparative study illustrating that national culture plays a role in

employee learning activities for work. For instance, in the Moroccan workplace, decisions related to employee training are centralized and people accept this fact as part of the way things are done in their culture. On the other hand, in low PD cultures power is dispersed and individuals do not support unequal distribution of power. In this study, characteristics of high PD cultures such as a centralized decision-making process regarding employee training has been confirmed with the Moroccan insights. The Canadian findings about learning activities for work corroborated cultural characteristics of low PD cultures.

This research further informs the literature as it allows us to make more informed decisions that consider aspects of culture in learning for work. For instance, in high PD cultures, it would be unlikely that colleagues would initiate any action, and they prefer to be guided and directed to complete a task; therefore, if a manager does not take charge of their team, employees or trainees may perceive tasks as not particularly important. Based on the insights from this research, in high PD cultures, we need to acknowledge the status of those with leadership roles. Stakeholders may want to circumvent the power vested in a leader's status in implicit ways. Individuals may also need to go to the top for answers and be mindful of stonewalling techniques. This research found that in low PD contexts as in the Canadian sample, organisations are flatter with supervisors and employees considered as equals. In these cultures, we can delegate tasks and involve individuals directly affected by decisions in the decision-making process. These insights draw our attention to cultural characteristics to consider when making decisions about training and development in diverse cultures as in Canada and Morocco.

In this study, frameworks and theories were relied on to describe cultural traits in a particular society. Cultural theorists (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; Trompenaars, 1996; the GLOBE project, 2001; House et al., 2001; Hall, 1990; Adler, 2003) found patterns of similarity and differences attributing them to national differences. The latter

were used to explain insights shared from a Canadian and Moroccan sample. Based on studies in the literature, Hofstede's cultural dimensions and other cultural frameworks have contributed to examining how power distance, individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity versus femininity influence aspects of learning for work. In this research cultural features from a Canadian and Moroccan perspective have explained perceptions, beliefs, and behaviours related to learning at work. For the MAS dimension, limited evidence was found in the literature and in the collected data.

The role of globalisation, agency, gender, and power relations and how they may influence culture and learning for work should complement CCM comparative studies when examining national culture and employee learning for workplace training. The climate setting of a training activity can be predisposed to forces of globalisation in many ways as discussed in section 4.2.2.1. Thus, training stakeholders need to be familiar with influential forces to understand differences in terms of cultural values and norms (Azevedo & Shane, 2019) and to better adapt training approaches that contribute to effective and positive learning environments. Additionally, as seen in the discussion about agency, while learning participants have the potential to influence a training for work activity through their agency, it is vital to consider that external factors and other phases of the learning process may also play an important role in framing the climate setting, the learning objectives, and the design of a training program, workshop, or module (Oliveira et al, 2021). Climate setting for a work-related training can also be impacted by gender roles; therefore, to create effective and inclusive training programs in diverse cultural contexts, it is important to be aware of these influences and adapt approaches in ways that promote diversity and equality. Lastly, climate setting for a training is also predisposed to power relations. An awareness of the issues can help to promote equity and inclusion of diverse genders. Stakeholders, especially trainers, should be culturally competent, agile, and aware of underlying power dynamics to create an

effective, just, and fairer learning environment. Training providers ought to be sensitive of the subtleties regarding power issues and adapt their training methods accordingly.

5.3.1 Planning

The existing literature shows that less restrictions are imposed when planning activities in low UA cultures as seen in Singaporean and Canadian organizations; additionally, unplanned objectives may surface at any given time with adjustments made as required (Hassi, 2015). In high UA cultures such as Morocco, companies and organizations exhibit aspects of rigidity during the planning stages and when determining objectives for their employees (Hassi, 2012). Similarly, cultures with tight structures display facets of intolerance with trainees expecting clear-cut objectives from the onset; nonetheless, in cultures with loose structures, learners are given latitude in setting the goals and objectives (Weech, 2001).

In examining planning, this study shows that Canadian interviewees are regularly included in this phase of the process. On the other hand, Moroccan senior management delegate planning tasks to training providers and both plan the training for beneficiaries; trainers execute based on how they are directed by management. Trainees have extremely limited direct input at this stage. Thus, as mentioned in Chapter 2 and 4, the findings on the planning phase in both diverse contexts exhibit cultural features aligned with what has been documented in similar UA, PD, MAS, and IND societies illustrating that aspects of national culture are also behind learning activities for the workplace. This study's valuable contribution is that diverse samples examining learning at work from a Canadian and Moroccan lens further inform the existing body of literature.

An examination of learning activities across the UA dimension, which describes how well people cope with anxiety, provided for an explanation of the differences that emerged

from the findings in this sample. In societies that score low for UA, individuals try to be as predictable and controllable as possible, and when this cannot happen, they may be tempted to stop making any effort. The literature highlights that individuals in low UA cultures are more tranquil, open, and inclusive (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Other cultural characteristics of low UA societies are an openness to innovation, open-ended learning and decision making, and a lesser sense of urgency. In examining this cultural dimension and how it sheds light on learning activities, stakeholders should ensure that employees remain focused and not create too many restrictions or impose too much structure. In these contexts, titles are less important, hence, no need to exhibit one's credentials, knowledge, or experience. Individuals in these cultural contexts respect those who earn it through their hard work not based on one's title. An understanding of these cultural forces at play adds valuable insight to the growing literature in training and development for the workplace in MENA region countries and Anglo cluster societies.

In high UA societies such as Morocco, cultures are considered more conservative, rigid, and structured. This study informs the literature as it illustrated a need to be clear and concise about expectations and goals, the necessity to clearly define parameters while encouraging critical thinking and dialogue, and to recognize that there may be unspoken rules or cultural expectations one needs to grasp in diverse learning contexts as Morocco. An understanding that these high UA contexts have many societal conventions and that individuals in these cultural contexts need to feel they are in control of their situations may be helpful when providing options or solutions to activities related to learning and development for the workplace. For instance, in the Moroccan context when planning a training activity for trainees, the study illustrated that it would be helpful to set concise learning goals and expectations with clearly defined limits while encouraging a creative and dynamic exchange with trainees. Stakeholders should also recognize that unspoken rules or cultural expectations

exist that one may need to learn about if working in high UA cultures. In high energy contexts such as high UA cultures, people are expressive, and it is acceptable for them to show anger or emotions when necessary. In these situations, recognizing that anger, emotions, and gestures may simply be part of the conversation may be helpful for training and development stakeholders. In this research, the Canadian sample supported features of a low UA setting as set out in the cross-cultural literature, in the sense that, respondents confirmed an openness to change and innovation, and a general sense of inclusion when it comes to training for work. Canadian respondents were more inclined to open-ended learning and showed that too much structure is not necessary. Titles in low UA cultures carry less meaning, so stakeholders should avoid exhibiting their knowledge or experience as it may not be helpful.

Comparative studies in cross-cultural management require an understanding of the role complexities play at different learning phases. As discussed in section 4.2.3.1 globalisation introduces complexities into the planning phase of training activities with the former necessitating a granular approach that recognizes and respects cultural differences while ensuring effective and efficient learning outcomes for trainers. Also, individual agency plays a pivotal role in shaping the planning of a training by influencing program selection, communication, motivation and effort, scheduling, and customization throughout the entire training process. Gender roles can impact the planning phase by having an impact on the training content, material, the program delivery, and overall inclusiveness. Understanding and addressing gender roles in diverse cultural contexts is important as it ensures that programs remain relevant, effective, and equitable. We need to recognize and challenge these roles to create a more positive, fair, and just training experience. Grasping the complexities surrounding power dynamics during the planning phase of a training activity helps to ensure principles of fairness, inclusivity, and that organizational alignment of goals are respected. It

is important to keep sight of how diverse stakeholders' interests and power levels could frame the overall training process plan and training outcomes.

5.3.2 Learning needs

This comparative research found that the learning needs of training participants in the Moroccan context are determined by senior management in collaboration with instructors who plan according to their directives. Additionally, factors that also determine learning needs include reasons based on active projects, unit necessities, performance, skills, type of training available, internal budgets, and departmental priorities. However, the Canadian sample showed that trainers are facilitators that guide, draft, and determine needs based on trainee input for individual learning plans. Competencies and skills, as well as standards of knowledge for specific work-related tasks are considered at this step of the process.

The extant literature mentions how various dimensions of national culture influence the way training objectives are decided for trainees. In this respect, Hassi (2015) found that respondents from organizations in the high PD cultures such as Singapore resort to authority and do not extend latitude to participants during the planning stage of training objectives, whereas, with organizations from low PD cultures (i.e., Canada and Germany), the tendency is to adopt an inclusive and participative approach to setting objectives. Similarly, the findings in the present study, are aligned with what has emerged in the literature about setting objectives for employees on training in high PD and low PD cultures.

In collectivistic cultures as Morocco and Singapore, organizations consider the collective needs of the employees in planning training objectives; conversely, in individualistic cultures, such as Canada and Germany, the tendency is to plan training objectives based on individual needs and participants' learning objectives (Hassi, 2015). The extant literature found that the practices of setting objectives in the Canadian sample are

aligned with low UA, low PD, and individualistic cultures; where practices in the Moroccan sample show similar traits seen in high UA, high PD, and collectivistic cultures.

Insights into particularities that may play a role at various learning phases help to understand national culture and learning for work more in-depth and require consideration. At the needs assessment phase, cultural competences, diversity, inclusion, and equity should be emphasized. The rapid pace of change and development in globalized countries necessitates that training programs be flexible and responsive to emerging technological trends. Globalisation allows for a broader scope of training needs assessment making it crucial to consider cultural, technological, market-specific, and regulatory factors that affect a companies' workforce and how trainees operate on a globalized scale. As discussed in section 4.2.5.1, learning objectives need to incorporate various considerations into a training to better align with global expectations. When setting learning objectives, globalisation necessitates a broader perspective. The latter involves recognition of a diverse, dynamic, and interconnected facets of a globalised business environment including learning for working professionals and should align training objectives with these realities.

Recognizing individual free will at this step of the training process is also valuable because it allows for custom tailoring the content to follow and informs the delivery methods; subsequently, leading to more engaging and effective training experiences that consider trainees' preferences. Agency plays a key role in the needs assessment phase by influencing what trainees perceive as their needs, their commitment to and willingness to participate in a training program, and with the customization process of aligning training needs with trainees' preferences, objectives, and goals. To oversee and manage effective needs assessments in diverse cultural environments, stakeholders need to be culturally flexible, agile, and sensitive to diversity. Employing culturally competent trainers that acknowledge and respect individual agency within boundaries of cultural norms is necessary for designing inclusive and reflective

programs. Also, individual agency enables trainees to reflect and self-assess their progress and adapt their learning strategies and LOs accordingly. They can modify or re-evaluate their goals upon new insights. Hence, while LOs are often set by administrative stakeholders beyond the trainee and trainer, individual agency influences how trainees engage with and pursue the LOs. It allows for personalisation, adaptability, and motivation in the learning process. The extent of the role individual agency has on shaping LOs varies significantly depending on cultural values, structural factors, and societal norms within a given culture.

Legal frameworks related to gender discrimination and equality also influence how needs assessment are drafted. Training needs may include compliance with gender-related laws and policy regulations. Discrimination based on gender can hinder career development and limit training opportunities. These systematic issues should be discussed when assessing a thorough training needs assessment as gender roles influence training needs assessment in numerous ways. The complex interplay should be examined and should aim to be inclusive, respectful, and responsive to trainee's specific needs and expectations regardless of one's gender identity or cultural background. Gathering feedback from trainees to assess how effective the objectives are in addressing gender roles can be helpful. In my teaching and coaching experience, continuously being in an agile and adaptable mode helps refine objectives as required. These considerations ensure that LOs are sensitive to gender roles in diverse cultural settings and promote an equitable and inclusive learning experience.

To navigate in contextual complexities surrounding power relations, needs assessments need to ensure that they are as inclusive, objective, and transparent as possible. This may require input from all the stakeholders while protecting the trainees' anonymity. Promoting an open culture of communication and commitment to information-driven and informed decision-making can minimize the negative effects of power dynamics on the needs assessment process. Power relations may indicate whether LOs are respectful of diverse cultures or

inadvertently perpetuating biases and reinforcing stereotypes. In effort to address these power influences that impact on LOs of a training activity it is important to encourage and promote culturally appropriate programs that acknowledge and respect diversity within a society. This may require ongoing collaboration and dialogue exchanges that value diverse perspectives and actively work both implicitly and explicitly to reduce power imbalances embedded within training for work programs.

5.3.3 Design

The literature on employee learning and national culture indicate that the latter impacts the selection of training content including the sequences and modularisation of training at the design phase (Hoff, 2002). Results of the present study showed that trainee input, when setting objectives and designing training programs, is low in the Moroccan context as senior management play a leading role in the learning process, while Canadian responses revealed contrasting findings with trainee involvement occurring throughout the various phases.

Studies indicate that organizations belonging to high UA cultures such as Germany and Morocco, show higher levels of rigidity when planning training content whereas, low UA cultures, as seen in Singaporean organizations, showed lower rigidity levels with fewer restrictions when planning training content (Hassi, 2015). Inflexible aspects also surfaced in the Moroccan sample of the current research. Conversely, Canadian, and German organizations, as individualistic cultures, were found to emphasize individual needs and objectives when planning training content (Hassi, 2015). Canadian and Moroccan responses in this study showed similar tendencies as presented in the extant literature about training objectives for the workplace.

The design phase focuses on the instructional techniques used to best meet target objectives customised for trainees. This phase lays down the conditions and activities performed by the trainers and learners to achieve the required training outcomes (Conole and Fill, 2005). This comparative study about Canada and Morocco revealed that cultural features in diverse environments shed light on diverse approaches trainees expect to receive from their trainers or coaches and which teaching methods would work best for diverse types of training participants.

Varied methods characterise Western approaches to acquiring knowledge. Learning by doing is frequent practice in North America and Nordic countries with experiential learning considered as an effective technique; learners are actively engaged as they work on case studies, simulations, role-plays, etc. (Marquardt et al., 2004; Waddill et al., 2010). In the present study, Canadian professionals learning for work also steer towards high self-direction, experiential, and independent learning. Thus, in similar contexts, people should encourage expression of one's own ideas and acknowledge individual accomplishments.

Conversely, in more collectivistic countries trainees believe that the task to transfer knowledge belongs to the expert trainer. Experiential learning is perceived to make an individual look imprudent; in these cases, the role of the instructor is to demonstrate and share information while the trainee listens and recalls important points (Marquardt et al., 2004; Waddill, 2010). Similar points of view were shared by Moroccan trainees in the present research. In this setting and similar cultures, it is important to understand that individuals tend to focus on building their competencies and skills until they master them, employees work for intrinsic rewards, and maintaining harmony among their 'in-group' members may override ethical and moral issues. Considering the findings, stakeholders need to understand that knowledge is important in collectivistic societies and sentiments that may endanger harmony

may want to be suppressed. It may be helpful to avoid giving constructive feedback publicly as disagreement is rarely expected.

In cultures characterized with a high degree of PD, individuals tend to learn better from passive methods rather than active methods (Rodrigues, 2005) and are at ease with approaches they are accustomed and familiar with, rather than be more inclined to explore new and innovative methods (Hassi, 2012). In Morocco and Singapore, both high PD cultures, organizations were found to resort to authority and did not take into consideration employees when planning methods for workplace training; conversely, in Canada and Germany, both low PD cultures, the latter tend to adopt a trainee inclusive approach when making decisions about training methods (Hassi, 2015). Similarly, in tight structure cultures, trainees anticipate clear structured programmes; by contrast, in cultures with loose structures where weak social norms and a high tolerance of deviant behaviour (Gelfand et al., 2011) are present, there are many ways to approach problem-solving issues as learning participants see innovative and original responses as a significant part of the learning experience. In these situations, learners are more comfortable with programmes that unfold in a fluid and flexible manner. Findings in the current study indicate that Canadian responses revealed comparable cultural characteristics as documented in low PD cultures.

The present study revealed that learners from cultures marked by strong degree of UA tend to learn better from passive methods, whereas trainees from cultures with weak uncertainty avoidance learn better through active teaching techniques such as the business case study method (Rodrigues, 2005); for instance, open-ended training strategies targeting a good solution rather than a precise and exact response can be perceived as renunciation of trainers' responsibility by trainees whose need for uncertainty avoidance is strong (Hassi, 2012). In designing methods, organizations in high UA cultures, such as Germany and Morocco, show high level of rigidity as training methods were selected before the training

delivery and non-planned training methods could be used during the training session; whereas Singaporean organizations, which belong to a low UA culture, do not exhibit rigidity with training methods selected progressively during a session (Hassi, 2015).

Studies mention that in individualistic cultures, participants' value independence and self-sufficiency and are comfortable working individually by themselves; whereas in collectivistic cultures, learners tend to focus on group-oriented, collaborative, and harmonious accord even if one may disagree on something. Canadian insights in the present study are aligned with traits seen in individualistic cultures, and the responses from the Moroccan interviewees corroborated what unfolds in collectivistic cultures. In my experience as a lecturer and trainer, I have observed how learning styles differ in diverse cultures; nonetheless, a better grasp of cultural complexities can be effective in broadening our views of how training participants learn and discovering the value in the diverse ways others acquire and share knowledge. This exchange and sharing of insights on how we do things can assist scholars and training professionals to expand our assumptions about training and professional learning, and help us understand the complexities of different learning styles specific to diverse cultures in which we are training or learning in.

In the design phase and in respect to PD, approaches to feedback, participation, and contribution in the sharing of knowledge, self-directed sufficiency, and sources of learning preferences may differ by the degree of compassion and understanding in the relations with those who have power. Individuals from collectivistic cultures are more inclined towards group activities rather than gravitate towards independent-oriented activities that focus on individual values and goals (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Similar inclinations, as presented in the literature, surfaced in this comparative study, validating the notion that national culture plays a role in employee learning for the workplace.

The findings in this Canadian sample illustrate various methodologies are used to best meet the individual learning needs as opposed to traditional lecture style methods where knowledge is acquired by listening, remembering, and recalling information provided by a trainer. Additionally, trainees and trainers contribute at all the phases of the learning process in the Canadian sample. On the other hand, Moroccan responses show that learning by listening and retaining material is still the prevailing approach as trainees described themselves as listeners who follow the training attentively. The insights shared support cultural preferences documented in the literature on the design phase of training activities.

When designing learning activities, stakeholders should also consider how complexities of culture influence the design phase. Globalisation has led to more adaptable and diverse training methods that are mindful of a trainee's cultural context. This approach aids organisations and companies to adequately prepare their employees to work efficiently in a globally dynamic world. Understanding the influence of individual agency within diverse cultures is beneficial for designing inclusive and effective training programs that take into consideration the values, norms, and preferences of trainees from diverse cultural backgrounds. Exercising one's individual agency helps to shape learning methods to achieve optimal learning outcomes. Agency empowers learners to make choices that are aligned with preferences, interests, organisational objectives, and personal goals, enhancing the overall learning experience and success.

The implementation of gender-sensitive teaching methods at the design phase of a training, while providing equal access to training and promoting diverse gender role models in various fields including leadership and management is important in recognizing that the influence of gender on learning methods can vary across diverse cultures.

Dynamics of power need to be understood in relation to gender roles and trainees' expectations as these may influence learning methods. Some cultures may impose gender specific expectations for how a training should be conducted. Socio-economic factors also influence technological access and resources. At the training methods phase, stakeholders should consider the digital divide to ensure inclusiveness. Cultural awareness for trainers and curriculum designers is crucial when adapting and tailoring approaches to align within a cultural context. This will lead to a more balanced and respectful training experience.

5.3.4 Implementation

Studies show that the notion of implementation in learning encompasses the role of the trainers and participants involved in the learning, and effective techniques used in the process (Marquardt and Reynolds, 1994). In the US, both stakeholders play an active role in the implementation of learning with LBD as the most effective technique. Canadian respondents in this study confirmed that LBD is what typically unfolds in training for work seminars and modules. In other cultures, the implementation rests with the trainers; instructors elicit and model the way to do things for trainees to follow and imitate with experiential learning seen as risky and a way to expose learners to vulnerabilities that may make them feel foolish as adults (Marquardt and Reynolds 1994). In the current research, there were no indicators that Moroccan trainees had inhibitions; however, an expectation of knowledge transfer from the 'expert' to the learner was often mentioned.

In this study the Canadian and Moroccan insights illustrated divergent findings regarding the importance of attaining outcomes upon completion of a training despite both samples considered to be slightly patriarchal cultures according to cross-cultural frameworks discussed in Chapter 4. In feminine cultures, support and caring for the weak is necessary; however, patriarchal cultures are more goal-oriented with a focus on outcomes (Kim and

McLean, 2014). These features were confirmed for the Canadian sample, but it was not the case for the Moroccan sample because according to the Moroccan interviewees, training in general does not assess the skills or behaviours which the participants are able to perform after attending a training.

The cultural dimension of UA exerts influences on reflective observation (Kayes, 2005) with low UA cultures, as in Nordic countries, reflection and innovative ideas are encouraged (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). But, in high UA cultures, such as Middle Eastern countries, experts prepare well-thought-out plans and elicit ideas to trainees in formal ways (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Similarly, this study found that in the Moroccan context, trainers as directed by senior management, are responsible for the formal planning of training. Trainee input has been found to be limited compared to their role in the Canadian sample which revealed that participants play a pro-active role in the planning of their training programs. National cultural dimensions as explained by notable cultural theorists have illustrated that features of national culture are plausible explanations for the differences and similarities that surface in varied milieus.

5.3.5 Learning techniques

In low UA cultures, trainees are at ease with problem questions without necessarily seeking exact responses; this learning style encourages one to seek and explore innovative approaches to problem-solving issues with intellectual disagreement stimulating the exchanges (Hassi, 2013). Similarly, Barmeyer (2000) suggests that trainees inclined towards reflective observation illustrate a meditative approach towards new insights, which is more aligned with behaviours exhibited among cultures with high UA. Instructional instructor-focussed techniques are developed in high PD and in contexts with strong control of uncertainty (Deal, 2004) as in the Moroccan setting. However, trainee-centred, and

experiential techniques are commonly used and implemented in cultures with a low PD such as the USA, Canada, UK, and Nordic countries, as well as, with low UA cultures (Hassi, 2012). Weech (2001) suggests that in individualistic cultures as in Northern European countries, independent learning is encouraged with trainee engagement in discussions fostering individual expression of ideas (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009); nonetheless, in collectivistic contexts, mature learners grasp agreements and pacts in unison as seen with many communal groups in Africa. Insights in this study illustrated similar preferences for the Canadian sample as a low UA cultural context and Morocco as a high UA setting.

The current study supports similar findings on high PD cultures where trainees favour instructor-centred and guided learning by trainers who are perceived as experts. In contrast, the ideal role of trainers that Canadian participants value most are those of a facilitator, consultant, and training coordinator (Hassi, 2013). Also, in low PD cultures, such as Canada, participants prefer peer learning and team-oriented approaches (Phillips and Vaughn, 2009). Didactic trainer-centred techniques that formally elicit ideas are preferred in cultures with a strong control of uncertainty and high PD (Deal, 2004). In individualistic cultures, trainees are comfortable with self-sufficiency and prefer independent work (Weech, 2001), whereas in collectivistic group-oriented cultures, training participants are inclined towards the concept of peaceful accord among the group (Hassi, 2012).

In the current research, the Canadian sample indicates that the learner is an integral part of the implementation phase. Learner engagement and hands-on practical activities are common practices for trainees to learn and process information acquired in CPD training as revealed by the interviewees. Meanwhile, Moroccan responses revealed that, in general, training techniques are perceived as static and inflexible. The reliance on group-oriented methods also emerged in their responses; furthermore, training methods appeared to be more

trainer-led, pre-planned and structured beforehand, and hence, unchangeable during or throughout a training session.

Over the years, as a trainer working in both cultural contexts, I have observed that the general learning style for Canadian trainees is in fact more experimental compared to Moroccan trainees, so, for the latter, we should provide the theory from the onset of a training before we move to more practical learning exercises. Moreover, it may be best not to start with hands-on types of learning activities. The findings in this comparative study imply that we should consider a deductive approach to how we deliver training by beginning with a review of theoretical foundations and then work our way down to the more specific details.

Learning techniques in training have also significantly been impacted by globalisation. The latter impacts the implementation phase in terms of learning resources, cultural norms, values, and preferences, linguistic diversity, varying learning modes, compliance with international standards, and adaptation (Zajda, 2021). Organisations need to be cognisant of all these factors when designing and implementing programs in a more globalised workplace.

Adaptability and flexibility contribute to agency concerns. Stakeholders should allow for individual choice and self-directed learning while still respecting the local cultural norms and expectations. Overall, individual agency influences the implementation of learning techniques and requires a nuanced approach that considers numerous factors as discussed in Chapter 4. Training programs should be well balanced and promote agency and individual autonomy while respecting the local culture in which they are operating.

To address challenges related to gender roles' influence on training techniques, an equitable learning environment needs to be promoted. Stakeholders including trainers, policy makers, and training participants need to be culturally aware of the contexts they are working in and actively work to change and challenge biases and gender stereotypes that may be impeding

learning. Acknowledging and advocating for diverse perspectives in an inclusive setting can aid in mitigating the influence of gender roles on learning techniques.

For more effective and equitable training, an awareness of power dynamics at separate phases of the learning process will help to mitigate the influence power exerts on the learning phases. This may require sensitivity towards designing inclusive programs, providing equal access to resources, and promoting diversity of voices and genders. Addressing discrimination and bias also aids with fostering a positive learning environment.

5.3.6 Training evaluation

In the present study, informal practices of evaluating trainees distinguishes the Canadian sample from the Moroccan one. In the former, insights showed that learning outcomes of a training are conducted in a more collaborative way with the input of both trainees and trainers throughout the many learning activities. Several assessment modes are utilized in the Canadian sample. Conversely, the Moroccan sample showed that written forms of assessments are still common practices in training for the workplace. This form of evaluation does not appear to be outcome-based because it does not assess the skills or behaviours which the participants are able to perform after attending a training. Participation is at times assessed as part of the learning outcome. The evaluation of the outcomes is conducted by trainers based on acquired competencies and skills that trainees retain from the material provided to them.

Practices regarding evaluation are aligned with preferences exhibited in individualistic and collectivistic cultural contexts as discussed in the extant literature. For instance, the study showed that Moroccan trainees tend to act in the interest of the group and appear not to make decisions based on their own interests. Also, ties between the trainee and their superiors seems to be more familial in high collectivism societies, whereas in the

Canadian context, which is high on individualism, the trainee relationship with their managers is more linear and less top-down.

Studies indicate that trainers in the US seek regular feedback from trainees with the latter encouraged to identify ways to improve learning through the content material and constructive feedback (Marquardt, 1990). Additionally, in individualistic cultures, Canadian and German organizations were found to emphasize individual needs regarding evaluation and did not take into consideration the collaboration of the entire group as criterion to evaluate a session (Hassi, 2015). Change is encouraged throughout a training session to optimize on learning objectives. However, as illustrated in the literature, in other cultural contexts, recommendations, suggestions and constructive critiques may be interpreted as disrespectful (Marquardt, 1994). Trainees are often cautious or sceptical about how the ideas shared could be interpreted and hence mostly provide neutral and positive feedback. Thus, evaluation of a training session is conducted by trainers based on what trainees have retained during training delivery (Marquardt and Reynolds, 1994).

Diverse cultures also have distinct ways and norms to communicate affecting the tone and style of the feedback. For instance, directness may be valued in some cultural contexts, while others prefer indirect, ambiguous, and obscure feedback. Cultural variations in skill expectations and performance standards may need to be adjusted based on assessment criteria. Trainers would also benefit from cross-cultural training and evaluation can help to better grasp nuances of providing feedback in a globalised diverse context.

The value a culture has on independence or individual autonomy can also impact how training participants respond and engage with feedback (Castanelli et al., 2022). In cultures where individual decision-making is prioritised, trainees may have more agency in their acceptance or rejection of feedback. To navigate these cultural aspects effectively, training

stakeholders should provide cross-cultural training and foster cultural sensitivity when designing feedback mechanisms that consider individual cultural norms, values, and preferences. This will ensure that assessment and feedback are effective, productive, and appropriate, and respectful of individual free will across cultures.

Mitigating gender bias in training evaluation criteria should consider inclusivity and awareness of potential biases, stereotypes, and cultural diversity. Cultural sensitivity, initiative-taking efforts, and awareness will ensure that training evaluation are unbiased, fair, and suitable for all learners regardless of their gender or cultural background.

To navigate issues of power at the evaluation and feedback phase, dynamics of power need to be considered and managed appropriately. It is vital to promote cultural sensitivity and diversity training within organisations. Training facilitators and trainees should be educated about the cultural norms and values of training participants to ensure that evaluation and feedback processes are respectful, effective, and constructive in culturally diverse contexts.

This section has summarized the insights from the cross-cultural comparative study on national culture and learning and addressed complexities of culture that may play a role from behind the scenes. The latter were discussed and analysed in detail in Chapter 4. In doing so, the main objective of the study has been met. The influence of national culture on learning for work activities was explained from a CCM perspective and relied on an employee learning framework from the human resource development literature. Also, complexities of culture such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power were examined and discussed to explain subtleties surrounding a complex phenomenon as culture. This path provided logical explanations for the insights of the study. As a result, the four research propositions of the comparative study set out in Chapter 1 and discussed in detail in Chapter 4 were answered in a systematic, concise, and coherent manner.

5.4 National culture in learning activities

This comparative study found that in a high PD workplace context as Morocco, the approach to employee learning activities is centralized, whereas in the low PD Canadian culture the process is more decentralized. In low PD cultures (Canada: 39/100 PD score), decision-making power tends to be more egalitarian and democratic with employees requiring explanations for inequalities that arise at work. Conversely, learning activities in the Moroccan milieu may be centralized due to the high PD cultural traits associated with the country (Morocco: 70/100 PD score). In high PD cultures, the unequal distribution of power is tolerable and unobjectionable with limited need for explanations for decisions made by their superiors.

Second, in a high UA cultural context as Morocco (Morocco: 68/100 UA score), the general approach to employee learning is more rigid, whereas in a low UA Canadian (Canada: 48/100 PD score) setting, the process is less rigid and more flexible. Further, in high UA cultures, individuals favour predictability and exhibit low tolerance for ambiguity with societies maintaining rigid belief codes.

The research presented insights illustrating that in the collectivistic Moroccan (Morocco: 46/100 IND score) context, the general approach to employee learning activities is centred on the group, whereas in the Canadian setting, which is an individualistic culture, the process is centred on the individual learner. The findings of the Canadian sample indicated contrasting and divergent findings. Cultures with individualistic preferences (Canada: 80/100 IND score) exhibit traits of an independent mind-set and connections among groups are fashioned in relaxed ways. Contrarily, Moroccan trainees in this sample prefer working in teams throughout their learning experience. Morocco is considered a collectivistic culture with traits indicating a preference for tight-knit ties within their social groups. Canadian responses revealed individualistic learning styles of trainees are more prone towards

independent work. Lastly, the Canadian sample illustrated that training activities were outcome-based.

In the following research, in both the Canadian and Moroccan contexts, which are slightly patriarchal cultures, the overall approach to employee learning activities is outcome-based. Although Canada's score in Hofstede's masculinity dimension is 52, which is mid-point between masculinity and femininity, training-activities, as described by the respondents, are outcome-based as it should be in a fully-fledged masculine culture. Conversely, the Moroccan sample showed that training activities were not outcome-based. It is noteworthy to mention that Morocco's score in Hofstede's masculinity dimension is 53, which is also mid-point between masculinity and femininity.

Limited studies concerning this cultural dimension emerged from the literature on national culture and employee learning for the workplace. In high masculinity cultures, work is important to people and employee roles are clearly established; work is a main priority even over family. According to Hofstede's framework (1980; 2001), Anglo cultures such as Canada, USA, and the UK, tend to have higher masculinity traits. In contrast, Middle Eastern countries have moderate masculinity and illustrate more feminine traits that reflect a work to live mind set rather than a live to work mentality (Hofstede, 2001). For instance, in a society that leans towards low masculinity, both men and women at work are expected to be cooperative, modest, and caring; whereas, in higher masculine societies, men and women are expected to be more competitive and assertive (Hofstede, 2001; 2021).

The Moroccan findings leaned towards the more feminine cultural pattern, whereas the Canadian findings illustrated a slightly patriarchal cultural pattern. In the Moroccan findings, training activities were not outcome-based because they did not address tasks or behaviours which training participants were expected to perform and do after having attended

a training session. For these reasons, RP4 was partially met in the study. Based on the findings in the current research, it may be concluded that the masculinity/femininity score for Morocco (53) is too high and should be closer to the feminine end of the continuum; conversely, the MAS score for the Canadian findings (52) should be higher than what emerged in the findings.

On the other hand, Moroccan and Canadian workplace cultural realities may in fact echo mid-range features based on Hofstede's masculinity/femininity dimension, and the divergent results in the present findings may just be limited to the nature of the current study as it focussed more on training practices in general rather than gender sensitivities and related issues. More comparative research studies are required to examine deviating findings regarding this cultural dimension.

In brief, the previous section provided a CCM view about how national culture influences learning for workplace training. The analysis presented a cross-cultural comparative understanding of diverse cultural traits from training participants in two distinct and diverse cultural contexts. Additionally, complexities of culture such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power dynamics were discussed in efforts to widen the scope of the analysis to get more nuanced and granular insights. This cross-cultural comparative study focused on a Canadian and Moroccan workplace sample; the findings can be relevant to other similar environments that belong to the same cultural clusters. The importance of these findings will be shown in the subsequent sections about the theoretical and practical implications and contributions that this project adds to the study of national culture and employee learning.

5.5 Complexities of national culture

As different researchers examine culture and cross-cultural studies in diverse ways, it was insightful to bring together some of the different approaches used to examine complexities of national culture and concepts as globalisation, agency, gender, and power relations in case some aspects of the cross-cultural management comparative study may have been taken for granted. Thus, although this research relied on the classical CCM traditional approach to cross-cultural studies for the comparison of the insights, a meta-analysis on complexities examined national culture for additional analysis, interpretation and understanding interactions in more depth. In this part, focus was on notions of complexities of culture as traditional CCM theories did not concentrate on factors such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power relations.

5.6 Insights on complexities of culture

A meta-analysis based on existing critiques and the extant literature was conducted to respond to additional questions that emerged from the CCM comparative analysis, particularly questions MAQ 1 to MAQ 6. These questions have been addressed in sections throughout the thesis and discussed in-depth in Chapter 4. This part explored research that investigated national culture from different perspectives relying on discourse drawn from studies in the field of CCM. It looked at current debates about complexities of national culture and factors such as globalisation, agency and cultural structures, gender, and power relations. These questions focused on *why* such things may be happening as opposed to just describing and explaining the *what* and *how* of participants' insights.

Insights into the complexities may aid stakeholders to better understand employee learning for work and help to reflect on underlying cultural norms. While in some cultures, a Western

approach to learning can be both appropriate and advantageous, a carbon copy of these training and learning styles may be risky and ineffective in other cultures.

5.7 How research informs practice

This cross-cultural comparative study can be of interest to researchers, scholars, and academics as it addresses underlying cultural factors that may influence employee learning for workplace training. It provides informative insights about the interplay between national culture and learning for work from two diverse perspectives. It also provides insight into varying views and approaches scholars look at to better understand complexities that may influence national culture.

First, this research adds to the training, employee learning, and the CCM literature in showing the importance of adapting practices when collaborating with local employees who may be interpreting cultural behaviours and employee actions in diverse ways. As global economies merge closer and closer, it is increasingly vital that we recognise how cultural variations affect realities within organisations around the world. Understanding the role of national culture in training, professional development, and learning for work helps determine key success factors of effective and efficient management of employee training and learning for work across various cultures.

Second, the study examined influences of national culture on employee learning in a comprehensive and systematic manner by focusing on each phase of the learning process. There are no studies that have compared employee learning at each of phase of the training process. This study empirically tested Marquardt's comparative learning framework from the field of HRD and its nine learning components based on criteria from diverse contexts.

Thirdly, very few studies investigated learning for work across two diverse national cultures as Canada and Morocco. While this cross-cultural comparative analysis does not attempt at generalizing its findings, the selection of these two countries is nonetheless insightful about their respective cultural clusters: Anglo-Saxon cultures such as UK, US, and Canada and MENA national cultures such as Morocco. These types of studies allow researchers, analysts, and practitioners to explain and describe cultural differences from an empirical first-hand standpoint.

Lastly, the discussion surrounding complexities of culture contributed more nuanced and granular insight to the study. The analysis allowed for a more comprehensive interpretation of issues such as globalisation, agency, gender, and power that may have been overlooked or taken for granted in the cross-cultural comparative study.

In examining the role that national culture plays in employee learning, the findings can assist practitioners and organizations operating internationally to efficiently manage their educational and employee learning programmes. In so doing, practitioners can adapt learning and training activities to diverse cultural settings. A major practical implication of the current study is that corporate training programs developed internationally should fit with diverse cross-cultural realities. This would positively lead to more adequately custom-designed programs. Cultural awareness should be considered and approached openly for trainees, trainers, and all stakeholders to better adapt in cross-cultural environments. This could happen by designing modules that are aligned with the cross-cultural realities of the country where the training is delivered. International training activities should fit with the preferred ways of doing things in each host culture while respecting the values and norms of that cultural setting.

More insights into cultural differences are also essential for effective communication across cultures. Comparative studies from cross-cultural management perspectives provide insights into how distinct cultures vary in terms of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and short vs long-term orientation. Insightful knowledge helps businesses and employees adapt and adjust their communication style and communication strategies to diverse cultural contexts. In the world of international business and management, MNCs can benefit from insights shared and analysed in cross-cultural comparative studies to manage cultural diversity and navigate intercultural challenges while supervising effective global strategies. By recognizing distinct cultural traits and behaviours, companies can enhance their team collaboration, employee performance, and HR relations in diverse cultural contexts. Employees and managers can also gain a deeper appreciation of cultural variations increasing their cultural sensitivity and adaptability regarding their behaviours and attitudes for the workplace.

The present study responds to calls made by scholars (e.g., Kim and McLean, 2014) who suggest that professionals working in non-Western countries, ought to consider national cultural factors when implementing theories or training programs in divergent milieus. Particularly, insights from the study will assist international managers working in Morocco and similar cultural contexts to adequately design and deliver professional programs that consider various cultural aspects. International organizations should consider comparative insights when working on training and development programs in Canada and Morocco and similar contexts. This research helps to understand what specific aspects should be selected based on their cultural appropriateness rather than just resorting to a one-size-fits-all approach by offering standardized training activities to learners from Canada and Morocco.

Policy makers should consider aligning “imported” employee training programs with the target learner and cultural context. Insights from this research will assist in aligning programs to best fit features of national culture at play in the Moroccan and Canadian

context. Policy makers should call for an alignment of training programs in their respective countries. By understanding cultural differences, policy makers and public administrators can design more effective policies that are aligned with the values, social norms, and expectations of diverse cultural groups within society.

While the onus of designing and implementing employee training and learning within Moroccan public organizations is fundamentally on the managers and the instructors, the current study has nonetheless numerous implications for training participants and beneficiaries in hopes of enhancing their learning experiences when the instructor is from Canada, the UK, or the USA. In this regard, training and learning participants ought to understand their instructors by shifting their cultural points of references. Training participants, who understand the perspectives of their culturally different instructors, may learn more effectively as they would be aware of the underlying assumptions of training components, including training methods and techniques. They can also be instrumental in assisting both their peers and the instructor in having an effective training experience.

5.8 Contribution to the body of knowledge

Although some studies have discussed how culture influences aspects of learning (e.g. Chang 2004 on planning; Hoff, 2002; Weech, 2001; Hassi, 2012 on design, Joy & Kolb, 2009; Jaju et al., 2002 on content; Rodrigues, 2005; Ndoeye, 2003; Phillips and Vaughn, 2009; Barmeyer, 2004; Dimitrov, 2006, Hassi & Storti, 2011 on techniques;) there appear to be no studies that shed light in a comprehensive way as to include how an individual's culture may influence ways we learn from the initial stage of climate setting to the last step of evaluating expected learning outcomes of a training. The literature on culture and learning for workplace training indicates there is a lack of research investigating the role of national culture on climate setting, needs assessment, and evaluation of training outcomes (Hassi, 2012). As

discussed in Chapter 2, a dearth of cross-cultural comparative studies exists in this regard. This research contributes new knowledge in many ways as it provides a deeper understanding of how national culture influences learning for work.

Moreover, a meta-analysis addressed and discussed emergent questions about complexities of national culture and other factors like globalisation, agency, gender, and power relations. This is the first study to explore trainees' learning activities across the lens of cross-cultural frameworks in workplaces such as Canada and Morocco from a CCM and HRM perspective. Exploring the perceptions of learning for the workplace in the Moroccan context enhances the literature as insights give us a landscape view of a cultural context that has been neglected in the training and learning literature available. The findings contribute by investigating learning practices of trainees within public organizations in two diverse places, namely Canada and Morocco. As explained in Chapter 4, the cultural tendencies used to explain training and learning activities are not only insightful about these two distinct cultures but also highly informative about their respective cultural clusters. Understanding the interplay of complexities also helps to explain how national culture influences learning from different points of view.

This research offers an opportunity to clarify unaddressed questions about how training is managed in both samples. Cross-cultural frameworks may help us understand nations' cultural norms and values in relation to learning for work as well as training and development. Power distance and uncertainty avoidance dimensions may predict areas where learning and training are more likely to have difficulty and provide a rationale for why this may be the case. An understanding of this may help training service providers to understand what is meant by training for the workplace and to reflect on the cultural norms embedded within those environments.

In this research, the use of cross-cultural frameworks was relied on to describe and explain that norms, beliefs, and diverse ways of doing things may be due to features inherent in one's national culture. The research explored common and divergent aspects between Canadian and Moroccan perceptions of what happens when we are engaged in learning for work activities. Notwithstanding that the study shed light on more differences than similarities, a positive aspect of this contribution is that the insights can support practitioners, managers, and organizations in better understanding barriers that affect training and development for the workplace. The insights from the analysis regarding other elements at play in understanding intricacies of national culture provided for a more granular and nuanced perspective on complexities as discussed in the extant literature.

5.9 Limitations and directions for future research

In general, research always confronts limitations during a study. This research is not an exception. Firstly, while it would be comprehensive to include other key factors such as trainers, coaches, and senior management in a comparative cross-cultural study, this sample focused on one specific group of stakeholders, namely training participants. Expanding the range of training stakeholders may be an interesting direction for future research as it would bring to light more detailed and comparative culture specific points of view from multiple stakeholders involved in the learning process.

Secondly, a limitation of the study regarding the sample is that only public sector interviewees were approached to participate in the study. The rationale for targeting this specific group of participants was to respect principles of representativeness regarding national culture (Hassi, 2015) as opposed to targeting private sector employees as the latter may be less representative of holding embedded national cultural values due to international dimensions of their organizations. Despite mitigating issues of representativeness in the

current study, future research should target private sector employees while controlling for participants' belonging to the national culture they represent and compare insights with public sector trainees.

Thirdly, a sample recruited to a qualitative study is not usually intended to be representative of a larger population or to produce data that can be widely generalised. More important is the notion of 'transferability' of findings using a theoretical framework (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Nevertheless, the selection of the participants for the Canadian sample rested on convenience sampling; therefore, the results cannot be extrapolated beyond these countries, or beyond their cultural clusters. Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and confinement measures around the world, travel back to Canada to conduct interviews with Canadian participants as originally planned for was not feasible. Consequently, the data collection mode for the Canadian sample changed and interviews had to be conducted remotely through WhatsApp Messenger with referral participants who voluntarily agreed to be interviewed. However, as I currently reside in Morocco, the Moroccan participants were interviewed in person in the country.

Fourthly, in corollary to the previous point, a shortcoming of this is that two different modes to collect the data had to be used. This may have impacted validity of the collected data. Nonetheless, strategies used to mitigate this were that although interviews were held in a synchronous platform via videoconference, the online real-time environment provided an experience like face-to-face interaction in the sense that the online experience provided for a back-and-forth natural exchange of questions and answers in real-time. Video cameras were used to allow for the researcher and participant to see each other and build a comfortable rapport, and while this approach is not identical to the face-to-face interview, it felt natural and transpired in a comparable way as the face-to-face exchange.

Another predicament that was contemplated was that of being an insider-researcher in the study because there is a need to understand that as individuals, we are affected by everyday life experiences, and although a researcher's detachment should be consistent, it is not always possible. An important aspect, as described by Bryman and Bell (2011), is that this research regarding empirical analysis has been conducted to the researcher's best knowledge and researcher's bias was acknowledged and monitored accordingly throughout the study (Lodico et al., 2016). Measures taken to mitigate bias were first, results were discussed one-on-one informally with three academics (without mention of names); and secondly, various methods such as the comparison technique, descriptive content analysis, and cross-cultural frameworks were used to compare, analyse, and explain the findings. The methods relied on in this study to maintain credibility and control for researcher bias included meaningful participation in the setting, participant review of interview transcripts, member checks, and peer debriefing (Lodico et al., 2016).

Understanding underlying facets of a national culture may help stakeholders to better grasp what is meant by learning, training for the workplace, and help us to reflect on the cultural norms embedded within those environments. While in some countries and cultures, a Canadian or American approach to learning for work can be both appropriate and advantageous, a carbon copy of Western training styles may be risky and ineffective in other cultures.

Another consideration is the fact that there is little research in the literature examining cultural factors that impact knowledge sharing practices within organizations with businesses struggling to understand how to best approach diversity and cultural differences (Ammar, Hayder, and Norashikin 2014). Cultural tendencies are helpful roadmaps that set us on a path towards a more in-depth understanding of cultural differences, as the latter are perceived as barriers hindering the exchange of knowledge and its effective management in the workplace

(Riege, 2005; Zhang, 2011; Zawawi et al., 2011). The findings in this study illustrated how national culture impacts employee learning and highlighted contrasts from a Canadian and Moroccan workplace setting. In an interconnected globalized world, more complex considerations regarding cultural differences can help us to effectively and efficiently breakdown barriers at work.

Given the dearth of studies that consider national cultural differences, more work is necessary to examine the impact of national culture on professional learning. Future research studies should also consider other factors such as the effects of national culture on the organizational culture and the impact on how the acquired knowledge from the learning is influenced by other aspects of a national culture. More comparative studies should be undertaken to compare what emerges among diverse cultures.

5.10 Summary

This chapter has presented the key research conclusions, implications in theory and practice, contributions, limitations, and directions for future research. The research has informed theory and practice by providing comparative and descriptive insights on learning for work as revealed in two diverse cultural contexts. In addition, the comparative study relied on CCM frameworks to help us understand national cultural norms, and values in relation to learning for workplace training. This provided a rationale for the differences that emerged in the CCM comparative study. Questions that focused on *why* such things may be happening as opposed to just describing and explaining the *what* and *how* of the insights also considered complexities of national culture and other mediating factors that may play a role in how national culture influences learning for the workplace.

References

- Adler, N.J., Graham, J.L., & Gehrke, T.S. (1987). Business negotiations in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, *Journal of Business Research*, 15(5), 411-429.
- Ailon, G. (2008). Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Culture's Consequences in a Value Test of Its Own Design. *Academy of Management Review* 33(4), 885-904.
- Ailon G. (2009). A Reply to Geert Hofstede. *Academy of Management Review* 34 (3), 571-573.
- Aktaş, M. & Gelfand, M. & Hanges, P. (2015). Cultural Tightness–Looseness and Perceptions of Effective Leadership. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 47, 297-309.
- Allen, B. J. (2023). *Difference matters: Communicating social identity*. Waveland Press.
- American Psychological Association (APA), (2010). Retrieved from: www.apastyle.org
- Ammar. D.N, Hayder. S. H., & Norashikin. A. (2014). Factors Influencing Knowledge Sharing in Organizations: A Literature Review, *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, 3(9), 1-6.
- Anderson, N., Potočník, K., & Zhou, J. (2014). Innovation and Creativity in Organizations: A State-of-the-Science Review, Prospective Commentary, and Guiding Framework. *Journal of Management*, 40 (5), 1297–1333.
- Andrews, T., & Mead, R. (2009), *Cross-Cultural Management. Critical Perspectives on Business and Management series*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.
- Apaydin, M. (2008). A case for the case method in Türkiye. *Journal of Management Development*. 27(7), 678-692.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Appadurai, A. (2008). In Inda, Jonathan; Rosaldo, Renato (Eds.). *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader* (2nd Edition.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Argyris, C. (1976). Theories of action that inhibit individual learning. *American Psychologist*, 31 (9), 638-654.
- Azevedo, A., & Shane, M. J. (2019). A new training program in developing cultural intelligence can also improve innovative work behaviour and resilience: A longitudinal pilot study of graduate students and professional employees. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 17(3), 100303.

- Bachiochi, P. D. & Weiner, S. P. (2004). "Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis" in Rogelberg, S. G. (ed.) *Handbook of Research Methods in Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 161- 183.
- Barber, B. (1995). *Jihad vs. Mc World*, New York: Ballantine Books.
- Baruch, Y., Altman, Y. & Tung, R. L. (2017). Career Mobility in a Global Era – Advances in Managing Expatriation and Repatriation. *Academy of Management Annals*, 10 (1), 1-49.
- Barmeyer, C. (2004). Learning styles and their impact on cross-cultural training: an international comparison in France, Germany, and Quebec. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 28 (6), 577–594.
- Baskerville, R. F., (2003). Hofstede Never Studied Culture, *Accounting, Organizations, and Society* 28 (1), 1-14.
- Bhabha, H.K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Berger R. (2015). Now I see it, now I do not: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research* 15 (2), 219-234.
- Beugelsdijk, S., Kostova, T. & Roth, K. (2017). An overview of Hofstede-inspired country-level culture research in international business since 2006. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48 (1) pp.30-47.
- Beugelsdijk, S., Maseland, R., & van Hoorn, A. (2015). Are scores on Hofstede's dimensions of national culture stable over time? *Global Strategy Journal*, 5(3), pp. 223–240.
- Beugelsdijk, S., & Welzel, C. (2018). Dimensions and Dynamics of National Culture: Synthesizing Hofstede with Inglehart. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49 (10), 1469–1505.
- Bilecen, B., & Van Mol, C. (2017). Introduction: international academic mobility and inequalities, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43, 8.
- Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Boisnier A., & Chatman, J. (2013). *The role of subcultures in agile organizations*. in R. Petersen and E. Mannix, *Leading and managing people in dynamic organizations*. Psychology Press.
- Bond, M. H., Leung, K., Au, A., Tong, K.-K., de Carrasquel, S. R., Murakami, F., & Lewis, J. R. (2004). Culture-Level Dimensions of Social Axioms and their Correlates across 41 Cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35(5), 548–570.
- Brewer, P., & Venaik, S. (2011). Individualism-Collectivism in Hofstede and GLOBE. *Journal of International Business Studies* 42 (3), 436-445.
- Brewer, P., & Venaik, S. (2012). On the Misuse of National Culture Dimensions. *International Marketing Review* 29(6), 673-683.

- Brewer, P., & Venaik, S. (2014). The Ecological Fallacy in National Culture Research. *Organization Studies* 35(7), 1063-1086.
- Brion, Corinne. "The centrality of cultural considerations in facilitating training for adults." *Adult Learning* 33, no. 4 (2022), 158-167.
- Brown, K. (1999). Globalization and Cultural Conflict in Developing Countries: The South African Example, *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 7(1), 225-256.
- Bruce B.C., & Bloch N. (2012) *Learning by Doing*. In: Seel N.M. (Eds) *Encyclopaedia of the Sciences of Learning*. Springer, Boston, MA.
- Bryman, A. & Cassell, C. (2006). The researcher interview: a reflexive perspective. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 1(1), pp. 41-55.
- Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*. London: Heinemann.
- Cabezas, A., Reese, E., & Waller, M. (2015). Wages of Empire: Neoliberal Policies, Repression, and Women's Poverty.
- Canning, E. A., Murphy, M. C., Emerson, K. T., Chatman, J. A., Dweck, C. S., & Kray, L. J. (2020). Cultures of genius at work: Organizational mindsets predict cultural norms, trust, and commitment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 46(4), 626-642.
- Cardador, M. T., Hill, P. L., & Salles, A. (2022). Unpacking the status-levelling burden for women in male-dominated occupations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 67(1), 237-284.
- Cardenas, L. (2022, December 30). Re: Overcoming Cultural Barriers in Negotiations and the Importance of Communication in IB Deals. <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/international-negotiation-daily/bridging-the-cultural-divide-in-international-business-negotiations/>
- Cardon, P.W. (2008) A Critique of Hall's Contexting Model: A Meta-Analysis of Literature on Intercultural Business and Technical Communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 22. 399-428.
- Casad, B. J., Franks, J. E., Garasky, C. E., Kittleman, M. M., Roesler, A. C., Hall, D. Y., & Petzel, Z. W. (2021). Gender inequality in academia: Problems and solutions for women faculty in STEM. *Journal of neuroscience research*, 99(1), 13-23.
- Castanelli, D. J., Weller, J. M., Molloy, E., & Bearman, M. (2022). Trust, power and learning in workplace-based assessment: The trainee perspective. *Medical Education*, 56(3), 280-291.
- Chang, W.W. (2004). A Cross-Cultural Case Study of a Multinational Training Program in the United States and Taiwan. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 54 (3), 174-192.
- Charrad, M. (2001). *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Charrad, M. (2009). Kinship, Islam, or oil: culprits of gender inequality? *Politics and Gender*, 5(4), 55-72.
- Charrad, M. (2010). Women's agency across cultures: Conceptualizing strengths and boundaries. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 33, 517-522.

Charlesworth, Z.M. (2008). Learning styles across cultures: suggestions for educators. *Education and Training, 50* (2), 115-127.

Chenail, R. J. (2011). Interviewing the investigator: Strategies for addressing instrumentation and researcher bias concerns in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 16*, 255–262.

Chong, H.G (2008). Measuring performance of small-and-medium sized enterprises: the grounded theory approach. *Journal of Business and Public Affairs, 2* (1).

Chua, R. Y. J., Roth, Y., & Lemoine, J.F. (2015). The Impact of Culture on Creativity: How Cultural Tightness and Cultural Distance Affect Global Innovation Crowdsourcing Work. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 60* (2), 189–227.

Communication Challenges: A “Negotiated” Culture Perspective. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management, 7*(3), pp. 317–332.

Code J (2020). Agency for Learning: Intention, Motivation, Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation. *Frontiers in Education, 5* (19), 1-15.

Coget, J.F (2011). Does National Culture Affect Firm Investment in Training and Development? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, November, 85-87.

Cohen, L. (2012) Adaptation and creativity in cultural context *Revista de Psicología, 30* (1).

Collin, K., van der Heijden, B., & Lewis, P. (2012). Continuing professional development. *International Journal of Training and Development, 16*(3), 155-163.

Conole, G., & Fill, K. (2005). A learning design toolkit to create pedagogically effective learning activities. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education 8* (1).

Cooks-Campbell, A. (2021, June 3). Re. What does dominant culture mean in the workplace? <https://www.betterup.com/blog/dominant-culture>

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Costley, C. (2001). Organisational and employee interests in programs of work-based learning. *The Learning Organisation, 8*(2): 58–63.

Cowen, T. (2002), *Creative destruction: How globalization is changing the world's cultures*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Creswell, J. W. & Brown, M. L. (1992). How Chairpersons Enhance Faculty Research: A Grounded Theory Study. *The Review of Higher Education* 16(1), 41-62.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130.

Cronbach, L. J., & Snow, R. E. (1977). *Aptitudes and instructional methods: A handbook for research on interactions*. New York: Irvington Publishers.

Cross, K.P. (1981). *Adults as learners: Increasing participation and facilitating learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Crothers, L. (2013). *Globalization and American Popular Culture* (3rd Ed.), USA: Rowman and Littlefield publishers, INC.

Deal, C.D. (2004). *Training across Cultures: Designing Training for Participants from China, India, and Mexico* (PhD dissertation), University of New Mexico, USA.

De Dreu, C. K. W. (2010). Human creativity: reflections on the role of culture. *Manage. Organ. Rev.* 6, 437–446. *Decision Processes*, 118, 116–131.

Delobbe, N., & Vandenberghe, C (2004). “La culture organisationnelle,” in Brangier, E., Lancry, A., and Louche, C. (Eds) (2004). *Les dimensions humaines du travail. Théories et pratiques en psychologie du travail et des organisations*. Nancy University Press, France, 522.

DeNitto (2022). The concept of granularity in data analysis. Accessed at www.memind.eu

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1998). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2000), Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research, in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York: McMillan.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience & Education*. New York, NY: Kappa Delta Pi.

- Dewey, J. (2003). Social Inquiry, in Delanty, G. and Strydom, P., *Philosophies of Social Science*, (Eds.), Open University Press, Berkshire, 290-297.
- Dheer, R., Lenartowicz, T., Peterson, M. F., & Petrescu, M. (2014). Cultural regions of Canada and United States: Implications for international management research. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 14, 343–384.
- Dickson, M. W., BeShears, R. S., & Gupta, V. (2004). The impact of societal culture and industry on organizational culture, in House, R.J, Hange, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., and Gupta, V. (Eds.), *Culture, leadership and organizations: The Globe study of 62 societies*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 74-93.
- Dimitrov, D. (2006). Cultural differences in motivation for organizational learning and training. *International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations*. 5(4) 37-49.
- Dingwall, R., Murphy, E., Watson, P., Greatbatch, D., & Parker, S. (1998). Catching goldfish: Quality in qualitative research. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 3 (3), 167– 172.
- D'Iribarne, P. (1989). *La logique de l'honneur*, Seuil, France.
- D'Iribarne, P. (2009). National Cultures and Organisations in Search of a Theory: An Interpretative Approach. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 9(3), 309–321.
- Donnelly, R., & Johns, J. (2021). Recontextualising remote working and its HRM in the digital economy: An integrated framework for theory and practice. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(1), 84-105.
- Downe-Wambolt, B. (1992). Content Analysis: Method, applications, and issues. *Health Care for Women International*. 13, 313-321.
- Dupuis, J.P. (2008). “L’analyse interculturelle en gestion: décroiser les approches Classiques” in Davel, E., Dupuis, J.P., and Chanlat, J.F. (Eds.), *Gestion en contexte interculturel; Approches, problématiques, pratiques et plongées*. Presses de l’Université Laval, Quebec, Canada.
- Eroglu, O., & Picak, M. (2011). Entrepreneurship, national culture, and Türkiye. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2 (16).
- Fairley, M. J. (2020). Conceptualizing language teacher education centered on language teacher identity development: A competencies-based approach and practical applications. *TESOL quarterly*, 54(4), 1037-1064.
- Fang, Tony (2003). A Critique of Hofstede’s Fifth National Culture Dimension. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 3(3). 347-368.
- Fang, Tony (2006). From ‘Onion’ to ‘Ocean.’ *International Studies of Management and Organisation*, 35(4). 71-90.

- Fang, Tony (2012). Yin Yang: A New Perspective on Culture. *Management and Organization Review*. 1-26.
- Felstead, A., & Fuller, A., Jewson, N., & Unwin, L. (2009). *Improving Working as Learning*. (1st Ed.) Routledge.
- Felstead, A, Gallie, D, Green, F & Zhou, Y (2010). Employee involvement, the quality of training and the learning environment: an individual-level analysis. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(10), 1667-1688.
- Ferree, M.M., & Tripp, A.M., (2006). *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*. New York: U Press
- Flick, U. (Ed.). (2007). *The Sage qualitative research kit*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Flick, U. (2018). *The sage handbook of qualitative data collection*. London, UK: SAGE Publications
- Flynn, D., Eddy, E. R., & Tannenbaum, S. I. (2006). The Impact of National Culture on the Continuous Learning Environment. *Journal of East-West Business*, 12(2/3), 85-107.
- Folger, J. P., Hewes, D. E., & Poole, M. S. (1984). Coding social interaction. In B. Dervin, & M. Voigt (Eds.), *Progress in the communication sciences, Vol.4*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Fougère, M. & Moulettes, A. (2007). The Construction of the Modern West and the Backward Rest: Studying the Discourse of Hofstede's Culture's Consequences, *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 2 (1), 1-19.
- Fougère, M. & Moulettes, A (2012). A postcolonial reading of Hofstede's culture's consequences. *Copenhagen Business School Press*, 276-301
- Fontana, A & Frey, J (2005). Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials, in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA
- Fontana, A., and Frey, J.H. (1998), Interviewing, the art of science, in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA
- Forster, G., & Fenwick, J. (2015). The influence of Islamic values on management practice in Morocco. *European Management Journal*, 33(2), 143-156.
- Frank, P.G. (1998). The Variety of Reasons for the Acceptance of Scientific Theories, in Klemke, E.D., Hollinger, R., and Rudge, D.W., *Introductory Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY.
- Fuentes, M. A., Zelaya, D. G., & Madsen, J. W. (2021). Rethinking the course syllabus: Considerations for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. *Teaching of Psychology*, 48(1), 69-79.

Garavan, T.N., McCarthy, A. and Carbery, R. (2017). International HRD: context, processes and people – introduction, in Garavan, T.N., McCarthy, A. and Carbery, R. *Handbook of International Human Resource Development: Context, Processes and People*. Edward Elgar Pub, UK, 1-25.

Gayeski, D., Sanchirico, C. & Anderson, J. (2002). Designing training for global environments: knowing what questions to ask. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 15(2), 15–31.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Gelfand, M. J., Nishii, L. H., & Raver, J.L. (2006). On the nature and importance of cultural tightness, looseness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91, 1225-1244.

Gelfand, M. J., Raver, J. L., Nishii, L., Yamaguchi, S. (2011). Differences between tight and loose cultures: A 33-nation study. *Science*, 331, 1100-1104.

George, A. S., Amin, A., de Abreu Lopes, C. M., & Ravindran, T. K. S. (2020). Structural determinants of gender inequality: why they matter for adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health. *The BMJ*, 368, 16985.

Gibbs, G. (1960). *Teaching Students to Learn*. Mitton Keynes: London: OUP.

Giddens, Anthony (1979). *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gilgun, J. F. (2005). “Grab” and good science: Writing up results of qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15, 256-262.

Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. White Plains, New York: Longman.

Global Affairs Canada (2022) https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/inclusion_respect.aspx?lang=eng Accessed 01.12.2023.

Godwin-Jones, R. (2019). Telecollaboration as an approach to developing intercultural communication competence.

Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8 (4), 597-606. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol8/iss4/6>

Gudmundsdottir, G. B., & Brock-Utne, B. (2010). An exploration of the importance of piloting and access as action research. *Educational Action Research*, 18, 359–372.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hall, J. R. (2000). Cultural Meanings and Cultural Structures in Historical Explanation. *History and Theory*, 39 (3), 331–347.

Hall, E.T. (1959). *The silent language*. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday

- Hall, E.T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. New York: Doubleday
- Hall, E. (1990), The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity, In A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, 19-40, Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Hampden-Turner, C. & Trompenaars, F. (1994). *The Seven Cultures of Capitalism*, Piatkus, London.
- Hassi, A. (2011). International briefing 23: training and development in Morocco. *International Journal of Training and Development*. 1(4), 169-178
- Hassi, A. Storti, G., & Azenoud, A., (2011). Corporate trainers' credibility and cultural values: evidence from Canada and Morocco, *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 18 (4), 499-519.
- Hassi, A., & Storti, G. (2011). Organizational Training across Cultures: Variations in Practices and Attitudes. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 35(1), 45-70.
- Hassi, A. (2012). The impact of culture on corporate training design: a review of the current state of knowledge. *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management*, 12 (1/2), 119–139.
- Hassi, A. (2013). Case method in employee training: comparative insights from Canada and Morocco. *International Journal of Teaching and Case Studies*, 4 (1), 36-56.
- Hassi, A. (2015). *Influence de la culture nationale sur la conception de la formation du personnel en milieu de travail* (PhD dissertation). Laval, University, Canada.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hay, C. (2011). The Obligation to Resist Oppression. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 42 (1), 21-45, Wiley Periodicals.
- Hays, S. (1994). Structure, agency, and the sticky problem of culture. *Sociological Theory*, 12, 57-72.
- Healy, M. (2023). " *In Training*": *Systems of Power and Exploitation in the Making of the American Physician* (Doctoral dissertation, Temple University).
- Hesse-Biber, S.N (2016). *The Practice of Qualitative Research: Engaging Students in the Research Process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Hickey, G., & Kipping, C. (1996). Issues in research. A multi-stage approach to the coding of data from open-ended questions. *Nurse Researcher*, 4, 81-91.
- Hickman, Mary. (2015). Re: Is writing answers instead of recording in in-depth interviews methodologically sound? Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/post/Is_writing_answers_instead_of_recording_in_in-depth_interviews_methodologically_sound/5523f8e4d2fd6488258b4618/citation/download.

Hoff, O. (2002). *Development and Evaluation of an Instructional Design Model for International Training Programs* (PhD dissertation) Department of Instructional Technology, Utah State, University.

Hofstede, G. ([1980] 1984). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (1st Ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hofstede, G. (1986). Cultural differences in teaching and learning. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10 (3), 301-320.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions and Organizations across Nations* (2nd Ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hofstede, G. (2002). Dimensions do not exist: A reply to Brendan McSweeney. *Human Relations*, 55 (11), 1355–1361.

Hofstede, G. (2006). What did GLOBE really measure? Researchers' minds versus respondents' minds. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37(6), 882–896.

Hofstede, G. (2009). "Who Is the Fairest of Them All? Galit Ailon's Mirror." *Academy of Management Review*, 34 (3), 570-571.

Hofstede, G. (2010). "The GLOBE Debate: Back to Relevance." *Academy of Management Review*, 34 (3), 570-571. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41, 1339-1346.

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2 (1).

Hofstede, G. (2017). "Speech at ITIM Meeting," 50th Anniversary of IBM's International Opinion Survey, Amsterdam, Netherlands, September 29, 2017.

Hofstede, G. (2018). The 6 dimensions model of national culture. Retrieved at t: <https://geerthofstede.com/culture-geert-hofstede-gert-jan-hofstede/6d-model-of-national-culture/>

Hofstede, G. (2021). National Culture. Retrieved from The Hofstede Centre: <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind: intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival* (3rd Ed.) NY; London: McGraw-Hill.

Hofstede, G. & Peterson, M.F. (2000). National values and organizational practices in Ashkanasy, N, M., Wilderom, C.P. M., and Peterson, M.F. (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational culture and climate*. London: Sage, pp. 401–5.

- Hofstede, G., Neuijen, B., Ohayv, D. & Sanders, G. (1990). Measuring organizational cultures: A qualitative and quantitative study across twenty cases. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35, 286–316.
- Holbeche, L. (2005). *The high-performance organization: Creating dynamic stability and sustainable success*. New York: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Holton, R. (2000), Globalization's Cultural Consequences, *American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 570, 140-152.
- Honey, P. & Mumford, A. (1986). *The Manual of Learning Styles*, London: P Honey.
- House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Hseih, H., & Shannon, S.E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research* 15 (9), 1277-1288.
- Htun, M. (2003). *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce, and the Family under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huntington, S. (1993), “The Clash of Civilizations?”, *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3), 22-49.
- Husted, B. (2001), Cultural Balkanization and Hybridization in an Era of Globalization: Implications for International Business Research, Retrieved March 05, 2018, from citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.200.5621&rep=rep1.
- Inazu, J.D. (2016). *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference*. University of Chicago Press.
- Inkeles, A., & Levinson, D. J. (1969). National character: The study of modal personality and sociocultural systems, in G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.). *The handbook of social psychology IV* (pp. 418-506). New York: McGraw-Hill. (Original work published 1954).
- Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Israel, M., & Hay, I. (2006). *Research ethics for social scientists: Between ethical conduct and regulatory compliance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jack, G., & Lorbiecki, A (2003). *Asserting Possibilities of Resistance in the Cross-Cultural Teaching Machine: Re-Viewing Videos of Others*, in Anshuman Prasad (Ed.) *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis: A Critical Engagement*, 213-231, Palgrave Mcmillan.
- Jack, G., & Westwood, R. (2009). *International and Cross-Cultural Management Studies: A Postcolonial Reading*. Palgrave Mcmillan.
- Jackson, T. (2011). From cultural values to cross-cultural interfaces: Hofstede goes to Africa, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 24 (4), 532-558.
- Jackson, T. (2018). Editorial: Ideology and culture in cross-cultural management scholarship. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 18 (2), 121-123.

Jackson, T. (2020). Editorial: The Legacy of Geert Hofstede. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 20 (1), 3-6.

Jacobs, R. L. (2006). Perspectives on adult education, human resource development, and the emergence of workforce development. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 20(1), 21–31.

Jacobson, R. (2006). Mozambique and the construction of gendered agency in War. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 29, 499-509.

Jaju, A., Kwak, H., & George, Z. (2002). Learning styles of undergraduate business students: a cross-cultural comparison between the US, India, and Korea. *Marketing Education Review*. 12 (2), 49.

Javidan, M., House, R., Dorfman, P., Hanges, P., & Sully de Luque, M. (2006). Conceptualizing and measuring cultures and their consequences: A comparative review of GLOBE's and Hofstede's approaches. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37 (6), 897–914.

Jayachandran, S. (2021). Social norms as a barrier to women's employment in developing countries. *IMF Economic Review*, 69(3), 576-595.

Joy, S., & Kolb, D. A. (2009). Are there cultural differences in learning style? *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33 (1), 69-85.

Kamis, M., Caffarella, R., Muhmand, M. & Othman, O. (2006). *Negotiating the cultural maze in program planning for a transnational collaborative initiative*. Proceedings of the 47th Adult Education Research Conference. Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota.

Kayes, C. D., Kayes, A.B., & Yamazuki, Y. (2005). Essential competencies for cross-cultural knowledge absorption. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 20 (7), pp.578-589,
Kearsley, G. (2010). Andragogy (M. Knowles). The theory into practice database. Retrieved from <http://tip.psychology.org>

Kim, H. M., Li, P., & Lee, Y. R. (2020). Observations of deglobalization against globalization and impacts on global business. *International Trade, Politics and Development*, 4(2), 83-103.

Kim, S., & McLean, G. N. (2014). The Impact of National Culture on Informal Learning in the Workplace. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 64 (1), 39–59.

Kim, Y. (2010). The pilot study in qualitative inquiry: Identifying issues and learning lessons for culturally competent research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 10, 190–206.

King, N. & Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in Qualitative Research*, London: Sage Publications.

Kirkman, B., Lowe, K., & Gibson, C. (2006). A Quarter Century of Culture's Consequences: A Review of Empirical Research Incorporating Hofstede's Cultural Values Framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37 (3), 285-320.

- Kirmayer L.J. (2019) The Politics of Diversity: Pluralism, Multiculturalism and Mental Health. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 56 (6), 1119-1138
- Kluckhohn, F. R., & Strodtbeck, F. L. (1961). *Variations in Value Orientations*, New York: HarperCollins.
- Knowles, M. (1975). *Self-Directed Learning*. Chicago: Follet.
- Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Knowles, M. (1984). *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (3rd Ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (Vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kondrachi, N., & Wellman, N. (2002). Content analysis: Review of methods and their applications in nutrition education. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behaviour*, 34, 224-230.
- Kormi-Nouri, R., Macdonald, S., Farahani, M. Trost, K., & Shokri, O. (2015). Academic Stress as A Health Measure and Its Relationship to Patterns of Emotion in Collectivist and Individualist Cultures: Similarities and Differences. *International Journal of Higher Education*.
- Kroeber, A. L., & Kluckhohn, C. (1963). *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kroese, I. (2022). Is employee training really gender-neutral? Introducing a sex/gender-sensitive model of training. *Human Resource Management Review*, 32(4), 100890.
- Krueger, R.A. (1988) *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Sage, Newbury Park.
- Kuhn, T., S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *The Sage qualitative research kit. Doing interviews*. Sage Publications.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Kwek D. (2003). Decolonizing and Re-Presenting Culture's Consequences: A Postcolonial Critique of Cross-Cultural Studies in Management in Prasad A. (Eds) *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis: A Critical Engagement*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Lambert, C., Jomeen, J., & Mcsherry, W. (2010). Reflexivity: A review of the literature in the context of midwifery research. *British Journal of Midwifery*. 18

- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lechner, F. (2001), Globalization Issues: Does Globalization Diminish Cultural Diversity? Retrieved from sociology.emory.edu /faculty/ globalization /issues 05. html.
- Lee, J. F., & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, V. (2020). Gender representation in instructional materials: A study of Iranian English language textbooks and teachers' voices. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24(4), 1107-1127.
- Lee, R.M. (2004) Recording technologies and the interview in sociology, 1920–2000. *Sociology* 38(5) 869–889.
- Leedy, P. & Ormrod, J. (2001). *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (7th Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lester, J. N., Cho, Y., & Lochmiller, C. R. (2020). Learning to Do Qualitative Data Analysis: A Starting Point. *Human Resource Development Review*, 19 (1), 94–106.
- Lester, B. & Costley, C. (2010) Work-based learning at higher education level: value, practice, and critique. *Studies in Higher Education*, 35 (5), 561-575.
- Lewis, P., Thornhill, A. (1994). The Evaluation of Training: An Organizational Culture Approach, *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 18 (8), 25-32.
- Lincoln, Y., S. (2009). Ethical practices in qualitative research, in Mertens, D.M and Ginsberg, P.E (Ed.). *The handbook of social research ethics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 150–169.
- Lincoln, Y., S. & Guba, E., G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Lindeman, E., C. (1925). *The meaning of adult education*. New York: New Republic Press
- Littlejohn, S., W. & Foss, Karen A. (2009). Agency. In S. Littlejohn, & K. Foss (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, 28–32, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE
- Loewenstein, J., & Mueller, J. (2016). Implicit Theories of Creative Ideas: How Culture Guides Creativity Assessments. *Academy of Management Discoveries*.
- Luo, Y., & Zheng, Q. (2016). Competing in complex cross-cultural world: Philosophical insights from Yin-Yang. *Cross Cultural and Strategic Management*, 23 (2), 386-392.
- Malmqvist, J., Hellberg, K., Möllås, G., Rose, R., & Shevlin, M. (2019). Conducting the Pilot Study: A Neglected Part of the Research Process? Methodological Findings Supporting the Importance of Piloting in Qualitative Research Studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.
- Mangubhai, S., & Lawless, S. (2021). Exploring gender inclusion in small-scale fisheries management and development in Melanesia. *Marine Policy*, 123, 104287.
- Manyukhina, Y., & Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: A critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal*, 30(3), 223-243.

- Marquardt, M. (1990). Working internationally, in Nadler, L. and Nadler, Z. (Eds.). *The handbook of human resource development*. New York, NY, 23.1-23.30
- Marquardt, M., Berger, N. & Loan, P. (2004). *HRD in the Age of Globalization*, New York, Basic Books.
- Marquardt, M. & Engel, D. (1993). *Global Human Resource Development*. Prentice Hall, NJ.
- Marquardt, M. & Reynolds, A. (1994). *The Global Learning Organization: Gaining Competitive Advantage through Continuous Learning*. Irwin Professional Publishing, Burr Ridge, IL.
- Marquardt, M., & Waddill, D. (2004). The power of learning in action learning: A conceptual analysis of how the five schools of employee learning theories are incorporated within the practice of action learning. *Action Learning Research and Practice*. 1(2), 185-202.
- Marsella, A. (2005). Hegemonic Globalization and Cultural Diversity: The Risks of Global Monoculturalism *Australian Mosaic*, 11(3), 15–16.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G (2015). *Designing Qualitative Research* (6th Ed). London: Sage.
- Mathers, N., Fox, N., Hunn, A. (2000). Using Interviews in a Research Project in *Research Approaches in Primary Care*, Publisher: Radcliffe Medical Press/Trent Focus, 113-134
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. 1(2), p.20.
- Maxwell, J., A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McLean, G., N. (2006). Rethinking Employee Learning in the Workplace. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 8 (3), 416–423.
- McNiff, J. (2013). *Action Research Principle and Practice*. Routledge.
- McSweeney, B. (2002). Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith – a failure of analysis. *Human Relations*, 55 (1), 89–118.
- McSweeney, B. (2002). The essentials of scholarship: A reply to Geert Hofstede. *Human Relations*, 55 (11), 1363–1372.
- McSweeney, B. (2009). Dynamic diversity: Variety and variation within countries. *Organization Studies*, 30 (9): 933–957.
- McSweeney, B. (2013). Fashion Founded on a Flaw: The Ecological Mono-Deterministic Fallacy of Hofstede, GLOBE, and Followers. *Irish Journal of Management*, 30, 483–504.
- McSweeney, B., Brown, D., & Iliopoulou. (2016). Claiming Too Much, Delivering Too Little: Testing Some of Hofstede's Generalisations, *Irish Journal of Management*, 35 (1), 34–57.

- Méhaut, P., & Perez, C. (2004). Further education and training in the public sector. A difficult relationship with human resource management. *Public Management Review*, 6 (3), 333–352.
- Merriam, S., B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.
- Merriam, S., B., Caffarella, R., S., Baumgartner, L. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mertens, D. M., & Ginsberg, P. E. (2009). *The handbook of social research ethics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Middlesex University (2019). Research Ethics. Retrieved from: <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/spotlights/types/research-at-middlesex/research-ethics>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, S., Gibson, A., Barbour, Nevill, L., Brown, C., Laroui, A., & Swearingen, W. (2022). *Morocco*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*.
- Mills, J., & Birks, M. (2014). *Qualitative methodology*. SAGE Publications.
- Minkov, M., & G. Hofstede. (2011). The evolution of Hofstede’s doctrine. *Cross-Cultural Management*, 18 (1), 10–20.
- Moulette, A. (2007). The absence of women’s voices in Hofstede’s Cultural Consequences: A postcolonial reading. *Women in Management Review*, 22 (6), 443-455.
- Morris, M., Leung, K. (2010). Creativity East and West: Perspectives and Parallels. *Management and Organization Review*, 6 (3), 313-327.
- Morrison-Smith, S., & Ruiz, J. (2020). Challenges and barriers in virtual teams: a literature review. *SN Applied Sciences*, 2, 1-33.
- Nakata, C. (2009). *Beyond Hofstede, cultural frameworks for global marketing and management*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Ndoye, A. (2003). Experiential learning, self-beliefs, and adult performance in Senegal. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 22 (4), 353–366.
- Neuliep, J.W. (2003). *Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach*, (2nd Ed.), Boston: MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, Teaching and Culture: Critical Perspectives for a New Century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers
- Nisar, T. M. (2004). E-Learning in Public Organizations. *Public Personnel Management*, 33 (1), 79-88.

- Nixon, J.C. (2005). Impact of national differences in work practices. *The Journal of Learning in Higher Education*, 1 (1), 43-52.
- Noble, C. (1997). The management of training in multinational corporations: comparative case studies. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 21(3), 102–109.
- Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. (1996). *The Knowledge Creating Company; How Japanese Companies create the Dynamics of Innovation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Nuseir, M. T., & Ghandour, A. (2019). Ethical issues in modern business management. *International Journal of Procurement Management*, 12(5), 592-605.
- Oliveira, G., Grenha Teixeira, J., Torres, A., & Morais, C. (2021). An exploratory study on the emergency remote education experience of higher education students and teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 52(4), 1357-1376.
- Ololube, N. P. (2013). The Problems and Approaches to Educational Planning in Nigeria: A Theoretical Observation. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 4 (12) MCSER Publishing, Rome, Italy.
- Ouchi, W. G. (1981). *Theory Z: How American business can meet the Japanese challenge*. Reading: MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Ozekin, M., & Arioz, Z. (2014), Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Globalization as Hybridization, *Journal of World of Turks*, 6 (3), 179-191.
- Palaganas, E. C., Sanchez, M. C., Molintas, M. P., & Caricativo, R. D. (2017). Reflexivity in Qualitative Research: A Journey of Learning. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(2), 426-438.
- Palmer, T. (2004). *Globalization and Culture: Homogeneity, Diversity, Identity, Liberty*, Potsdam: *The Liberal Institute of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation*.
- Papamarcos, S., Latshaw, C., & George, W. (2007). Individualism—Collectivism and Incentive System Design as Predictive of Productivity in a Simulated Cellular Manufacturing Environment, *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 7, 253-265.
- Pappas, C. (2013). The employee learning theory (andragogy) of Malcolm Knowles. Retrieved from <http://elearningindustry.com/the-adult-learning-theory-andragogy-of-malcolm-knowles>
- Pask, G. (1975). *Conversation, Cognition, and Learning*. New York: Elsevier.
- Peterson, D. A., Biederman, L. A., Andersen, D., Ditonto, T. M., & Roe, K. (2019). Mitigating gender bias in student evaluations of teaching. *PloS one*, 14(5).
- Peterson, M., F. (2003). Book Review: Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations by Geert Hofstede. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 48 (1), 127-131.
- Pettigrew, A. (1990). Longitudinal Field Research on Change: Theory and Practice. *Organization Science*, 1(3), 267-292.

Phillips, R. and Vaughn, L. (2009). Diverse ways of knowing and learning: The Impact of Culture. *The Open Medical Education Journal*, 49-56.

Pieterse, J., N. (1995). Globalisation as Hybridisation, in M. Featherstone, S. Lash, & R. Robertson (Eds.), *Global Modernities*, 45-68, Sage, London.

Pieterse, J. N. (1996). Globalisation and Culture: Three Paradigms, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31 (23), 1389-1393.

Pieterse, J. N. (2004). *Globalization and Culture*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD.

Piller, Ingrid (2011). *Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Poole, M. & Folger, J. (1981). A method for establishing the representational validity of interaction coding systems: Do we see what they see? *Human Communication Research*, 8 (1), 6-42.

Potter, W. J. & Levine-Donnerstein, D. (1999). Rethinking validity and reliability in content analysis. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 27 (3), 258-284.

Prasad A. (2003) *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis: A Critical Engagement*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Prasad, A., & Prasad, P. (2006). Global transitions: The emerging new world order and its implications for business and management, *Business Renaissance Quarterly*, 1 (3), 91- 113.

Prasad, A., & Prasad, P. (2007). Mix, Flux and Flows: The Globalization of Culture and its Implications for Management and Organizations, *The Journal of Global Business*, 1 (2), 11-20.

Punch, K. (2005) *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, (2ⁿ Ed.) London, UK: Sage

Rabionet, S. E. (2011). How I learned to design and conduct semi-structured interviews: An ongoing and continuous Journey. *The Qualitative Report*, 16 (2), 563-566. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR16-2/rabionet.pdf>

Reisinger, Y., & Turner, L. (2012). *Cross-cultural behaviour in tourism*. Routledge

Riege, A., (2005). Three-dozen knowledge-sharing barriers managers must consider. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 9 (3), 18–35.

Ritzer, G., & Malone, E. (2001). *Globalization theory: Lessons from the exportation of McDonaldization and the new means of consumption*, in G. Ritzer (Ed.), *Explorations in the sociology of consumption*, 160-180, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

Ritzer, G. (2010). *Globalization: A Basic Text*, Wiley-Blackwell, West Sussex, UK

Roberts, E., & Tuleja, E.A. (2008). When West Meets East: Teaching a Managerial Communication Course in Hong Kong. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 22 (4), 474-489.

Robson C. (1993) *Real World Research. A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers* (2nd Ed.) London, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Rodrigues, A., C. (2005). Culture as a determinant of the importance level business students place on ten teaching/learning techniques. *Journal of Management Development*, 24, 7/8, 608-621

Rohlfer, S., & Zhang, Y. (2016). Culture studies in international business: paradigmatic shifts. *European Business Review*, 28 (1), 39-62.

Rogers, A. (2002). *Teaching Adults*. Philadelphia, USA: Open University Press.

Rogers, Carl & Freiberg, H. J. (1994). *Freedom to Learn* (3rd Ed.) Toronto, Canada: McMillan

Ronen, S., & Shenkar, O. (1985). Clustering countries on attitudinal dimensions: A review and synthesis. *Academy of Management. The Academy of Management Review*, 10 (3), 435-454.

Romani, L., Sackmann, S., & Primecz, H. (2011). Culture and negotiated meanings: the value of considering meaning systems and power imbalance for cross-cultural management, in Primecz, H., Romani, L. & Sackmann, S., *Cross-Cultural Management in Practice. Culture and Negotiated Meanings*, Edward Elgar, p. 4.

Rothwell, W. J. (2020). *Adult learning basics*. American Society for Training and Development.

Ruane, J. (2015). *Introducing Social Research Methods* (1st Ed.). Wiley

Rumbley, L., Altbach, P. & Reisberg, L. (2012). Internationalization within the higher education context in DeardorffH. D.K., Wit, D. and Heyl, J.D. *The SAGE handbook of international higher education*. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 3-26.

Rutakumwa, R., Mugisha, J. O., Bernays, S., Kabunga, E., Tumwekwase, G., Mbonye, M., & Seeley, J. (2020). Conducting in-depth interviews with and without voice recorders: a comparative analysis. *Qualitative Research*, 20 (5), 565–581.

Said E. W. (1995). *Orientalism*. Penguin Books.

Sagiv, L., & Schwartz, S. (2000). Value Priorities and Subjective Well-Being: Direct Relations and Congruity Effects. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30 (2), 177-198.

Sagiv, L., Schwartz, S. & Arieli, S. (2010). Personal values, national culture, and organizations: insights applying the Schwartz value framework in Ashkanasy, N., Wilderom,

- C & Peterson, M., *The handbook of organizational culture and climate* (pp. 515-537). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Salmons, J. (2015). *Doing Qualitative Research Online*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sardar, Z. (2015). *Introducing cultural studies: A graphic guide*. Icon Books.
- Schein, E.H. (2010). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. London, UK: Jossey Bass.
- Schober, C. (2016). *Transfer of Human Resource Management Practices within US Multinational Companies: a 3 Country Case Study*. (PhD Thesis, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences), University of Fribourg, Switzerland.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Beyond Individualism/Collectivism: New Cultural Dimensions of Values, in Kim U. et al. (Eds.), *Individualism and Collectivism: Theory, Method and Applications* Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 85-122.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1999). A Theory of Cultural Values and Some Implications for Work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 48 (1), 23-47.
- Schwartz, S. H. (2006a). A theory of cultural value orientations: Explication and applications. *Comparative Sociology*, 5, 137-182.
- Schweiger, S., Müller, B., & Güttel, W. H. (2020). Barriers to leadership development: Why is it so difficult to abandon the hero? *Leadership*, 16(4), 411-433.
- Seagraves, L. Osborne, M., Neal, P., Dockrell, R., Hartshorn, C., & Boyd, A. (1996). Learning in Smaller Companies. Final Report. *Educational Policy and Development*, University of Stirling, Scotland.
- Seliverstova, Y., & Pierog, A. (2021). A theoretical study on global workforce diversity management, its benefits, and challenges. *Cross-Cultural Management Journal*, 23(1), 117.
- Selmer, I. (2007). Which is easier, adjusting to a similar or to a dissimilar culture? American business expatriates in Canada and Germany. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 7 (2), 185.
- Shankar, A., Sundar, S., & Smith, G. (2019). Agency-Based Empowerment interventions: efforts to enhance decision-making and action in health and development. *The journal of behavioural health services & research*, 46, 164-176.
- Shonk, K. (2022). Re: How to Resolve Cultural Conflict: Overcoming Cultural Barriers at the Negotiation Table. Retrieved at <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/negotiation-skills-daily/how-to-overcome-barriers-and-save-your-negotiated-agreement-at-the-bargaining-table/>
- Simonton, D. K. (1999). *Origins of Genius: Darwinian Perspectives on Creativity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Simonton, D. K., Ting, S. S. (2010). Creativity in Eastern and Western Civilizations: The Lessons of Historiometry. *Management and Organization Review*, 6 (3), 329-350.
- Sivakumar, K. & Nakata, C. (2001). The stampede towards Hofstede's Framework: Avoiding the sample design pit in cross-cultural research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 32 (3), 555-574.
- Skinner, B. F. (1971). *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. New York: Knopf Random House.
- Solano-Flores, G. & Nelson-Barber, S. (2001). On the cultural validity of science assessments, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 38, 553–573.
- Solbes-Canales, I., Valverde-Montesino, S., & Herranz-Hernández, P. (2020). Socialization of gender stereotypes related to attributes and professions among young Spanish school-aged children. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 609.
- Søndergaard, M. (2006). The fit between national cultures, organizing and managing, *Organization Design: The evolving state-of-the-art*, 103-121.
- Sotshangane, N. (2002). What Impact Globalization has on Cultural Diversity? *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 1(4), 214-231.
- Spivak, G.C. (1988). *Can the subaltern speak?* Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Smith, R. (1982). *Learning how to learn: Applied theory for adults*. Chicago: Follett Publishing.
- Smith, P. B. (2002). Culture's Consequences: Something Old and Something New, *Human Relations*, 55 (1), 119-135.
- Stahl, G.K. & Tung, R.L (2015). Towards a More Balanced Treatment of Culture in International Business Studies: The Need for Positive Cross-Cultural Scholarship," *Journal of International Business Studies*, 46, 391-414.
- Steger, M. (2017). *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (4th Ed.), UK: Oxford University Press.
- Stephen, O.O (2020). Information technology, technical vocational education in developing workforce towards globalization. In *The Roles of Technology and Globalization in Educational Transformation* (pp. 80-97). IGI Global.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques* (2nd Ed.). Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA
- Schwartz, S.H. (1994), Are There Universal Aspects in the Structure and Contents of Human Values? *Journal of Social Issues*, 50, 19-45.
- Sparkman, D. J., Eidelman, S., & Blanchar, J. C. (2016). Multicultural experiences reduce prejudice through personality shifts in openness to experience. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 46, 840–853.

- Stamarski, C., & Son Hing., L. (2015) Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism. *Frontiers of Psychology*, 6, 1400.
- Tan L, Wang X, Guo C, Zeng R, Zhou T & Cao G (2019). Does Exposure to Foreign Culture Influence Creativity? Maybe It is Not Only Due to Concept Expansion. *Frontiers of Psychology* 10, 537.
- Tanis, C. J. (2020). The seven principles of online learning: Feedback from faculty and alumni on its importance for teaching and learning. *Research in Learning Technology*, 28.
- Taras, V., Rowney, J., & Steel, P. (2009). Half a Century of Measuring Culture: Approaches, Challenges, Limitations, and Suggestions Based on the Analysis of 121 Instruments for Quantifying Culture. *Journal of International Management*, 15(4), 357-373.
- Taylor, P., Driscoll, M. & Binning, J. (2006). A new integrated framework for training needs analysis. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 8 (2), 29-50.
- Teijlingen van, E., Rennie, A.M., Hundley, V., & Graham, W. (2001). The importance of conducting and reporting pilot studies: the example of the Scottish Births Survey, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 34, 289-295.
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. NY: Falmer.
- Tomlinson, J. (2006). Globalization and Culture. Retrieved from cite seerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc /download?doi=10.1.1.465.9581&rep=rep1...pdf.
- Tran, Thanh V., Tam Nguyen, and Keith Chan (2017), Overview of Culture and Cross-Cultural Research', Developing Cross-Cultural Measurement in Social Work Research and Evaluation, 2nd Edition., Pocket Guides to Social Work Research Methods (New York), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190496470.003.0001>, Accessed 12 Jan. 2023.
- Triandis, H. (1982). Review of the Book Culture's Consequences, by G. Hofstede, *Human Organization*, 41, 86-90.
- Triandis, H. (1993). Review of cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 132-134.
- Triandis, H. (2004). The Many Dimensions of Culture. *The Academy of Management Executive* (1993-2005), 18 (1), 88-93.
- Trompenars & Hampden-Turner (1997). *Riding the Waves of Culture*. London, UK: Brealey
- Tung, R.L. & Verbeke, A. (2010). Beyond Hofstede and GLOBE: Improving the quality of cross-cultural research, *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41, (8), 1259-1274.
- US Census, 2020. <https://www.census.gov>
- Usunier, J. (1998). *International and cross-cultural management research*. London, UK: Sage.

- van Emmerik, H. Gardner, W. L. Wendt, H. & Fischer, D. (2010). Associations of Culture and Personality with McClelland's Motives: A Cross-Cultural Study of Managers in 24 Countries. *Group & Organization Management*, 35 (3), 329–367.
- van Fraassen, B. C. (1998). The Pragmatics of Explanation, in Klemke, E.D., Hollinger, R., and Rudge, D.W., *Introductory Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY.
- Van de Vijver, F. & Leung, K. (1997). *Methods and Data Analysis for Cross-Cultural Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Veniak, S. & Brewer, P. (2010). Avoiding Uncertainty in Hofstede and GLOBE, *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41 (8), 1294-1315.
- Veniak, S. & Brewer, P. (2013). Critical Issues in the Hofstede and GLOBE National Culture Models, *International Marketing Review*, 30 (5), 469-482.
- Veniak, S. & Brewer, P. (2016). National Culture Dimensions: The Perpetuation of Cultural Ignorance, *Management Learning*, 47(5): 563-589.
- Waddill, D., Banks, S., & Marsh, C. (2010). The Future of Action Learning. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 12 (2), 260–279.
- Wagnleitner, R. (2000). *Coca-colonization and the Cold War: the cultural mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Wang, Y. (2007). Globalization Enhances Cultural Identity, *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 14 (1), 83- *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, Vol.77, 2019 11 86.
- Warner, L. R., & Shields, S. A. (2013). The intersections of sexuality, gender, and race: Identity research at the crossroads. *Sex roles*, 68, 803-810.
- Warner-Søderholm, Gillian. (2012). *Culture Matters Norwegian Cultural Identity within a Scandinavian Context*. SAGE Open.
- Weber, M. (1994). Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy, in Martin, M., and McIntyre, L.C., (Eds.), *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Weech, W. A. (2001). Training across Cultures: What to Expect. *Training and Development*, 55(1), 62-65.
- Wenger, E., McDermott, R., Snyder, W. (2002). *Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press
- Wesseling, H. (2009). *Globalization: A Historical Perspective*. *European Review*, 17 (3-4), 455-462.
- Westwood, R., & Jack, G. (2007). Manifesto for a post-colonial international business and management studies: A provocation, *Critical Perspectives of International Business*, 3 (3), 246-265.

Westwood, R. (2006). International business and management studies as an orientalist discourse: A postcolonial critique, *Critical Perspectives of International Business*, 2 (2), 91-113.

“White Paper.” WhatsApp.com. Retrieved 2021-02-15.

WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020 <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>

Wolcott, H. (2009). *Writing Up Qualitative Research* (3rd Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yaghi, A., & Bates, R. (2020). The role of supervisor and peer support in training transfer in institutions of higher education. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 24(2), 89-104.

Yankuzo, K. (2014). Impact of Globalization on the Traditional African Cultures. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 15, 1-8.

Yeganeh, H., Su., Z. & Sauers, D. (2009). The applicability of widely employed frameworks in cross-cultural management research. *Journal of Academic Research in Economics*, 1-24.

Yeh, R.S. (1983). On Hofstede's treatment of Chinese and Japanese values. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 6 (1), 149–160.

Yong, K., Mannucci, P.V., & Lander, M. (2020). Fostering creativity across countries: The moderating effect of cultural bundles on creativity. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. 157, 1-45.

Zacharias, T., Rahawarin, M. A., & Yusriadi, Y. (2021). Cultural reconstruction and organization environment for employee performance. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 8(2), 296-315.

Zajda, J. (2021). *Globalisation and education reforms: Creating effective learning environments* (Vol. 25). Springer Nature.

Zander, L. (2005). Communication and country clusters. A study of language and leadership preferences. *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 35 (1), 83-103.

Zawawi, A. A., Zakaria, Z., Kamarunzaman, N. Z., Noordin, N., Sawal, M. Z. H. M., Junos, N. M., & Najid, N. (2011). The study of barrier factors in knowledge sharing: A case study in public university. *Management Science and Engineering*, 51 (1), 59–70.

Zhang, X. (2011). Cultural Influences on Explicit and Implicit Knowledge Sharing Behaviour in Virtual Teams. *International Journal of Computer Science & Information Technology*, 3 (4), 29 –44.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 Interview Protocol

1. In general, how important is the setting (i.e., classroom, boardroom, office) while on training? Give specific examples from personal experience.
2. Describe the relationship between the instructor and the learners based on previous training you have participated in.
3. In general, how does the planning of learning activities occur within your department (i.e., who decides, are programs flexible, and are they individual or group-oriented etc.).
4. How are needs assessment for training conducted in your department? Give details based on previous training experiences.
5. How are training objectives set before program delivery in your department? Give specific examples from previous training experiences at work.
6. Describe the role of participants before, during and after the program delivery.
7. To what extent have training methods used in previous training programs been rigid or flexible? Give examples from workplace training experiences.
8. In your views, how do training methods achieve clear-cut learning outcomes? Give details based on previous training experiences
9. In your views, is learning by doing (LBD is when learners interact with their environment to adapt and learn) an effective technique? Why or why not?
10. How are the evaluation of training outcomes conducted during program deliveries? Give examples from firsthand experiences at the workplace?

APPENDIX 2 Sample Invitation Email

Dear Mr/Mme _____,

My name is Giovanna Storti, I am a PhD candidate at Middlesex University under the supervision of Prof. Costley and Dr. Schulte and would like to invite you to participate in a research study about learning activities in professional workplace settings.

Interviews will be scheduled by appointment and should require about 45 minutes of your time. As the interview is part of a PhD research study, consent, confidentiality, privacy, and data protection policies are all in accordance with Middlesex University's ethical standards. A formal consent form will be provided before the interview.

Please note that your responses to the questions will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and not only is your participation desirable, but it will be particularly useful and beneficial to the inquiry.

The findings of the study will be available at the Repository, and they may be transmitted to you upon request. Please email me at gs765@live.mdx.ac.uk or gstortian@gmail.com to request a copy.

I hope that you will voluntarily consider participating in this research effort by scheduling an appointment for an interview at a time that is most convenient for you.

Should you have any questions or require more detailed information, feel free to contact me anytime at 212 771 555 955 or via email.

Thank you kindly in advance for taking the time to contribute to this study, I look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Giovanna Storti

Ph.D. Candidate, Middlesex University London, UK



CONSENT FORM

Professional adult training activities in the workplace: Comparative insights from the Canadian and Moroccan contexts

Giovanna Storti

- | | Please initial |
|--|----------------|
| box | 1 |
| 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet datedfor the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. | 2 |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without penalty. | 3 |
| 3. I agree that this form that bears my name and signature may be seen by a designated auditor. | 4 |
| 4. I understand that my interviewer will take notes that will subsequently transcribed. | 5 |
| 5. I agree to take part in the above study. | |

Name of participant	Date	Signature
Researcher	Date	Signature

1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher