THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONAL CULTURE ON KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER WITHIN THE MIDDLE EAST MANAGEMENT TRAINING SECTOR

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David Finnigan

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ABSTRACT

The Gulf region has enjoyed near-instant wealth thanks to natural resources but remains reliant on foreign workers to impart the knowledge required to generate endogenous talent. Despite efforts by the United Arab Emirate (UAE) government to absorb this knowledge and develop Emirate talent, the reliance on foreign workers is as prevalent today as at any time over the last forty years. The UAE has excelled at attracting international talent but has failed to utilise the available knowledge for their talent development. For managers in the region, this knowledge is often transferred through management training, and management training is a significant part of Human Resource activity. However, this often fails for many reasons, not least, the cultural differences that exist between the knowledge supplier and the knowledge recipient. Local managers lack a suitable model that could where the knowledge transformation is breaking down and what elements of national culture influence this knowledge transformation process.

Research has shown that there is a link between national culture and knowledge transfer. Building on existing work, this research explored the impact that national culture has on the transfer of knowledge within the management training context. While there is extensive information covering national culture and knowledge transfer, there is a lack of scholarly literature about national culture and knowledge transfer within the management training context within the Gulf region, particularly the UAE. Consequently, this research will go some way to addressing these theoretical gaps in the literature.

The theoretical framework developed to facilitate the research process provides the basis for a model that learners, trainers and training managers can use to help design, needs analysis and gauge training suitability. This model, and the research findings, will add significant practical advice at all levels and will enhance training quality, increase inclusivity, and could influence knowledge transference between international talent and local talent within the Gulf region.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This DBA thesis explores the link between knowledge transfer and national culture within the management training field in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The chapter will begin by providing an overview of the current situation, highlighting the background to management training within the country. From here, the chapter will focus on the problems associated with regional management training concentrating on the national culture element. I will be introduced next, and my positionality within the research to situate the reader within the context of the dissertation. This will introduce the research problem, the research question, aims and objectives. The final section will describe the structure of the dissertation.

1.2 BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Geographic Context

The UAE has evolved from an economically impoverished homeland to an affluent, progressive nation during the last 50 years. The financial bedrock for this development was the revenue obtained from oil and gas. Dirani (2018) suggests that when this industry became economically viable in the 1970s, the shortage of Emirati nationals to fill the jobs created by the nascent oil industry opened the door to an influx of global expatriate workers. This influx made the UAE one of the most demographically diverse countries in the World. It is widely accepted that an oil-based economy has a volatile future as oil is an exhaustible resource. Also, Baffes *et al.* (2015) argue that the instability of oil prices makes revenue from oil uncertain suggest. The UAE has made strident efforts to address this, and today the UAE's economy is found on alternative sectors such as tourism, banking, hospitality and real estate. However, the employment of national citizens remains a challenge.

Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2014) state that in the 1990s, in an attempt to address the low workforce participation of local citizens, and to reduce the reliance on a foreign workforce, the UAE introduced the Emiratization program to encourage employees to hire Emiratis and equip Emirati workers with the skills to compete in the private sector. Daleure (2017) suggests this initiative had mixed success, and Ulrichson (2017) adds that in 2010 the national government introduced an expansion of the process to incorporate

knowledge and human capital initiatives under the auspices of Vision 2021, in an attempt to build a knowledge-based economy.

Today, Global Median Insight (2020) states that the population of the UAE is 9.89 million, but the percentage of nationals to expats is some 12%. The aspiration of the government to generate an endogenous workforce has been achieved through the employment of foreign workers to impart the required knowledge. Similarly, Nore (2019) argues that the Gulf has succeeded in attracting global knowledge but remains dependent upon overseas labour and has done for many years with no real change in prospect. The UAE government has implemented initiatives to develop a knowledge-based economy, but expat workers continue to fill many of these positions.

From a cultural perspective, Global Median Insight (2020) reports that the UAE has a broad spectrum of cultures, over 200 in total, with South Asian nations making 59.48% of the population. They add that Dubai makes up the largest proportion of the UAE population with some 35.7% consisting predominantly of expat workers. From my experience of management training, it is clear that there is a desire to obtain greater knowledge across all cultural spectrums. UAE Nationals work predominantly within management or non-manual jobs. All taxis are driven by expats, all shop workers, restaurant staff and menial office jobs are conducted by foreign workers. Many businesses employ family members to work within their organisations and many organisations employ expat advisors as I witnessed many times during my management training work.

Beer *et al.* (2016) suggest that there are many reasons why the abundance of accessible knowledge has not been transferred, but this research will explore one notion suggested by Bunch (2007) who argues that knowledge migration is failing because of poor training, in particular, inadequate management training. Bunch (ibid) highlights many reasons for this training failure and this research will focus on one, namely the influence of national culture.

1.2.2 Management Training Failure

Ahbabi (2019) suggests that in the UAE, there is a growing trend to invest in human resource practices, with a specific focus on management and soft skill training as this is seen to have a direct impact on the performance of individuals and organisations. Meyer

and Smith (2000) argue the primary purpose of training is to develop and improve employee's competencies so that organisations can maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of their human assets, while Ahbabi (2019) argues that training is synonymous with improving skills, knowledge and behaviour.

Fox (2016) proposes that despite the billions of dollars spent on training programs each year, most of that money appears to be wasted because the training does not drive business results. Drawing on Salas and Cannon-Bower's, (2001) argument highlighting the strategic significance of management training, Roberta *et al*. (2019) suggest that training is now an integral part of most firm's human resource departments. However, they add that there is uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of management training interventions building on Bunch's (2007) assertion that, much of the training investment is squandered on ill-conceived or poorly implemented interventions. Morris (2018) suggests that training effectiveness extends beyond evaluation and involves identifying elements that impact learning, adding that individuals develop preferences for such activities. Mantiri (2015) extends this view by adding that a learner's culture has a meaningful impact on learning.

1.2.3 Cultural Influence

Anthropologists and sociologists have long wrestled with the definition of culture. This research draws on several key conceptualisations to define culture. Hofstede (2001, P9) conceptualises culture as 'collective programming of the mind', with Minkov *et al.* (2010, p.6) suggesting culture is 'learned behaviour', and Schein (2017, p9) offering 'the accumulative shared learning of a group as it solves problems'. While there is debate over the exact definition, many scholars agree that culture is a complex and layered concept that is developed over time and has features that are unique to individuals who share similar experiences. Schein (2017, p.328) suggests that individual's perceive phenomenon based on their experiences, including their interpretation of training, and to become effective the training should look to 'reduce learning anxiety by increasing learner's sense of psychological safety,'

Ahmad (2017) argues that a bi-product of globalisation is an increase in language diversification, with Linn *et al.* (2018) suggesting that many organisations choose English as the de-facto language. Anders (2015) argues that communicating in a common language does not necessarily result in a shared understanding which could lead to

numerous challenges and issues, adding that communication is more than the simple translation of speech but includes unspoken conversations through our bodies, were non-verbal communication is highly culturally contingent. Consequently, Anders (ibid) suggests that culture could influence knowledge transfer during a training event. This debate underpins the research question.

1.3 RESEARCHER EXPERIENCE AND MOTIVATION

I have lived in the UAE for nine years and spent six years working as a military advisor for the UAE Army. My role was to provide training advice to the commanders. The organisation training team included multiple expatriate instructors teaching local military officers to fly helicopters. I repeatedly saw how the interaction between Emirati officers and their foreign instructors failed to impart knowledge due to misunderstandings, conflicting values, and beliefs. I frequently witnessed the failure of training to deliver objectives. I have also worked as a management consultant and trainer in the country, and I have witnessed expatriate trainers deliver lessons that are taken directly from western training manuals that have no relevance, interest or understanding to the Eastern learners. The motivation to undertake this research is to develop a framework which will inform expatriate trainers with the required information, advice and guidance so they can ensure training is understood and absorbed, irrespective of cultural differences. The contribution of this research will also provide recommendations to organisational decision-makers to reflect on the training practices and the development of more inclusive training programs.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM, QUESTION, AIMS, AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Research Problem

The UAE remains reliant on foreign knowledge despite significant efforts by the government to address this deficit. One of the reasons for this deficit could be the lack of knowledge transfer from an international trainer to local learner due to cultural differences. This research is looking to explore how national culture influences the transmission of knowledge during management training events to determine whether national culture could be an impediment to the transfer and could be a reason why there is still such a reliance on foreign workers and knowledge.

1.4.2 Research Question:

- What impact does national culture have on the transfer of knowledge between trainers and learners from different nationalities in the context of management training?

1.4.3 Research Aims:

To answer this question, the research aims to:

- Investigate current knowledge transfer practices conducted in management training.
- Critically reflect on existing theory to explore how the knowledge transfer process can be aided by exploring the influence of National Culture.
- Make recommendations in the form of a theoretical framework for how knowledge transfer can be improved where cultural boundaries create learning barriers.

1.4.4 Research Objectives:

This will be achieved by undertaking the following objectives:

- To undertake a critical literature review into the national culture, learning styles, and knowledge transfer theory.
- Explore national culture factors that facilitate or impede the knowledge transfer process.
- Identify the key factors that will facilitate a research strategy informed by practical experience and the literature reviewed for this study.
- Conduct observations and interviews in several organisations to evaluate the current practice.
- To propose practical recommendations for practitioners operating within the knowledge transfer environment.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

There are many contributing factors that may explain why the UAE remains dependent upon a foreign workforce to provide the necessary skills and knowledge and reduce the reliance on foreign workers. This research will focus on one factor that is professionally recognised but lacks detailed, erudite exploration. The research will extend the current knowledge by exploring those areas of training that could be improved to enhance knowledge transfer.

Although the link between national culture and knowledge transfer is recognised, there is a theoretical gap regarding specific elements of national culture that influence knowledge transfer within the context of management training within the UAE. Similarly, while the need for culturally sensitive training is acknowledged professionally, there is no model that students, trainers, and training managers can utilise that will ensure training is designed and delivered in a culturally compliant way to achieve knowledge transfer. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to these theoretical and practical gaps. In addition, this research will contribute to professional practice and the training industry by providing a model that can facilitate the transfer of knowledge across cultural boundaries, thus enhancing inclusivity, providing for the needs of learners, and ensuring training managers can understand the challenges and design training accordingly. It should also go some way to helping with the UAE Emiritisation process by providing a tool that managers at all levels can use to assure the quality of management training.

1.6 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

Chapter one provides the background information for the research, highlighting the problems currently faced to situate the reader within the context of the research. A brief description of the environment is followed by an overview of culture and how it impacts the training climate. This leads to the research problem that is addressed by the research question, aims and objectives. The final element of this chapter is the description of the dissertation structure.

Chapter two situates the reader within the literature by exploring the strategic importance of training before moving on to examine culture, how manifestations of cultural behaviours can be observed, and how cultures are geographically divided, before finishing with how communication is influenced by culture. The chapter considers learning styles and how they can play a part in the research before moving on to explore knowledge and knowledge transfer. This section will investigate different knowledge types and how they influence the ability to transfer knowledge before introducing the Knowledge Transfer Model concept.

Chapter three will explain the methodology used in this research, stating how the research was designed and the influence this design choice had on the research approach. Fundamental to the quality of research is its exacting adherence to methodological processes and procedures, and this chapter will explain how this is

achieved, placing great emphasis on the validity of all aspects of the research. The various tools and approaches used in the research will be explained in great detail, including justifications, for why they were chosen while acknowledging the limitations of each. In this chapter, the research conceptual framework which underpins the research process will be introduced and explained. Additionally, this chapter will enable the reader to understand the thoughts behind the research design and the theoretical and practical choices made. The chapter concludes with detailed explanations of how the research was conducted, including participant selection criteria. The next chapter will take this information further and explain how it was planned to capture and analyse the data.
Chapter four explains in greater detail how the companies and participants were selected. It explains the conduct of the various pilot activities, highlighting the lessons learnt during these activities. The chapter then details the selection process, highlighting areas of redundancy as required to assure the research. The research consists of observations and interviews. This chapter highlights the details of how this was achieved, including the many models that were created to ensure the operationalisation of theory and practice. Data coding played a significant part in this research, and this process is explained in great detail, with focus on how the raw data would be transformed via a series of coding practices into themes that emerged as the data evolved. The chapter concludes with an explanation of how the data would be assessed for cultural influence to answer the research question.

Chapter five details the research findings where each finding is accompanied by a discussion section that would relate the findings to the literature. This facilitated the analysis to determine if the knowledge was new, extended existing knowledge, or contradicted the existing knowledge. Each theme is explained before a final analysis determined whether the theme was culturally influenced. Finally, recommendations for professional practice were suggested.

In chapter six, there is a reflection on the research journey and how this journey has influenced personal and professional change. Also, suggestions are given for the modalities and possible needs for future research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Bornia *et al*. (2019) report that contemporary changes in the face of globalisation with the explosion of information and technologies have created a new paradigm of society where the acquisition and application of new knowledge are growing exponentially. Many organisations are now seeking to meet the demand for new knowledge through their training interventions. This review will start by exploring the strategic significance of training and factors that could cause the training, and subsequent knowledge transfer to fail.

This research is concerned with the cross-cultural dynamic between trainer and learner that makes national culture a significant factor in management training. Shao and Ariss (2020) suggest that culture often impedes knowledge transfer, building on the argument proposed by Leidner *et al.* (2006) that culture constitutes a barrier to knowledge transfer due to an inability to change people's behaviour. Dermol (2019) suggests that culture defines the extent of an organisation's learning.

The next section in this chapter will focus on exploring culture, focussing on how culture is a layered manifestation that can only be observed at superficial levels. However, culture can be deconstructed into culture dimensions so that those dimensions appropriate to knowledge transfer and this research can be highlighted, and their impact explored.

Ahmad (2017) argues that globalisation is creating an increase in language diversity, developing Bjorge and Whittaker's (2014) suggestion that many organisations adopt a common corporate language. This use of language will be a focal point of this research. Dajani and Mohamad (2016) conclude that there is an empirically found transaction between culture and learning styles supporting Hofstede's (1997) suggestion that a country's culture shapes the preferred learning styles of its people. Also, Ndia *et al*. (2020) argue that all people possess multiple intelligences, and as Ahmad *et al*. (2019) suggest, utilisation of these intelligences can enhance knowledge transfer. Consequently, the next section of this review will explore these propositions to see whether learning styles are a function of culture and any impact this may have on knowledge transfer.

Critical aspects of this research focus on knowledge. Consequently, this literature review will consider explicating knowledge before discussing the various types of knowledge appropriate for management trainers. From here, the process of transferring knowledge will be developed to explore how knowledge transfers from one individual to another. This chapter will present relevant literature utilising Cummings and Teng's (2003) Knowledge Transfer Model. Despite the age of this model, it was chosen because it breaks down the knowledge transfer components in a way that facilitates observations and will integrate the various elements of the process to provide a coherent framework to explain the process and assist formulating the structure of the research data collection.

This review will provide critical discussion to the literature to expose the impact that culture might have on knowledge transfer. This critical review of the literature will identify gaps within the research to support the research question.

2.1.1 Literature Search Strategy

To ensure the literature search was conducted systematically, efficiently and in a structured manner, a strategy was devised. Initially the various concepts being considered were identified and defined to determine appropriateness including any keywords that could identify more in-depth literature. From here, several catalogues and journal databases were identified, and a resource management system was constructed that included a literature resource centre to manage the various sources and save key elements including quotations, citings and points of interest. The resources were then searched and appropriate ones where catalogued and stored before they were analysed and key literature elements were copied and added to a literature resource centre. These were then compared to the initial concepts to determine their relevance and applicability. This was an iterative process as various themes developed, and new ideas and concepts emerged. A schematic of this process is shown in Figure 1 below.

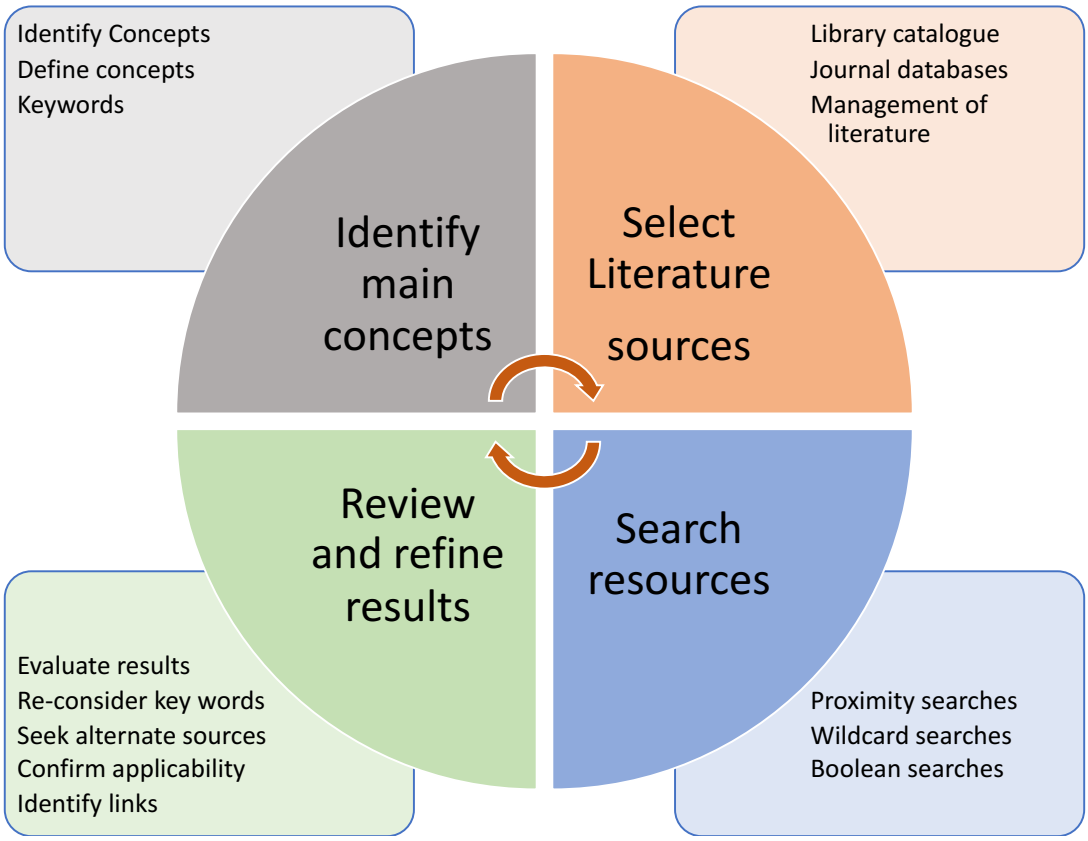


Figure 1. Literature Review Strategy Schematic. Source: The Author.

2.2 STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

The strategic importance of training has been proclaimed for many years argue Salas and Canon-Bowers, (2001) with Roberta *et al*. (2019) adding that training is now an integral element of any Human Resource Department, though the 2019 Training Industry Report found that training expenditures had fallen by 5.3% in 2019 from 2018. Ballard (2017) argue that despite this outlay, much of the investment appears to be squandered on misguided or poorly implemented interventions, with few organisations showing the link between training and positive change.

Beer *et al.* (2016) suggest that training interventions fail for many reasons, with Salas and Kosarzycki (2003) citing incompetent and or indifferent trainers, and Field (2019) adding that the training does not operate on the beliefs and values of the recipient. Feiden (2003) highlights the use of bizarre bonding and team-building exercises and playing goofy games that do little to address organisational inefficiencies. Bunch (2007) suggests that despite the literature available that highlights training design, content and evaluation failings, little is written recognising the importance of beliefs, values, or assumptions that prevent effective training. Indeed, Azevado and Jo (2019) stress that there has been

insufficient scholarly attention paid to the influence of culture on training effectiveness. This thesis will go some way to addressing that deficiency.

Martin and Sharot (2020) suggest that beliefs are more than tools to achieve external goals but are a source of value, and surface from prior experience and cultural reinforcement. Chao *et al.* (2017) propose that socialisation, expectations about the consequences of behaviour and understanding the beliefs of an individual has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of training. However, Mahvar *et al.* (2018) suggest a conflict of behavioural norms between learners and trainers may obstruct effectiveness. Bunch (2007) suggests that no training intervention will succeed if there are conflicting values such as encouraging creativity within a culture of mediocrity.

Schein (2017) explores these values claiming that culture is a layered concept with the most powerful layer of culture being the underlying assumptions, highlighting that assumptions start as values confirmed through experience until they become taken for granted. The review will now focus on critically evaluating the literature associated with culture.

2.3 CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

The cross-cultural interrelatedness of trainer and learner makes national culture a critical factor in this research. Fusch *et al.* (2016) suggest that international business has become a dynamic study area of the last forty years with culture focussed research and understanding of culture being of great importance. Raaouf *et al.* (2018) suggest that a country's culture shapes the preferred learning styles of its people. Zeid (2003), Bell (2013), Elkhouly and Sedafy (2016), and Rhaman *et al.* (2018) all conclude that there is an empirically found transaction between culture and learning. Similarly, Dermol (2019) argues that culture affects perception, organisation and information processing, while De Vita (2001) suggests that the formation of mental categories and the way that information patterns are retrieved to form new knowledge is based on existing knowledge and must affect the learning style preferences.

2.3.1 What is Culture?

Schein (2017) suggests that anthropologists and sociologists have studied culture for some time, resulting in many models and definitions adding that the numerous ways that many authors have conceptualised culture illustrate the depth and breadth of the subject.

Though not without its critics, no writing of culture can fail to consider the seminal work of Hofstede (2001, P9) who states 'Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group from another', and is based on the work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) who argue that culture consists of patterns of behaviour that constitute the achievement of humans. Additionally, Gradstein and Justman (2019) suggest that culture is the homogeneity of characteristics that separates one human group from another.

Deligiannis *et al*. (2020) expand the characteristics theme, suggesting that culture is a multifaceted, complex construct while Hofstede (2001) highlights the significance of shared values, norms and beliefs as crucial characteristics of culture. These arguments are supported by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) who espouse the isolation effect that culture has. Pinto *et al.* (2014) contradict this isolation view arguing that there is a worldwide culture developing that may render a more isomorphic process or pressure for universal sharing of values, norms and behaviours.

Though not repudiating Pinto *et al.* (ibid), Baines (2015) argues that while humans have much in common with each other, there are profound and subtle differences, the ultimate cause of which lies deep within the past and within what he refers to as the cultural DNA. Giorgi *et al.* (2015) suggest that contemporary research conceptualises culture as stories, frames, toolkits and values and Schwartz, (2014) adds it is a set of values shared by a group that differentiates it from another group, Lewis (2018) expands the theme by stating that culture is learned and not innate and derived from social environments, not one's genes.

2.3.1.1 Research Definition of Culture: Drawing on interpretations from the literature, this research now defines culture. Hofstede (2001) uses the term 'mind', implying a cognitive function, not a physical one that is not bound by physical constraints such as human-made country borders. He also uses the term 'programmed' inferring an

external intervention that influences the human operating system above the autonomic systems, implying a third-party influence. This inference suggests that culture is nurtured rather than natural. Lewis (2018) confirms this perspective using the term 'learned' behaviour suggesting the nurture is a self-motivated activity rather than taught behaviour. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) highlight that values and beliefs influence behaviour. Most authors attest that culture is a group activity, which implies that this activity takes place amongst certain people in close geographic or cognitive proximity. Consequently, my definition of culture is behaviour driven by values and beliefs that are achieved through the immersion of experience within a group that demonstrates the most appropriate correct behaviour to fit within the group.

2.3.2 Culture Layers to Create Knowledge Transfer Context

Hofstede (2001) coined the term mental programming in his book *Culture's Consequences* many years ago, referring to the process of learning behaviour. Beugelsdijk *et al.* (2017) claim that despite the age of the comment, the perpetuity and continued utility of the term has stood the test of time, having been cited more than 50,000 times placing it among the top 25 most cited books in social sciences. Lewis (2018) supports this by adding that parents, schools and colleagues teach us as we grow through childhood. This development continues to become our core beliefs and values, and we find them impossible to discard. He goes on to echo the findings of Hofstede (2001), and Schein (2017) by adding that the mental programming consists of layers that include human nature, culture and personality.

Hofstede (*2001*) argues that these mental programs are physiological functions of the brain. Therefore, we cannot directly observe mental programs, all that we can observe are behaviours. Dan (2020) supports these views and confirms that human behaviour can be observed at three levels: the Universal, Collective, and Individual levels, as shown in Figure 2 below:

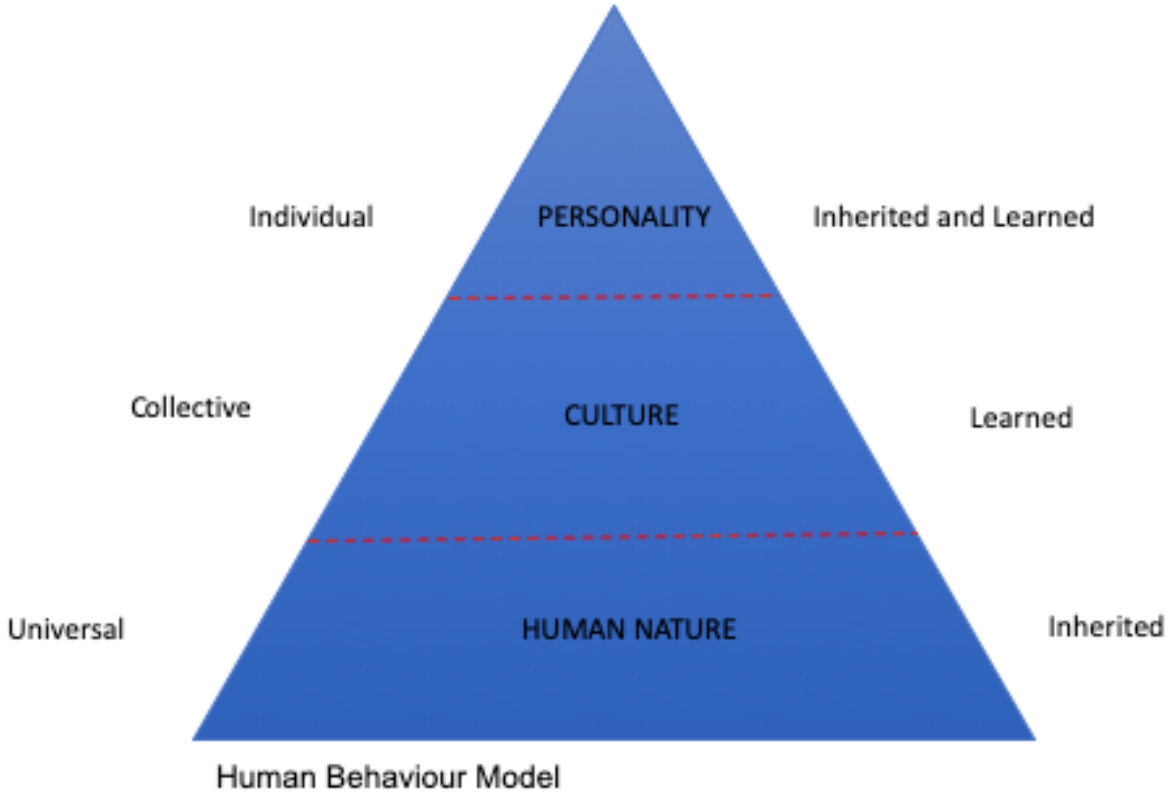


Figure 2. Human Behaviour Model (Mintov *et al.* 2010, p.6)

Dan (*ibid*) suggests that the Universal Level is the least unique and most base level of mental programming and is shared by all humans such as biological reactions, hunger, laughing, weeping and aggression. Lewis (*2018*) suggests that this basic level is inherited behaviour and is common to all humans in one form or another. Hofstede (*2001*) offers that some share the Collective Level but not all within a group, and includes factors such as cultural values, attitudes, and assumptions about correct behaviour within the group. Dan (*2020*) furthers that the group may be extensive, such as a nation-state, or it may be quite small such as a local committee. This intermediate-level is learned behaviour, suggests Lewis (*2018*), and Baines (2015) suggests that this learning can evolve over many thousands of years. Dan (*2020*) refers to this level as personality and add that this is specific to genetic makeup and personal experiences that add individuality. Lewis (*2018*) advises that the origin of the source of this level is not clear, and the borders between the various levels are not always a straightforward categorisation. Schein (2017) furthers the debate suggesting culture can be observed at different levels with the levels ranging from overt manifestations that you can see and feel, to deeply embedded unconscious assumptions that are difficult to observe without great exposure and understanding. Gu and Connor (2020) add that at these deepest levels, culture consists of core values and beliefs that are tacitly embedded within the organisation or culture.

Hofstede (2001) building on the work of Kluckhohn (1967) stated that there were four levels: values, rituals, heroes and symbols. At the core are the Values; (Schein (2017) terms this level basic underlying assumptions). These values are the 'tendencies to prefer individual states of affairs over others', suggests Minkov *et al.* (2010, p.8-10) and include good versus evil, dirty versus clean, dangerous versus safe, irrational versus rational. These tacit beliefs and values determine the subsequent observable practices and norms, what Schein refers to as Espoused Beliefs and Hofstede calls Rituals and Heroes. These are collective activities that are considered socially essential such as espoused values, ideals, aspirations, rules, stories, myths and goals. These norms subsequently drive the outer layer what Schein terms Artefacts and Hofstede call Symbols. These are the most observable manifestations and include language, jargon, clothing, structures and status symbols. Liu *et al*. (2020) suggest that culture determines the social context as to who is expected to share knowledge and who will hoard it. These observations should be exhibited during the observation phase of the research, and I anticipate these manifestations will be observable at the behaviour level but may only become detailed during the interviews. However, obtaining detailed information at the values level will demand skilled interviewing and keen observations. I have worked as a professional interviewer for the police and military, and these skills will be essential at this stage of the research.

2.3.3 Culture Clusters

Taras *et al*. (2009) argue that thinking of countries and cultures as overlapping concepts dates back as far as the concept of the country itself, adding that we have an ingrained willingness to equate country with culture. Dumetz (2012) claims that culture is a group-level phenomenon, and the values must be shared within a group; otherwise, we are comparing individual differences. Direct measurement of participant values cannot be generalised to a population unless we know the boundaries to that population where the values are shared. Taras *et al*. (2009) further that if cultures do not cluster within countries, value effects found in a sample cannot be generalised to a country. They add that if we do not know the boundaries of the population in which the given values are universal, we carelessly generalise findings from the sample to that population.

Taras and Steel, (2009) add that in order to use the country as a proxy for culture, two conditions must be satisfied: within the country, the variance must be small; and between-country variance must be significant. Borders are generally artificial constructs so it might seem unreasonable to expect values not to cross the national divide. However, Smith *et al*. (2002) note that societal, political and economic institutions, education systems, military forces, media and entertainment all reside adeptly within national borders while Veissierre *et al*. (2020) add that people tend to act and be guided by institutions consistent with their own beliefs. However, Bayeh and Baltos (2019) suggest that cultural convergence and modernisation theories argue that cross-border personal and organisation changes are blurring the differences among countries.

The earliest drive to clustering research can be traced back as far as Toynbee (1947) who discussed culture groupings and civilisations providing insight into how civilisations and boundaries have changed over time and identified twenty-one distinct living or culture patterns across civilisations, of which five clusters are remaining today. Huntington (1993) explored culture and civilisations and asserted that civilisations share common elements such as language, history, religion and customs. Cattell (1950) used Euclidean distances to identify twelve-factor dimensions based on psychology, sociology, demographics and economic characteristics within societies. Using fourteen countries, Haire *et al.,* (1966) used Maslow's need for satisfaction, attitude towards democratic practice and cognitive management practices to identify strong socio-economic and religion-language clusters. Ronen *et al*. (1979) argue that cultural regions are partitions of space whose minimal properties are boundedness and connectedness. Nadeem and De Luque (2020) found that clusters provided valuable information regarding variations across societies and were a useful way to identify intercultural similarities and differences.

Notwithstanding this, there is still some debate regarding the utility of clustering countries according to cultural similarities argues Graen (2006) with Rescorla *et al.* (2019) adding that by doing so may obscure discrete local nuances. Additionally, some of the questions asked during culture research are centred on inconsistency in the measurement of culture. Tormos (2019) suggests that civilisations are fluid and are all but sure to change over time, supporting the view of Huntington (1993) that civilisations are dynamic entities that rise and fall, divide and merge. However, McSweeney (2013) questions the measurement of culture via clusters arguing that cultural values do not apply at the

individual level. Notwithstanding this, while it is widely accepted to use country names as surrogates for cultures, the use of clusters is now more welcome and accepted.

2.3.4 GLOBE Study Clusters

Nadeem and De Luque (2020) suggest that the GLOBE Study is one of the largest and most comprehensive studies analysing cultural differences. Ten cultural clusters were constructed based on cultural similarities identified through exploratory factor analyses (House *et al*. 2004). The clusters are:

(1) Anglo Cultures (e.g. England, Australia, USA);
(2) Latin Europe (e.g. Spain, France);
(3) Nordic Europe (e.g. Finland, Denmark);
(4) Germanic Europe (e.g. Austria, Germany);
(5) Eastern Europe (e.g. Russia, Hungary);
(6) Latin America (e.g. Brazil, Argentina);
(7) Sub-Sahara Africa (e.g. Nigeria, Namibia);
(8) Arab (e.g. Morocco, Turkey);
(9) South Asia (e.g. Thailand, Philippines, India); and
(10) Confucian Asia (e.g. Singapore, South Korea, China).

Nadeem and De Luque (*2020*) suggest that these ten cultural clusters are developed based on cultural similarity but argue that while national boundaries remain proxies for culture, the increase in globalisation means that national boundaries may not be accurate representations of cultures. However, Mensaw and Hsaio (2014) argue that the use of clusters would appear to be better representations of culture barriers although they acknowledge that human-made borders would not maintain groups of individuals captured within cultural boundaries. Graen (2006) challenges the diversity of the clusters suggesting that they produce only superficial behavioural indicators, a perspective that House *et al.* (2006) defend vociferously. Notwithstanding Graen's criticism, the clusters will be used during this research to identify different cultures.

2.3.5 Culture Dimensions

Comparing cultures pre-supposes that there is something to compare and history is replete with the arguments centred on comparing cultural differences and comparing

similarities, suggest Hofstede, (2001), Dumetz, (2012), and Salin *et al. (*2019). Hofstede uses a fruit metaphor highlighting one argument regarding comparing apples with oranges against another argument that says that apples and oranges are fruit and they can be compared on several a priori aspects, such as colour, weight, and nutritional value. However, Gabelica and Popov (2020) suggest that the search for similarities or differences remains the most favoured method of comparison, with most psychological investigations looking at variations within populations of individuals. Schwartz (2014) adds that individuals operate within a cultural environment where specific values, norms and beliefs are more or less dominant towards the socialisation and social control of the organisation as some cultures exhibit greater variations than others. Palecek (2019) argues that while the delineation of cultural differences is open to criticism, it is acknowledged to be a critical determinate to measuring cultural diversity.

Minkov *et al*. (2010, pp.27-29) refer to this delineation of cultural differences as a dimension where 'groups bond together around empirically found phenomena that occur in combination within that group'. The grouping of the different aspects of a dimension is based on statistical relationships, or trends for these phenomena to occur in combination. Dimensions can only be identified using statistical methods based on comparative data from several countries. The scores from one country can be shown as points on a line, such that several countries could be compared across the single dimension. Dane (2018) suggests that dimensions are based on correlations, where two variables are said to be correlated if they vary together. He goes on that if three or more variables are used, one of the variables can be chosen as the dependent variable and the combining relationship between the other variables assessed.

The study of culture dates back many years, but it was only recently that culture began to be described and measured along cultural dimensions. Criticism has been raised against using dimensions as it tells us nothing about the variability within each nation, or if those sampled are typical or atypical of that culture. However, Dan (2020) suggests that the use of dimensions remains a recognised measure of culture, building on Romani *et al.'s* (2014) suggestion that dimensions are one of the most popular ways of identifying patterned behaviour where the behaviour is considered to be informative of the way things are. They add that the aim is to develop theories and constructs that can be applicable across many cultures so that comparisons and clusters can be made across large groups and follows a positivist approach. Sackmann and Phillips (2004) support this

argument adding that the study of culture has taken a significant turn following the implementation of positivist views by introducing tangible dimensions and predictive models into a domain that was often perceived as fuzzy. While value dimensions have been criticised over the years, McSweeney, (2013) they have also been vigorously defended, Minkov *et al*. (2010).

Holden (2002) argues that in contrast to the positivist perspective, the use of an interpretivist view will focus on meanings rather than values, adding that it can add greater richness to the knowledge and understanding of culture while adding that it provides a way to understand interaction rather than merely providing the static comparative view associated with the positivist approach. However, Romani *et al.* (2014) postulate that the use of meaning systems and emic knowledge could be perceived as a limiting factor as they only tell us about one local situation, structure or theme and are ill-suited for comparative purposes, while a purely etic approach fails to provide the rich details needed to understand a culture.

Gehrke and Claes (2014) attempt to solve this dilemma by combining the two approaches to create a complementary theoretical framework for the analysis and resolution of cultural issues. This enables the researchers to determine culture differences at a higher level before conducting a more in-depth analysis at the individual level. This research is looking to explore the meaning of phenomena, not just highlight a static observation, as this will provide deeper understanding and richness, although the challenge will be the interpretation of the phenomena to gain an accurate emic perspective. Therefore, the research will utilise a theoretical framework that uses both an emic and etic methodology.

2.3.6 Culture Dimension Development

Dumetz (2012) suggests the quests for an empirically grounded explanation of culture can be traced back as far as Julius Caesar and the Gallic Wars some 50BC. Palecek (2020) adds that understanding the numerous influences provided by early researchers provides a bounty of information necessary to understand how current models were developed. The work conducted in the 19th and 20th century followed anthropological and socio-political lines with much of the research focussed on societies, nationalism, economics and consumption. One of the first attempts to categorise culture dimensions was undertaken by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) using proposed categories based

on value concepts, desirability and guiding behaviour associated with groups. However, Haller (2002) criticise the use of dimensions as static and limited. Notwithstanding this, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) work provided the basis for many of the models to come in that it was the first to attempt to understand core cultural differences and determine the values that the behaviours demonstrated and proved the basis for Hofstede's (1984) influential work.

Chen and Lin (2020) argue that Hofstede's work with IBM remains the primary study of national culture and remains the most cited work in existence. As well as its utility within the academic forum, Berry *et al.* (2018) suggest it has been used extensively within the industry across a whole raft of management control systems, while Sobrepere (2020) support its use in marketing. Conducted initially between 1967 and 1973 while working with the IBM Corporation, Hofstede conducted an ecological factor analysis of mean responses across 117,000 personnel, 40 nations and 14 items related to different work goals. His statistical analysis identified common problems for employees from different countries, but with different solutions to the problems.

From these findings, Hofstede found two dimensions that he termed individualism and masculinity. Further work conducted in the early 1980s added a further two dimensions, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Finally, in 1994, he added a fifth dimension, long-term orientation. Scholosserova (2019) suggest that Hofstede's work has been described as possibly the most preeminent explanation of national behavioural differences. However, it is not without its critics, McSweeney (2002), McSweeney et al. (2016), and Roy (2020). The main argument from McSweeney concerns the predictability and universality that Hofstede claims his model extols and to the generalisations that Hofstede makes. Of interest is McSweeney's (2013) objections to the causal claims that Hofstede makes with McSweeney often warning researchers to avoid the confirmation bias embedded within Hofstede's work. However, Williamson (2002) points out the dilemma between deciding upon a parsimonious model that approximately describes or attempt to predict across an extensive range of situations and a more precise model that has very narrow applicability.

Despite criticisms aimed at Hofstede and his work, Venkateswaran and Ojha (2019) argue that the complex nature of social sciences make Hofstede's work a commendable contribution, while Venaik and Brewster (2013) suggest Hofstede is seen by many as the

'doyen' of cultural research. However, the work of Hofstede has been bolstered by the GLOBE study, House *et al*. (2004) that also looks at cultural dimensions to analyses the variables associated with cultural differences. Dumetz (2012) suggest the GLOBE is guided by an overarching theory suggesting that the societal characteristics of a culture are predictive of organisational practices and that the leaders attribute that is most frequently practised are considered most accepted and expected with a culture. While Lee and Kelly (2019) acknowledge the attraction that project GLOBE is attracting, Dumetz (2012) suggest the quantitative data does not allow for culture-specific emic descriptions of cultural features and Gabrenya and Smith (2020) criticise it for its focus on the characteristics of leader attributes, rather than considering situational effects. Additionally, Schedlitski *et al.* (2017) criticise the use of culture dimensions, arguing that they fail to capture the anthropological recognition of cultural dynamics and its historicity. Hofstede (2006) criticises the GLOBE study on many grounds, including it being manager versus employee-centric, theory-driven rather than action research-driven and being centred on the United States. However, Javidan *et al*. (2006) contest this, questioning Hofstede's use of action research because the research used 160 scholars from 62 countries. Notwithstanding this, while not as ubiquitous as Hofstede, Canestrino *et al*. (2020) suggest that GLOBE is growing in researcher popularity and is being used in similar ways to how Hofstede's study has been used over the years.

2.3.7 Research Choice of Dimensions.

There are measurement scales similarities between the GLOBE study, Schwartz Value Framework, and Hofstede's, namely power distance, uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism and in-group collectivism (Individualism), future (Long-term) orientation and gender egalitarianism/assertiveness (masculine orientation). For this research, the dimensions that will be used are the ones that are reflected most widely across the literature, namely, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and future orientation.

2.3.8 Explanation Of Dimensions

2.3.8.1 Power Distance: The dimension Power Distance was first defined by Hofstede (2001) as the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Institutions can be

seen as family, school, community or organisations where people work. Despite the term being defined many years ago, it maintains its utility today. Indeed, Prooijen and Song (2020) continue to use the dimension claiming that individuals within a high power distance society are comfortable with status differentials and will defer to people at higher levels in the social hierarchy. This claim could have implications within the training industry regarding the candidate's perception of the trainer, and this could influence training delivery methods. Matusitz and Musambira (2013) suggest that the measure of power distance relied on the employee's perception of his supervisor, with questions on the survey determining whether the employee felt respect or deference to his/her supervisor. McSweeney (2013) points out that this measurement is focussed primarily within the workplace, and he argues its correlation from workplace to national culture. Notwithstanding these criticisms, Tocar (2019) argues that there are similarities between the work of Hofstede, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's, and GLOBE, which supports the broader application of Hofstede's work.

Minkov *et al*. (2010) suggest that the questions in the Hofstede survey explored the degree to which the employee perceived his supervisor to be influential, autocratic, or paternalistic and the degree to which the supervisor had a predilection to engage in management strategies aligned to those characteristics. The level of autocracy is demonstrated in how significant a society places the importance of hierarchical relationships. Rojo *et al*. (2020) postulate that Hofstede's theoretical concept of power distance places emphasis on observance of authority and reliance on authoritarianism. Choi *et al.* (2019) add that paternalism plays a significant role within power distance, and is defined as the degree to which responsibilities for the family are deferred to the state. In low power distance societies, the parent's role of protecting the children diminishes as the child reaches adulthood and extricates themselves from the family to fend for itself. Whereas, high power distance societies lead people to adhere to a paternalism with Farivar *et al*. (2015) suggesting that several generations of families will live in the same house. Hofstede, (2001) suggests that the power distance dimension focuses on conformity over autonomy with those societies with a low power distance less likely to follow norms and more likely to follow their will. He adds that in high power distance societies, individuals are more likely to conform more and are deemed to be less independent and more predictable. Yang *et al*. (2019) stress the significance to conformity, rule-following and relationships in what they refer to as face-saving, stressing that face-saving has significant behavioural implications and strong cultural links.

2.3.8.2 Uncertainty Avoidance: Prince *et al*. (2020) suggest that uncertainty avoidance dimension refers to the degree of anxiety individuals feel when in an unfamiliar situation, building on Dumetz's (2012) proposal that it is the degree to which a culture feels threatened by ambiguous situations and tries to avoid them. Matusitz and Musambira (2013) claim that in high uncertainty avoidance societies, people feel that ambiguity is a life threat that must be conquered while Prince *et al*. (2020) add that they will avoid uncertainty by, for instance, staying away from conflict, not condoning deviant behaviours and notions deemed dangerous, and balancing optimal stability with minimal risk. Within the training environment, this could be manifest through a need to know what knowledge is being transferred and why, which should be articulated through training objectives and detailed scheduling. Individuals and societies with high uncertainty aim for law and order have a strong preference for written rules and are suspicious and wary of the future and foreigners, argue Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988). Farivar *et al.* (2015) take this argument further adding that people in high uncertainty avoidance societies have a passionate and overpowering desire to have rules.

Bokuniewicz (2020) suggest that people from low uncertainty avoidance societies allow ambiguity while Tu *et al.* (2020) suggest that low uncertainty avoidance societies condone deviance and abnormal behaviour, do not see new ideas as threatening, have a positive outlook on the future, are more trustful of foreigners and are willing to take greater risks. There is a minimal to no avoidance of uncertainty, and rules are only established when there is an overwhelming need to have them. Although Minkov *et al.* (2010) agree with many of the comments, they go to great lengths to stress the difference between risk avoidance, (where risk is expressed as a percentage of probability,) and anxiety expanding that uncertainty is to risk, as anxiety is to fear. They add that anxiety has no object, and uncertainty has no probability, it is a situation in which anything can happen, but we have no idea what.

Aurigemma and Mattson (2018) suggest that a society with mixed uncertainty avoidance can be a source of aggravation in organised life and that the rules of the game must be explained clearly from the outset to remove ambiguity. The training environment is characterised as a safe location where candidates can experiment without fear of harm. However, this assumption may be challenged if the rules are too vague or the risks too

great for candidates from certain cultural societies, and this could significantly impede knowledge transfer.

Despite the extensive use of this dimension, Messner (2016) argue that the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension raised by Hofstede lacks internal consistency and would benefit from a more psychometric focussed development. However, Messner's (ibid) inquiry was a replication study conducted on a reduced sample. Consequently, while the arguments are acknowledged, the dimension will be used in this research.

2.3.8.3 Individualism/Collectivism. Hajikhameneh and Kimbrough (2017) define individualism and collectivism as the degree to which the interests of the group are deemed more significant than those of the individual. They add that within an individualist society, ties between individuals are loose, and individuals are expected to look after themselves and their immediate family only promoting their self-interests over those of others. Venaik and Brewer (2013), argue that people within a collectivist society are integrated immediately into a cohesive, strong in-group, which will protect that person throughout his lifetime with unquestioning loyalty, and they respect and abide by the beliefs and values of the group. This observation could have ramifications within the training industry as training is a group activity, and socialising is encouraged as part of the knowledge transfer experience. One important concept associated with the collectivist family connection is the notion of shame argues Minkov *et al*. (2010). They argue that Individualist cultures are guilt cultures where people who infringe societal rules feel individual guilt, whereas collectivist societies are shame cultures where individuals feel shame, based upon collective obligations. This shame is akin to losing face, which Chao *and Chapman* (2020) describe as failing to meet the societal requirements placed upon an individual by their position.

The individualism-collectivism explanation is furthered by Hofstede (2001), Dumetz (2012), and Graham *et al.* (2020) who suggest that this dimension is closely linked to Hall's (1976) high and low context communication typology. Within high-context cultures, communication information lives in the context of the communication rather than the explicit spoken message suggests Dwyer *et al*. (2005) adding that in low-context cultures, the message is contained within the spoken (or written) aspect of the communication. Liu (2016) suggest that the cohesive nature of collectivist societies should provide more opportunities for communication among members. In contrast, the loose ties associated

with an individualistic society infer a lack of integration amongst people that could lead to a reduction in information flow. This observation could prove significant within the knowledge transfer domain.

2.3.8.4 Time Orientation. Lewis (2018) suggests that time is universal and central to human experience, but the notions of time and space are viewed very differently by Eastern and Western cultures. Price-Williams (2020) adds that perception of time assume values that dictate human behaviour, while Raugh *et al.* (2020) suggest that time influences communication and negotiation. Fulmer *et al.* (2014) argue that experiences and conceptualisations are highly culturally variable, adding that despite the significance of time to culture, research into temporal issues remains limited and fragmented. Zelnik *et al.* (2019) suggest that one reason for this may be the variety of temporal dimensions associated with the subject such as Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) perspectives of time as orientations of past, present and future, Lewis' (2018) portrayal of different time types, and Hall's (1959), description of time as a silent language.

Hall (1959) discusses the importance of people's time, stressing the significance of the rules associated with social time and temporal understanding. Jandt (2003) suggests that understanding these rules is analogous to learning a different culture's language and is fundamental to understanding communication across cultures. Hall is credited with creating the concept of Monochronic and Polychronic time. Monochronic is defined as linear, sequential and separable views of time were events can be divided into units and conducted one at a time. Fulmer *et al*. (2014) suggest that Polychronic time is defined as naturally re-occurring, emphasising doing many things at once and is relationship driven.

The time debate is furthered by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) who identified five areas that they argue define human value orientations. One of these revolved around the question, what is the temporal focus of human life? The answer to this fall within three domains, either past, present or future. Venaik *et al*. (2013) suggest that all societies have to cope with all three domains, but it is the order of this focus that differentiates one culture from another. Jafari *et al*. (2017) argue that past oriented cultures tend to place more values on traditions, elder members of society, organisation s and history. In contrast, those cultures that are present-oriented focus more on the short-term consequences of behaviour, they value events that happened recently and predict future events based on

recent events. Dator (2019) suggests that those societies that are future-oriented focus on tasks that suspend gratification and focus on tasks such as saving for the future.

2.4 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

2.4.1 Language

Ahmad (2017), suggests a bi-product of globalisation is an increase in organisational language diversity, while Linn *et al*. (2018) add that many organisations are working to adopt a common corporate language, usually English. This use of a de facto language means many employees are required to share knowledge in a language not native to them, and Schomaker and Zaheer (2014) suggest that this is a concern because the expressive confidence and proficiency folk enjoy in their native language far exceeds their ability in a different language.

Expanding this theme, Hayden *et al*. (2019) argue that knowledge of a language means knowing how to use it, not just its linguistic form. However, Li (2013) adds most people learn the cognitive skill of a language through immersion in society during childhood through to adulthood, whereas learning a non-native language involves schematic educational techniques, thus constraining them in ideas and thoughts. McFarlane *et al*. (2020) suggest the way people derive, conceptualise and produce meaning in their native language influences their use of a non-native language. This is true when consideration is given to the structure of language, specifically, pragmatics which is the use of language, in particular, the non-propositional use that Wilson and Carston (2019) suggest are widespread inferences that may not always be understood by a second language user, for example, the phrase, ‘ I could kill for a glass of water’, which individuals from other cultures could paraphrase to have a different meaning from that intended by the speaker. The speaking of a common language does not mean the sharing of common understanding as many of the contextualised cues, cognitive thinking and thought processes operating within the language may be missed. English and Marr (2015) suggest that this can lead to a loss of sense making as language forms a framework from which individuals create an understanding of a situation or experience within the workplace. Boris (2017) suggests that to gain a more nuanced understanding of a situation, many practitioners are using storytelling as a medium to engage in stronger emotional understanding. Socially situated praxis, such as storytelling, positively affects how people learn by being wrapped up in the story with an intrinsically human and

universal dimension suggests Daniel (2018). However, Sutiyatno (2018), suggests knowing a language is not limited to just the words but goes beyond words into non-verbal communications and gestures to reinforce the paralinguistic.

Notwithstanding Sutiyatno's (ibid) suggestion, Navimipour and Charband (2016) claim that language is a key method of knowledge sharing so any limitations, inconsistency or deviations from language proficiency will have a significant impact on the quality of the shared knowledge. They add that the varying proficiencies and thought processes involved when people from differing linguistic backgrounds speak in a non-native language makes knowledge sharing in this context a demanding skill. Ahmad (2017) argues that the challenge of non-native linguistics can also lead to marginalisation of individuals perceiving their non-native language to be poor. Tange and Lauring (2009) suggest this has proven to harm knowledge sharing with Kikas and Hurtig (2019) suggesting that this can lead to a perception of a career glass ceiling for individuals who fear their non-native language is not to a suitable standard. Bjorge and Whittaker (2014) support this view adding that individuals lack the mastery of the non-native language that provides access to informal and formal channels of communication that enable them to engage in social bonding across the organisation.

Ahmad (2017) suggests that knowledge sharing is a linguistic-based activity, while Ahmed and Widen (2015) argue that language can disconnect speakers of different languages and force social orientation towards individuals of the same linguistic orientation. Ahmad (2017) goes on to suggest groups form based on linguistic barriers known as language clusters, where individuals prefer to communicate with people of a similar linguistic background, thus maintaining the symbolic power of the national language. This use of language clusters dampens cross-cultural linguistic exchange and makes employees share critical information and seek advice from only within the linguistic cluster which forms knowledge networks suggests Piekkari *et al.* (1999) making knowledge seeking and dissemination a linguistic driven activity rather than expertise driven activity. This linguistic constraint may develop and polarise group identities to reinforce or maintain stereotypes, Gerhke and Claes (2014) and lead to a vicious circle where communication becomes less effective as does knowledge sharing. Sevinc and Backus (2019) suggest this is due to a fear of appearing unprofessional and is manifest in reduced socialising, small talk and gossip and the abstinence from the social practices that maintain the organisational social roles and norms.

However, Jandt (2016) suggests that native speakers can also experience problems, suggesting that translational issues can prove to be significant barriers to understanding and knowledge transfer. Jandt (ibid) highlights problems such as vocabulary equivalence which is the expectation that a word in one language translates exactly into another, grammatical-syntactical equivalence which is an issue as some languages do not use the same grammatical laws as English language, for example, 'place a book' or 'book a place.' Jandt (ibid) also highlights the use of idiomatic equivalence stating the English language is replete with idioms that may not translate. The confusion caused by the misuse of language could be a significant impediment to knowledge transfer as language is a key communication tool used by management trainers. This research will go some way to filling that gap.

2.4.2 Non-Verbal Communications

Wilson and Carston (2019) suggest that communication is not merely the transmission of thought by speech and non-propositional effects are not confined to literal utterances or figures. However, they can be broadened to include an unspoken conversation with Anders (2015) suggesting a large percentage of human communication being transmitted as non-verbal communication. Ying and Yu (2017) argue many people pay attention to words and terminology as an appropriation to linguistic understanding but fail to consider non-verbal communications. Ashmore (2018) suggests that interviewers make a conscious decision within 7 seconds of meeting the job candidate, while Kelly and Kaminskiene (2016) contend that non-verbal communication can win negotiations. The understanding of non-verbal communication is clearly understood, although Bonaccio (2016) argues that management scholars have lagged behind popular press in understanding this communication trait.

Furnham and Boe (2017) suggest that non-verbal communication is a complex non-verbal communication system that transcends societal boundaries providing authenticity to social interactions. Mandal (2014) adds that it includes all behaviour excluding speech but is far more than simple hand waving or gestures with all humans being unified by common physical tells regarding emotion that transcend cultural race or beliefs. Abramson *et al.* (2020) advance this adding non-verbal communication can betray emotional states and ideas by transmitting subliminal displays of truth reflecting inner self

directly. Meadors and Murray (2014) bolstered this argument by postulating that non-verbal communication is a more reliable and authentic communication vehicle than speech alone.

However, Mandal (2014) argues that humans may universally share the emotions behind certain expressions, although the actual action may have different meanings, such as a head nod. Furbee (1999) suggests that difficulty arises distinguishing between culture and the non-verbal manifestation, adding some scientists support a belief that non-verbal communication is influential at establishing culturally consistent thoughts and behaviours. Meadors and Murray (2014) counter this argument by stating this only provides a convincing explanation of thought, not an initial source. They add there are cultural similarities but also significant differences, views that Mandal (2014) shares but expands that non-verbal communication originates in an emotional state that will have universal similarities. However, these will shift as the culture develops and evolves to create diverse expressions. A way to define non-verbal communication is to detail the type, and this research will use the work of Jandt (2016) who identifies the following areas of non-verbal interest.

2.4.3 Proxemics.

Gronbaek *et al.* (2020) suggest that proxemics refers to the spatiotemporal study of personal space used for communication and is based on the work of Hall (1959) who stated that different cultures view personal space in different ways. This belief is strengthened by Lewis (2018) who confirms that space apportioned for personal space is dictated by culture stating that the violation of personal space can be seen as a threat in one country but be perfectly normal behaviour in another, for example, Arab will stand much closer to their interlocutor than a Westerner.

2.4.4 Chronemics.

Martin *et al*. (2017) define chronemics as the perception of time, manifest through work speed, promptness, punctuality, and walking speed for individuals from different cultures.

2.4.5 Kinesics.

Irgin (2017) describe kinesics as communication through gestures adding that kinesics is often used as a primary means of communicating to support or even supersede verbal communication. Bonaccio *et al*. (2016) suggested several categories of kinesis including 'adapters' that refers to self-touch, 'emblems' that are socially understood gestures, 'regulators' that are used to maintain conversation and 'affective' displays that are concerned with facial expressions. Also, 'illustrators' are gestures to accompany verbal messages including spatial gestures to convey size or distance typically using the hands, 'kinetographics' gestures that mimic human or non-human gestures, and pictographic gestures that are defined as drawing imaginary objects in the air. Bonaccio *et al*. *(ibid*) suggest emblems and, to a lesser degree, illustrators, are all culturally sensitive.

Observing the understanding of a language will be challenging; however, the manifestations of language cluster and thinning may be observed during exercises or breaks in the training. Similarly, observing the trainer's use of language, in particular, the use of idioms and the use of storytelling within the training will be explored. Identifying gestures is not a straightforward task, as the gesture has to be separated from normal behaviour. Meadow (2005) suggest that the first task is to identify the standard motor stream and then look for the extraneous gesture outside of that adding that gestures occur during the act of speaking, but not all acts count as gestures. Meadow (ibid) expands that the criteria for identifying a gesture is that it is produced during the act of speaking, although it does not necessarily mean that it is conveying information to the listener and that it should not be a practical action on a person or object. Key to aligning the gestural recognition to the underlying belief and feeling is through contextual application and the gesture has to be coded in relation to the task in hand. This will provide a fundamental part of the observations as well as verifying understanding through the various interactive activities and the consequent interviews.

2.5. LEARNING STYLES

The link between culture and learning style is not new. Hill (2016) suggests andragogical research has long accepted that learners that come from different social and cultural

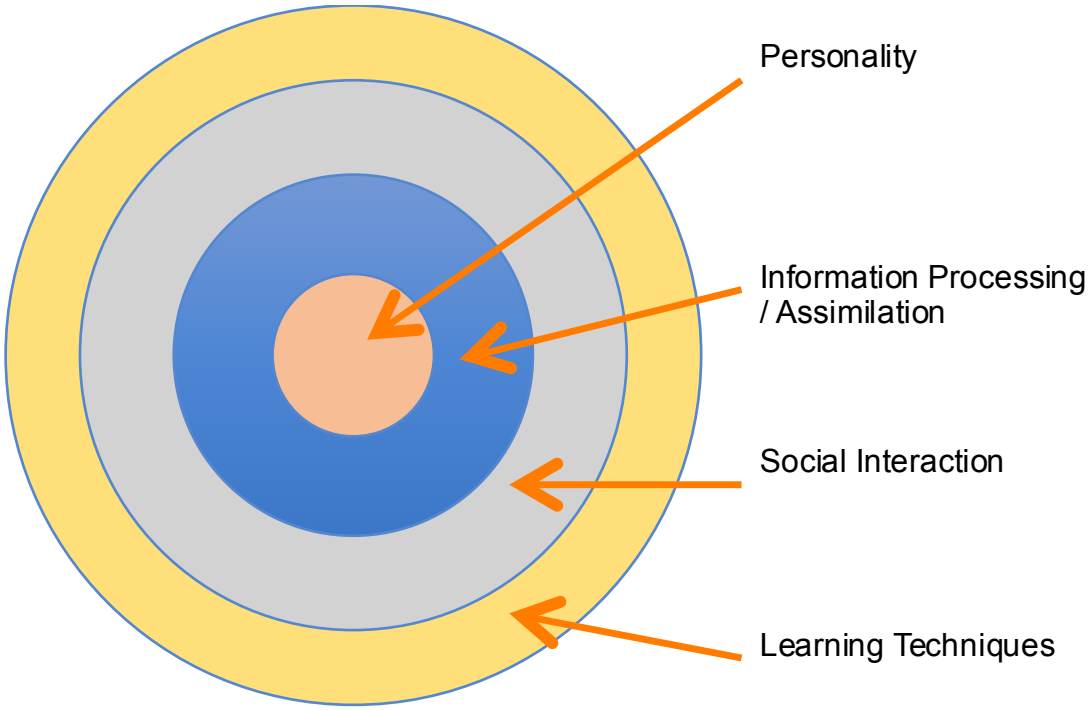
backgrounds have different learning styles. The results of investigations by Zhang and Rong (2016) found significant differences between cultures and learning styles.

2.5.1 What are Learning Styles?

Rekalde *et al.* (2017) suggest a persistent problem facing trainers and education personnel designing training courses for new and developing managers is the fact that even well-prepared lessons and workshops frequently fail to engage all students. De Vita (2001) suggest this is particularly significant when the cohort is multi-cultural adding that traditional training methods, using uniform training techniques, are ineffective with students from different backgrounds and different methods of learning. Additionally, Bhatnagar and Sinha (2018) add that students from different background could be culturally predisposed to learn in ways that may not be compatible with conventional methods of instruction.

Tasdemar and Yankoglu (2019) develop this theme adding that some learners outperform others despite being provided with the same quality and equal amounts of training arguing that individuals differ in their choice of methods of acquiring new knowledge based on individual preferences. Tews *et al.* (2016) offer that learning involves all of the human activities, including feelings, reflection, thinking and doing, and fun, arguing that individuals develop specialised abilities and preferences for specific ways of learning, which are defined as learning styles. Pritchard (2018) suggests that learning styles are individual consistencies in memory, cognition, perception and judgment and include habits or strategies that individuals display.

To explore these consistencies, Basheer (2016) suggests that Curry developed the concentric rings model, (often called the Onion Model) Figure 3 shown below, to explore the stabilising phenomenon of the stability indicators. The model has four rings, at the centre is the basic personality traits that represent the cognitive personality elements, the next layer examines information processing and assimilation, followed by a social interaction layer that looks at the behaviour of an individual within a learning environment, and the outer layer is the preferred learning techniques that describe the learner's preference for a learning environment or techniques. Basheer (ibid) argues that the most stable and ingrained patterns are found at the core, while the stability decreases as we move to the outer core.



Curry's Onion Model Learning Styles

Figure 3. Source: Basheer *et al*. (2016, p.517)

Hughes *et al*. (2017) suggest that management training is often designed in ways to homogenise the learning experience, the assumption being, add Sadler-Smith and Smith (2004) that learners will demonstrate uniformity in the way that they organise and process information, align with training methodologies and deal with the demands of specific learning environments. However, in doing so, there is a heightened risk of ignoring the fact that learners are heterogeneous in how they process information, approach learning tasks and deal with problems and learning opportunities. Kirschner (2017, p. 167) argues that learning styles 'poorly classify, or indeed pigeonhole' learners. Hughes *et al*. (2017) suggest that effective learning takes place when training methodologies; learning experiences and the learning environment is aligned with the students learning style,

Despite the logical appeal of learning style theories, the complexity of the research associated with it adds significant ambiguity and questions the validity and reliability of the process. Kirschner (2017) based on the work of Coffield *et al*. (2004) raise considerable doubts about the utility of learning styles, questioning three areas of concern:

1. The proliferation of new and emerging instruments. In their report, they cite 71 models of learning styles, although they argue that the majority are adaptations of previous models.

2. Researcher diversity with researchers coming from psychological, sociological, business studies, education, and management backgrounds. Coffield *et al*. (ibid) argue that many perspectives from these many backgrounds influence the evidence about learning, arguing that academic researchers develop their reputations by establishing specialisms and territories, which they defend vigorously in what he terms a form of intellectual trench warfare, resulting in fragmented knowledge with little cooperation.

3. Finally, Coffield *et a*l. (ibid) question the commercial use of learning styles, arguing that the commercial gains for the authors of successful learning styles are so considerable that critical engagement with the theoretical basis of their claims is unwelcome.

The ambiguity associated with learning styles questions its utility in this research. However, due to its popularity, panoptic use and involvement within the training environment, it may have an impact on the research, hence its inclusion. Irrespective of the utility of learning styles, the learning aims to transfer knowledge and to achieve this, we must understand the concept of knowledge. The next section will explore knowledge and the knowledge transfer process.

2.6 KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

2.6.1 What is knowledge?

To successfully explore knowledge transfer, it is important to define what knowledge is. Liu (2020) argue the study of knowledge is one of the most difficult and challenging concepts in our vocabulary, adding that the problems of understanding what constitutes knowledge have been the subject of vigorous debate for thousands of years. Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, and contextual information, Montoya (2016) suggesting that it originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. This claim is a fundamental aspect of this research as the research is attempting to determine key factors that could inhibit or enhance the knowledge flow between minds.

Hewitt (2019) suggest that to ease the task of defining knowledge, it is essential to explore the foundations of knowledge, which are data and information. Sanders (2016) states that data describes events, facts, qualities or quantities of objects or phenomenon without context, judgement or perspective, adding that data can be structured or unstructured, can be signs or symbols and can be measurements, observations, or numbers. Reisener *et al.* (2019) expand the theme proposing that data has no meaning but provides the raw material from which information is produced, adding that information is data that has been ordered into a declaratory pattern, and analysed from which inferences can be drawn. Groot (2017) propose that Information can be brought together, contextualised and put into perspective to deliver to people's minds while Riesener *et al.* (*2019)* suggests the application and productive utility of information can make knowledge. Having gained an understanding of the foundations of knowledge, we must now explore the different types of knowledge to determine whether some types are more pre-disposed to transfer than others and what impact this will have on the research.

2.6.2 Types of Knowledge

Knowledge that is declared in a sentence and asserts to something, for example, the Earth is round, is propositional knowledge suggest Pritchard (2018). There is also ability knowledge or the knowledge of know-how; for example, I know how to ride a bicycle, to drive a car or to swim. Pritchard *(ibid*) adds that only sophisticated animals like humans can possess propositional knowledge, whereas ability knowledge is far more common. This trait is significant as it presupposes the intellectual sophistication required to possess propositional knowledge.

Pritchard, (ibid) adds that knowledge is embedded in social context suggesting that there are four broad knowledge perspectives, including: 'K*now-why*' (knowledge of the principle of laws of nature), 'K*now-what'* (knowledge of facts), 'K*now-how'* (skills, abilities and selective social relations), and 'K*now-who'* (information about who knows what), adding that a natural characteristic of 'know why' and 'know what' knowledge is that they can both be incorporated into a database and easily codified without specialised understanding. However, agents cannot easily codify the 'know-how,' and 'know-who,' other than by database listings such as contact details and expertise of individuals. Social relations and human interaction are fundamental to make '*know-how'* and '*know-who'* knowledge.

Therefore, Dalkir (2017) adds that the human ability to make meaning out of information is significant to knowledge, and is fundamental to this research as an understanding of the knowledge to be transferred is a key factor. Nonaka (1994) postulates that knowledge is seen as highly contextual, adding that the knowledge produced will be different from that of another individual unless the context remains the same.

Despite the lack of a universal classification for types of knowledge and the ongoing epistemological debate regarding the concept of knowledge, Liu (2020), Vissers and Dankbaar, (2013), Olomolaiye and Egbu, (2005) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) support the belief that the most broadly accepted classification is that of Polanyi, (1962) who suggest that there are two representations of knowledge: explicit and tacit. However, drawing on Glisby and Holden's (2003) criticism that Nonaka and Takeuchi's universality assumptions focus overly on explicit manifestations that are Japanese in context, Poggi (2018) questions the epistemological foundations arguing that Japan does not have the same philosophical traditions as the Western World while adding that Polanyi's concept of tacit was misunderstood by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). Notwithstanding this, Liu (2020) suggest the concept of explicit and tacit knowledge are recognised as the starting point of knowledge recognition.

2.6.3 Explicit Knowledge

Jones and Mason (2018) argue that explicit knowledge seems the easiest to describe and understand, adding that it is a knowledge that can be spoken, communicated, transmitted, processed, and stored with relative ease, building on Nonaka's (2000) suggestion that it is information that is interpreted, contextualised and anchored in the beliefs and commitments of individuals. This knowledge is the type that is public and most widely known typically found in books, journals, mass media, newspapers and television. Maravilhas and Martins (2019) add that it is the knowledge that most organisations are familiar with and can be found in plans, training manuals, directives, patents, formulas and reports. Based on my professional experience in the training industry I have witnessed many occasions were explicit knowledge has been successfully transferred, for example, a learner who has been taught an aircraft system. However, when asked to apply the knowledge, for example, to diagnose a defect, the learner has not understood the system sufficiently to do so. Leonhoff (2011) supports my observations highlighting

the success of knowledge transfer based on explicit knowledge provides only a superficial exchange and that the only way to achieve accurate intercultural knowledge transfer is through the application of tacit criteria.

2.6.4 Tacit Knowledge

Polanyi (1962) states that tacit knowledge is know-how, a non-verbal, intuitive concept that is difficult to articulate in a meaningful and complete way, adding that it is the accumulated practices or expertise that allows for efficient and smooth operating. Polanyi captures the essence of tacit knowledge by suggesting that we know more than we can tell. Klein (2008) expands the discussion by stating that know-how must be learned and acquired; it is a description of how to do something, is highly context-specific and is generally acquired through experience. Jones and Mahon (2018), agree that tacit knowledge is more difficult to define as it is revealed in procedures, entrenched in action, and is gained through shared experience, observation, and imitation. Building on, Kikoski *and Kikorski's* (2004) argument that tacit knowledge provides the clarity needed to place knowledge in context to provide a competitive advantage, Saini *et al.* (2018) add that personal knowledge held by individuals could offer a significant benefit to an organisation once that knowledge is unlocked expanding that reservoirs of knowledge could be gleaned from what is unsaid and unexpressed.

Dalkir (2017) furthers the argument by suggesting that tacit knowledge is difficult to explain into words or put into drawings or text expanding Tsoukas's (2013) claim that tacit knowledge is context-dependent, non-codified, disembodied know-how that is acquired via informal take up of learned behaviours and procedures.

Many of these arguments imply that tacit knowledge is a learned, procedural process, acquired through interaction and the social domain. Spraggon and Bodolica (2017) add the socially constructed nature of tacit knowledge may be enhanced through Social Ludic Activities, such as gameplays, as this facilitates the explication of who knows what and where the expertise is within a safe domain that engages high levels of activation drawing on Mehrabian and Russel's (1974) suggestion that this activity is a form of meta-communication to modify the meaning of actions. Gameplay is a significant part of business training and will be evident during the observations in this research.

Erden (2008) explores the term further by suggesting that tacit knowledge can be broken down into two dimensions, the first dimension is the technical dimension, which focuses on the know-how of knowledge, and the second is a cognitive dimension founded on beliefs, ideas and values. This cognitive dimension could be a mitigating factor to knowledge transfer across cultures if the cultures involved do not share the same beliefs, ideals and values. Hardhan (2016) suggests that problem-solving and practice can accumulate tacit knowledge in what Assimakopoulos and Yan (2006) term 'learning by doing.' Nonaka *et a*l. (1995) emphasise the importance of learning by doing when they explain that an apprentice would learn from a master craftsmanship through practice, observation and imitation, not language.

Group activities can facilitate the creation of tacit knowledge within distributed cognitive systems. Alexander and Williams (2015) argue that groups pool complimentary knowledge through joint endeavours to expand knowledge by breaking down individual barriers to overcome personal incomplete work-related perspectives. While Spraggon and Bodolica (2017) suggest collective sense-making facilitates tacit knowledge creation within a group.

Tacit knowledge creation is the aim of all training interventions. The knowledge has to evolve from the individual level such that it can be dispersed across the whole organisation as a spiral of knowledge in what Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) call knowledge conversion. They suggest four modes of knowledge conversion:

Socialisation (tacit to tacit) The sharing of knowledge from one individual to another through direct experience, observation or imitation.

Externalisation (tacit to explicit) The development of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Used daily in organisations through internal regulations, tacit rules and rumours, Ivona (2009).

Combination (explicit to explicit) Explicit knowledge re-arranged to make it more appropriate to the organisation and shared more easily.

Internalisation (explicit to tacit) The conversion of explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge.

As management training is centred on the transference of explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge, knowledge internalisation will be the main focus of this review.

2.7 KNOWLEDGE INTERNALISATION

Ming and Kuo (2006) question the success rate of management textbooks asking how students can take textbook knowledge and convert that into sophisticated real-world knowledge, adding no amount of spending on training will achieve the desired results unless a company can transform the explicit knowledge into individual tacit knowledge. I have witnessed this when new knowledge is achieved through research and development and easily internalised into tacit knowledge when those involved in the transfer process are from very similar backgrounds, thus greatly enhancing organisational capability. Conversely, I have also witnessed the same process fail, having spent significant amounts of money and achieved no capability enhancements when those undergoing the transfer are from differing cultures. Consequently, while Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) present four knowledge conversion modes; this research will focus on the transfer from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge, namely internalisation. Anthonia *et al.* (2019) suggest that internalisation is the process of transferring explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge, in particular, the capability to apply knowledge in real-world situations. However, in today's fiercely competitive and changing business world, it is no longer enough for employees to passively learn and employ new knowledge, as highlighted by Alavi and Leidner (2001) who suggest that firms expect employees to go further to enhance their job positions, so that knowledge application has to be accompanied with knowledge creation.

2.8 KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MODEL

The objective of knowledge transfer is to transfer source knowledge to a recipient successfully. However, as the literature has shown, this is easier said than done as much of the knowledge is nested within bounded rationalities, values, norms, politics and the preferences of the knowledge source and recipient. To facilitate the understanding of knowledge transfer and conceptualise the process, I decided to use a concept model. Despite criticism that there are too many models available that are unrefined, untested and fail to address the evaluation of transfer interventions, Ward *et al*. (2014) the use of a model will facilitate the understanding of the concept and will also provide a framework that can be used for the data collection. Several models were considered for this

research, including Graham and Tetroe's (2006) 'Knowledge to Action' framework and Roger's Theory of Diffusion and Innovations. However, this research will utilise the Knowledge Transfer Model created by Cummings and Teng (2003), Fig 4, as it captures the main knowledge transfer areas and the banding of the model will ease the design of the data collection tools. This model highlights four contexts within which transfer takes place: Knowledge Context, Relational Context, Activity Context and Recipient Context.

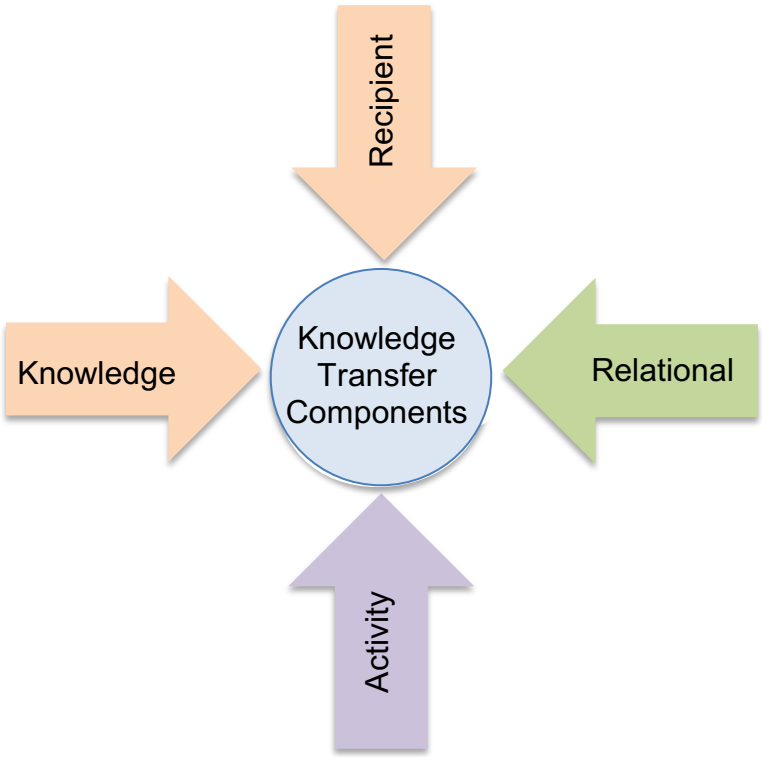


Figure 4. Knowledge Transfer Model. Source: Cumming and Teng's (2003, p.40)

2.8.1 Knowledge Context.

Drawing on the work of Ambos and Ambos (2009) who suggest that knowledge transfer success requires that source and recipient develop an understanding as to where the knowledge originates, Anirban *et al.* (2019) suggest the degree to which knowledge is embedded within source and recipient has an impact on its ability to be transferred. Without this understanding, a recipient may omit a key knowledge element. Demeter and Losonci (2019) suggest that knowledge is embedded in people, tools and routines, and sub-unit elements of those factors, products and organisational routines. Fang, (2018)

suggests that knowledge can also be embedded within multiple elements and transferred as clusters.

Tsai and Hsu (2018) found that the success of knowledge transfer was due to the tacitness of knowledge versus its articulability. Huang (2020) suggests that ambiguity is a significant challenge to knowledge transfer, adding that ambiguity is observed when the source and recipient of knowledge cannot reduce what is being sourced into a list of items that make up a contribution. Song *et al*. (2003) suggest that this may be an indication of how the knowledge is embedded in the original context. Many of these factors will be explored as part of the interview schedule in the data collection of the research.

2.8.2 Relational Context. Yen *et al*. (2018) suggest that several knowledge transfer barriers have been characterised across relational and cognitive social capital, geographical distance, cultural distance and technological distances. Regarding the relational context, Cummings and Teng (2003) use the following in their study: organisational distance, geographical distance, knowledge distance and norm distance.

Organisational distance is based on the organisational model used by the source and recipient to transfer knowledge. Argote and Fahrenkopf (2016) propose that organisations that transfer knowledge from related parties, such as franchises, chains and networks, can transfer knowledge more successfully than from external sources, building on Uzzi, (1996) assertion that successful knowledge transfer, in particular, tacit knowledge, occurred more regularly within networks than across independent organisations.

Building on this idea, Vlajcic *et al.* (2019) suggest that geographic distance refers to the expense, the time needed and difficulty associated with getting source and recipient face to face arguing that frequent communications, visits and meetings are a requirement to facilitate knowledge transfer. Ali *et al*. (2018), deepen the debate by suggesting that knowledge transfer is far more efficiently transferred face to face. Cummings (2003) add that ‘learning by doing’ often has to go through several iterations, and proximity facilitates the intense interactions. Dolcos *et al*. (2020) support the views of Nooteboom (2000) that people evaluate, perceive, and interpret the world according to mental forms that they develop through interaction with their environment and Lakoff and Johnson (1999) who suggest that interaction with the environment builds neural processes to structure cognition. This argument is in line with the views of Vygotsky (1962) who suggests that

knowledge and meaning are context-dependent. Nooteboom *(2000*) adds that for a group to achieve a joint goal, they must coordinate their thoughts through a reduced cognitive distance.

Acar and Ende (2016) suggest that knowledge Distance is the knowledge similarity between the source and the recipient adding that for organisational learning to take place, the knowledge distance should not be excessive, building on Hamel, (1991) as too many learning steps will be required. Nonaka *et al.* (1995) posit that knowledge redundancy and overlapping areas of expertise can facilitate knowledge transfer, while Kirkman (2016) furthers the debate by suggesting that redundancy minimises functional segregation allowing employees to move out of silos and establish new connections to develop deeper levels of tacit knowledge. Kogut and Zander (2003) suggest that when a company's information and knowledge codes differ, then it follows that understanding and transfer will prove difficult. However, there is a balance to be struck between too large a knowledge gap and too small a gap. Michael (2017) argues that if the gap is too small parties, become less satisfied and burdened unlearning old knowledge before leaning new knowledge.

Dey and Mukhopadhay (2018) describe norm Distance is the degree to which sender and receiver share the same organisational culture and norm and value systems. Lee *et al.* (2016) argues that differences in work values and cultures can significantly impair knowledge transfer, whereas similar cultures and value systems facilitate smooth relations by defining what is acceptable and unacceptable within a workforce.

2.8.3 Activity Context.

Cummings and Tang (2003) call this dimension the Activity Context. Katsara and DeWitte (2018) suggest that successful knowledge transfer is increased when more types of activities are used suggesting that a Didactic (the pedagogy of instruction and immutable facts, teacher-centric, where learners sit quietly and listen attentively) or Socratic approach (problem centred, trainer promotes co-learning, inductive through reason and conflict of ideas), can facilitate knowledge transfer. In contrast, Karge *et al.* (2011) argue for the need for collaborative and experience-based transfer activities. For data collection, the training program and delivery will illustrate if this context is utilised and its efficacy.

Ndia, *et al.* (2019) argue that despite the various cultural and economic backgrounds, all people possess multiple intelligences. The Gardner Multiple Intelligences Theory, Xhomara and Shkembi, (2020) propose that there are eight measures of multiple intelligences: linguistics, logical- mathematics, visual-spatial, interpersonal, Intrapersonal, musical, bodily kinaesthetic and naturalist, as shown below in Figure 5.

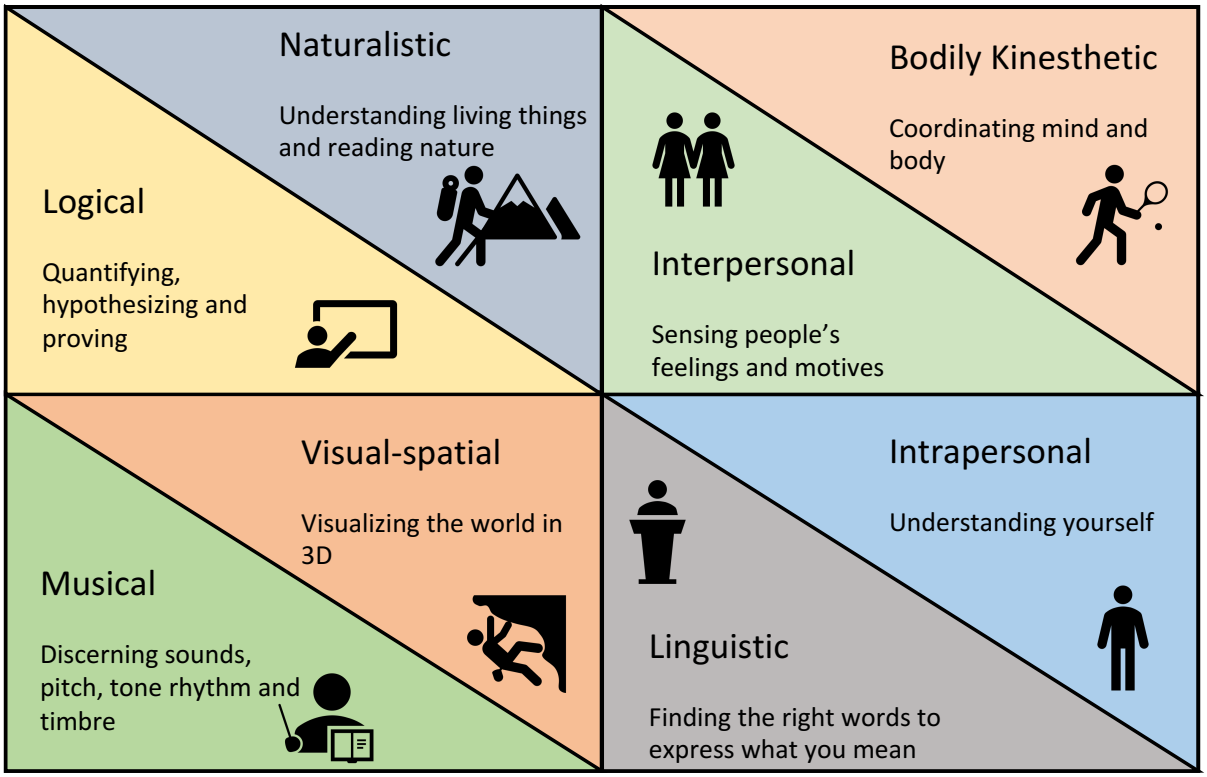


Figure 5. Taken from The Gardner Multiple Intelligences Theory. Source: Xhomara and Shkembi, (2020, p.21)

Ahmad (2019) argues that if these intelligences could be utilised, there would be an increase in the success of knowledge transfer. Nazmi and Fleura (2020) further the debate by suggesting that incorporating all multiple intelligences can enhance knowledge transfer effectiveness. Ideally, the trainer should use all of these intelligences in his training. If he doesn't, then that could indicate inadequate training that could make the examination of this context challenging to assess.

2.8.4 Recipient Context.

These are factors analogous to the recipient's acceptance to learning new knowledge and to the degree of effort put forward to undertake transfer activities that can affect transfer success. Cummings and Teng (2003) cite recipient factors as priorities to

learning success. Project Priority articulates the degree to which recipients are motivated to learn new knowledge. Khan *et al.* (2019) identified the conceptual similarities between learning intent and motivation, arguing that when the recipient perceives the project to have a high priority, there will be a greater motivation to support the successful transfer of knowledge. Meyer *et al.* (2019) suggests that learning has to be meaningful and relevant to them. From this, it is clear that recipients must have a desire to learn new knowledge, and this motivation must be cultivated. This motivation can be enhanced if the subject is of interest to the individual. Again, the interaction between trainer and student during the training will demonstrate the existence of this.

Islam *et al.* (2016) argue the need for a Learning Culture to enhance knowledge transfer. Knowledge will only be transferred effectively if the knowledge is retained, suggest Cummings and Tang (2003) building on the work of Davenport and Prusak (1998) that knowledge can be transferred using two dimensions, namely speed and richness, what they term viscosity. In a firm that tolerates mistakes, fosters delegation and provides time for new idea generation, both knowledge speed and viscosity can be much higher. Santa, (2015) suggests that a learning culture is open to new ideas, experimentation, empowerment and openness to errors and Gil and Mataveli (2016) suggest that a learning culture facilitates learning within the workplace. The research will explore the learning culture of the organisation as part of the data capture. The enthusiasm and support for the research by the companies involved indicate a high learning culture. However, the research may find that this is a management aspiration that is not translated to the workforce, and the training does not achieve its aims due to organisation limitations.

I have significant experience with successful and unsuccessful knowledge transfer events. I have experienced a highly demanding selection and training process that necessitated great motivation just to be in a position to do the job. The training involved extreme inculturation including stripping folk of individuality indicators such as clothing and haircuts, teaching them organisational history and ethos through songs and stories. Training and the subsequent internalisation for those that had successfully completed the training was a straightforward task. Similarly, I have experienced groups that have not gone through any form of inculturation together, are from differing backgrounds, and have differing perspectives on the world. Despite both groups having similar education and training, albeit in different parts of the world, the inability to transfer knowledge is clear.

Therefore, this research aims to explore those key factors that inhibit the knowledge transfer process to determine whether National Culture is a key factor.

2.9 SUMMARY

It has long been accepted that knowledge is a key source of competitive advantage, especially if it is unique and incapable of being substituted, especially when the knowledge is tacit. With knowledge becoming of ever-increasing significance, organisations must learn to determine how to identify and share new knowledge.

The interrelatedness of trainer and learner makes national culture significant. In my professional practice, I have been fortunate to witness high degrees of knowledge transfer, but have also seen examples where the transfer is very poor. Invariably this has been down to many factors that can be associated with cultural difference. Culture often stymies knowledge transfer and culture is often identified as an obstacle.

An exploration of culture focussed on the layered quality of culture and how it can only be observed at superficial levels. However, by deconstructing it into appropriate culture dimensions, key areas could be explored, and their impact analysed. The culture of a country moulds the preferred learning styles of its people and demonstrates the analytically found bond between culture and learning styles. This is a significant element of the research, so the research looks to ascertain whether learning styles are a function of culture and its subsequent impact on knowledge transfer.

The critical aspects of this research are knowledge and culture and this critical literature review focused on explicating knowledge and discussing the various types of knowledge appropriate to management trainers. From here, the knowledge transfer process was investigated, as this is a crucial research area. Underpinning all of this will be Cummings and Teng's (2003) Knowledge Transfer Model, which integrates the various elements of the process providing a framework for the process and facilitating the design of the research data collection tool.

2.9.1 Theory Knowledge Gap

The literature indicates that there could be a connection between knowledge transfer and culture, with several resources indicating elements that could be contributing factors, such as the link between cognitive distance and knowledge transfer. However, there appears to be a knowledge gap that highlights those specific areas where culture has an impact on knowledge transfer. This research will go some way to fill that gap.

2.9.2 Practical Knowledge Gap

There is a significant practical use of learning styles, cross-culture training and knowledge acquisition. But in the thirty years of professional training and training management, I have not seen any models that provide practical advice for those involved with training that links knowledge transfer and national culture. This research has highlighted that many models explain the knowledge transfer process, and theories that highlight the implications that culture has on learning behaviour, but there are no models that link the two in a way that practitioners can use to facilitate training effectiveness. This research will look to address that deficiency.

This research is looking to answer the following research question: What impact does National Culture have on the transfer of knowledge between trainers and learners from different nationalities in the management context? The utility of previous critically reviewed literature and the data collection, it is hoped that the research question will be answered. The following section will outline the methodology for the research.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to explain the rationale for the methodology chosen, how the research was conducted and highlights the research requirements. This research explores the influence of national culture on knowledge transfer between individuals from different cultural regions, with specific reference to the Middle East and bound within the context of the business management training environment. My ontological position values rich, socially constructed, and meaningful interpretations grounded in experience and practice. My epistemological perspective believes that concepts and theories are oversimplifications of that rich reality, and so will focus on stories, narratives, interpretations and perceptions to understand phenomena, drawn from interviews, observations, my reflections and insight into the cultural context. I recognise my beliefs and values will shape the research, which is aligned with my interpretivist philosophical position, where I want to *understand* human behaviour rather than *explain* it, Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) which would be more aligned to a positivist position.

This research used qualitative methods to obtain detailed and rich information regarding the behaviour, in what Merriam (2009) refers to as a naturalistic engagement. To enhance the credibility of the research Cresswell (2013) I embarked on establishing a thick description. Willig (2019) suggest the goal of thick descriptive qualitative research is to describe a phenomenon in terms of meaning rather than just description of observable facts, adding that it seeks to provide the reader with access inner emotions, thoughts, perceptions and intentions. This involved me describing and interpreting observed social behaviour within deeply portrayed context to enable readers to understand the thoughts and feeling of the participants, rather than merely providing an overview, as suggested by Ponterotto (2006). Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggest that to obtain an appropriate level of validity, I should draw on my observations to seek out data triangulated with that from interviews. Charmas and Bryant (2019) define triangulation as the use of multiple data sources to form themes or categories.

These methods enabled findings to emerge naturally from the data in line with the inductive approach where data is specifically collected to identify themes or patterns or to create a conceptual framework. Achieving validity was fundamental to the success of this research. Various strategies were used to develop appropriate tests of my findings

in terms of credibility, dependability, confirmability, reflexivity and rigour, as explained in Appendix A.

The interaction explored in this research was between a knowledge provider and knowledge recipient. To ensure both viewpoints were achieved, I observed and reported from the perspective of both. Consequently, both were observed and interviewed.

A key factor within this research was the maintenance of my methodological choices and their ethical underpinnings. Reflexivity was fundamental, and Bish (2019) suggests that my positionality, in particular, the influence I had on the relational contribution to the construction and awareness of meaning, was of paramount importance. Multiple case studies were used with participant observations and semi-structured interviews being the primary data capture tool. Once captured, the data, findings, fieldnotes, interview transcripts and any other primary data, were collated and thematically analysed to isolate meaning. The research was designed around my research philosophical position, as I will now explain.

A schematic showing the research design and parameters is at Figure 6 below.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.2.1 Business Research

Despite the ongoing debate regarding the application of business research, Carr *et al.* (2018) suggest that one area gaining support is the argument that knowledge must be obtained using approaches and frameworks drawn from several disciplines using several research methods. Underpinning research is a system of beliefs and assumptions about knowledge development, known as research philosophy. Saunders *et al.* (2016) propose that understanding philosophical commitments is essential to researchers as these will impact on the type of research strategy chosen, and the understanding of the research area. In the following section, I will expand on these philosophical ideas.

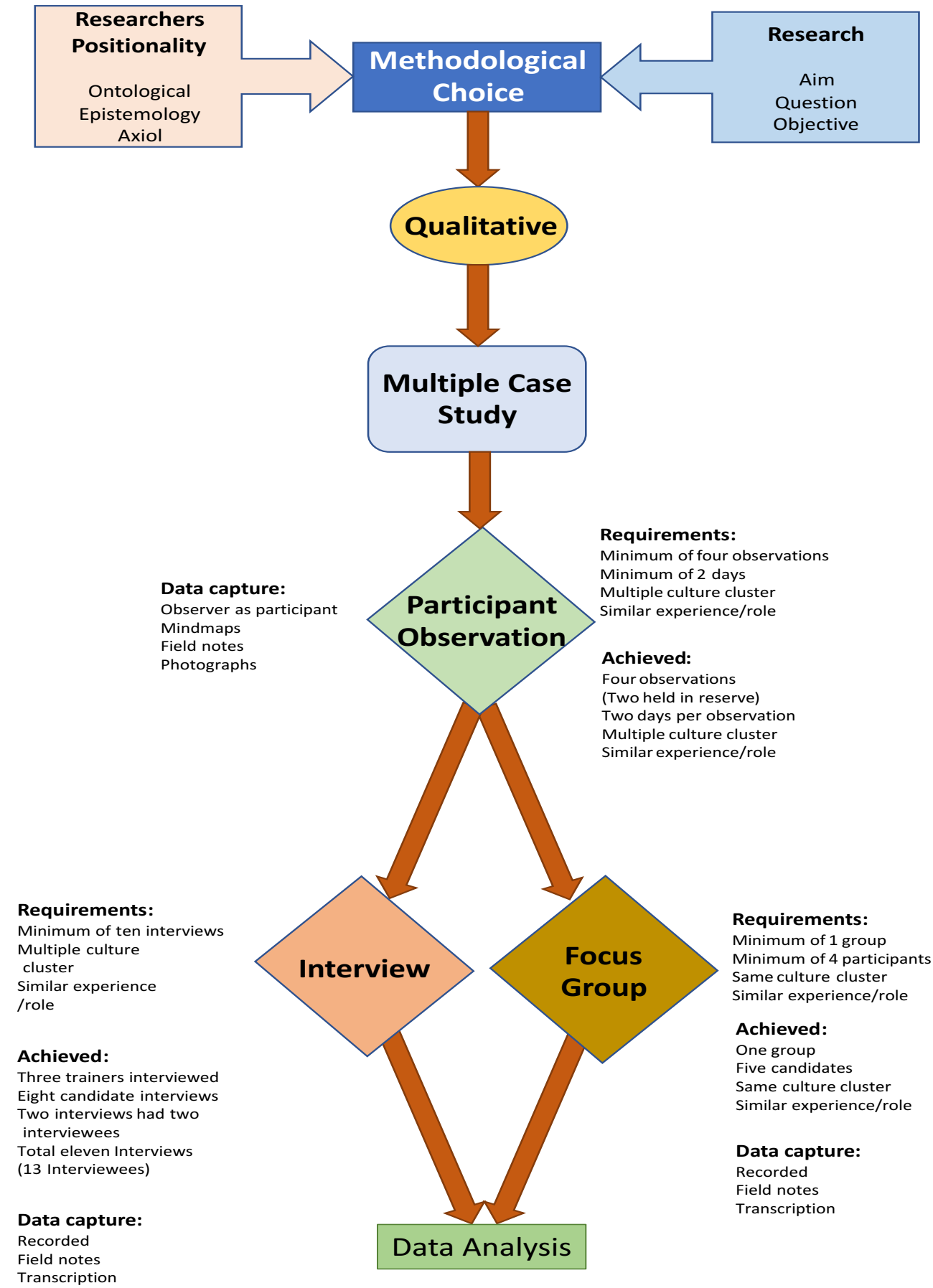


Figure 6. Research Design Schematic. Source: (The Author)

3.2.2 Interpretivist Philosophical Position

In an interpretivist philosophical position, Bryman and Bell (2013) suggest that reality has a social meaning and human's act and attribute action based on these meanings. Saunders *et al*. (2016) expand this social theme suggesting that workers will view experiences based on their social position. They add the role of the researcher is to gain access to experiences common to all in what they call common-sense thinking. This research sought out this common-sense thinking, focussing on the interpretations of experiences from both sides of the interaction, to explore meanings within their context and to probe the complexity associated with human behaviour. It looked to enrich and add new understanding not devolve the complexity of humanity down to law-governed generalisations.

The research sought out the meaning and aligned with the ontological proposition that understanding is socially constructed, complex and rich, with multiple meanings and processes, interpretations, and realities. This research will seek out these social constructs by taking place within the training environment. Knowledge is gathered from perceptions, stories, narratives, observations and individual interpretations. This research did not look for generalisations or common laws; it sought value bound knowledge ground in context and interpretation, where my positionality, interpretations of the data and reflexivity were fundamental throughout the process.

3.2.3 Inductive Development

This research aimed to determine meaning as it emerged from relationships and patterns or themes to provide the basis for theory development. Saunders *et al.* (2016) refer to this theoretical development method as an Inductive Approach. The research was not attempting to prove a theory, although Schwandt (2015) suggest that theories obtained from the literature can be used to help formulate questions of the data and to identify theoretical concepts for possible comparison to data collected.

Developing an understanding of the social interactions was fundamental to this research where those being observed were treated as humans, not mechanical research objects. Maxwell (2013) argues that equitable engagement with research participants is key. However, this conflicts with the philosophical position that highlights the significance of

researcher positionality. Similarly, the research looked for alternative explanations of behaviour that emerged and was context-bound. This called for an approach that provided the freedom to manoeuvre within the research rather than being fixed to an unyielding, overly scientific and objectifying process.

The benefits of using an inductive approach are that its flexibility facilitates further exploration as one finding can lead to others, thus providing the heterogeneity required to explore and detail human behaviour richly. A criticism highlighted by Ravitch and Carl*,* (2016) is that when observations are incorrect, the researcher can draw erroneous conclusions from the data.

Context is essential because this research aims to obtain rich and detailed descriptions. Rose and Johnson (2020) suggest that to establish different views of phenomena while providing the appropriate degrees of research rigour and methodological correctness, various data capture methods should be used. Saunders *et al.* (2016) suggest that research in this tradition is more likely to use a qualitative approach. For these reasons, this research will use a qualitative approach which will now be explained.

3.3 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research emerged as a critique and alternative to the positivist tradition that dominated research for many years, Ravitch and Carl (2016). While qualitative research pre-dated the 1960s, it emerged during this time as a formal field whose focus centred on context, interpretation, subjectivity, non-neutrality and representation, Schwandt, (2015).

Glesne (2016) suggests that qualitative research typically involves fieldwork and naturalistic engagement, meaning the researcher plays an inescapable role in the research. Researchers are interested in the contextualised, temporal and sophisticated understanding and meaning held by others to ascertain how reality exists for them offer Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009), and obtained through in-depth and detailed contextual analysis to explore how people perceive phenomena from their perspectives and experiences. Consequently, Levitt *et al.* (2018) suggest that qualitative research can be said to be descriptive and analytic.

Howard and Hammond (2019) suggest that the researcher is considered the primary instrument in qualitative research, with Bish (2019) adding that the subjectivity, positionality, social interaction and identity of the researcher, all shape the research, making the researcher and the researcher's role a vital element of the research and the research design, Maxwell (2013). To fully understand positionality, Maxwell (ibid) suggests the researcher considers their social location, including gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, language and any other social markers or indicators.

The use of qualitative research will ensure it focuses on gathering in-depth, rich and context related data that provides understanding and meaning to phenomena. However, the data obtained from the research will only be of value when it is ethically collected and valid in its form.

3.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH VALIDITY

McAleese and Kilty (2019) suggest that qualitative research is becoming more valued and recognised, while Rose and Johnson (2020) argue that if qualitative research results are to be genuinely useful and meaningful, the research must be methodical and rigorous. O'Connor and Joffe (2020) add that research has to be conducted systematically and transparently transmitted to others. This requirement means ensuring researchers are open and clear about what they are doing and why. Ravitch and Carl (2016) argue that bias exists in all research and stress that the researcher should make all efforts to acknowledge, account for and resolve researcher bias.

Saunders *et al.* (2016) suggest that the credibility of research is determined when co-researchers recognise an experience when confronted with it, in what they call researcher trustworthiness. This is made up of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, to go alongside the quantitative assessment criteria for validity and reliability. Ravitch and Carl (2016) recently added criticality, reflexivity, collaboration, and rigour to that list. To ensure the credibility and quality of this research was achieved I constructed a Validity Criterion Matrix that was used throughout the research process as a standard against which to check the research. This can be found at Annex A.

Having explained the philosophical underpinnings of the research, the methods of research will now be examined in more detail.

3.5 MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES

3.5.1 Overview

A case study is a detailed enquiry into a phenomenon within its real-life setting, Yin, (2014). The case may refer to a person, group, organisation, or any experience. Alpi and Evans (2019) suggest that a fundamental responsibility associated with choosing a case study is defining its boundaries while ensuring cases provide an opportunity to learn. A case study must be contextualised, as this separates a case study from an alternative method. The positivist criticism that case studies lack validity, use small sample sizes and lack the ability for generalisability raised by Stake (2005) is countered, by Saunders, (2016) who argue that the value of rich, detailed data is becoming used more widely.

3.5.2. Rationale for Selecting Case Studies

The rationale for using case study methods was the desire to observe a phenomenon in a natural environment. Bryman and Bell (2013) suggest that case studies enable research variety while supporting an inductive approach that enables the data to emerge from the case. The research question sought to explore why a phenomenon occurred, and I believed that a case study would facilitate this. Multiple case studies were selected so that a comparative analysis could be made across the individual cases to aid data collection and aid validity assurance through triangulation.

3.5.3 Types

Case studies can be structured as single and multiple, plus holistic versus embedded suggest Yin (2014). This research utilised multiple case studies, to focus on pattern replication in what Yin refers to as literal replication. The aim was to replicate a phenomenon with similar people in similar, but not the same, environments. This replication will help triangulate results and strengthen credibility. The purpose of using case studies is to create a realistic training environment where multiple organisations can go through a similar process.

The interaction between trainer and those being trained is a two-way discourse, and it was essential to ensure this research captured both sides of that discourse. The case

study provided the opportunity to explore both sides of the debate that added to the understanding and origins of meaning. A fundamental element of the case study was the participant observations, and this will be explained in detail below.

3.6 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

3.6.1 Overview

Participant observation is a method of observation where the researcher becomes immersed within the setting to some degree. This immersion enables the researcher to become a group member and understand the symbolic interactionism that exists in the group. This enhances the researcher's ability to gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of meaning that informants associate with experience and interactions.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggest that to break down the gap between the observer and the observed, the researcher should permit themselves varying degrees of immersion and participation. These various degrees of immersion and participation are called observer roles.

3.6.2 Observer Roles

Saunders *et al.* (2016) highlight four observer roles starting with complete participant where the researcher immerses fully into the organisation, often without informing those being observed. This role has ethical issues and requires time to build the required relationships. At the other end of the spectrum is the complete observer where the researcher does not participate in any way with the informants. The lack of interaction associated with this approach can be a barrier to trust. Trust-building is a key requirement of this research. The remaining two methods, participant as observer (researcher does not take part in activities) and observer as participant (researcher does take part in activities), involve varying degrees of participation to build the required level of trust, and to provide a more natural environment to reflect reality accurately. I chose to act as observer as participant as I believed the activity interaction would yield greater trust to facilitate the subsequent interviews. However, care is needed to avoid participant observation problems.

3.6.3 Potential Problems with Participant Observations

A potential risk of participant observation argues Saunders *et a*l. (*2016*) is researcher familiarity with the environment and participants sufficiently well to interpret the phenomena being observed accurately. My familiarity with the training environment, the duration of the observations, and my participation in the training helped mitigate these influences. Saunders (*ibid*) highlights observer bias (personal researcher biases influence interpretations of events) and observer effect (the influence that the researcher being present has on the environment and participants) as key risks to research validity. This research minimised these risks by extended observations and my participation in the training to create habituation where the informants become familiar with the process of being observed. On completion of the observations, interviews were conducted as explained below.

3.6.4. Rationale for Selecting Participant Observations

The rationale for using participant observations was driven primarily by the research question as it sought to explore why a phenomenon happened. Using the natural environment of the training room for observations and ensuring the relationship between myself and the candidates was as close as possible by actively participating in the training, I felt the candidate behaviour would be more real, and more accurate data obtained. In addition, my experience as a trainer and the access afforded by my relationship with the various gatekeepers provided a greater guarantee that I would gain and maintain the required degree of access.

3.7 INTERVIEW

3.7.1 Background

My research aim was to obtain rich data embedded within the meaning held by participants. Interviews were used to facilitate the retrieval of this data. Trust is a critical factor in the success of the interview, and trust is built on relationships; consequently, the relational values of the interview were essential. Josselson (2013) argues that interviews are built on the concept of mutual engagement and reciprocal transformation, as opposed to interrogation or power asymmetry.

The research aims to explore not judge; therefore, the interviews were non-evaluative with researcher reflection and bias recognition fundamental to achieving this. The

interviews were conducted within numerous intersecting contexts; the skill for me was to understand the various contexts and determine how they shaped the participant's understanding of the experience. Part of the context was the temporal aspect and understanding the temporal trajectory of the participants facilitated the understanding of the context and experience.

3.7.2 Interview Type

To achieve the required degree of subjectivity, the interviews utilised a semi-structured approach. Saunders *et al.* (2016) suggest that semi-structured interviews provide the required degree of exploration while permitting a degree of freedom to explore any emerging information. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggest that in semi-structured interviews, the researcher uses the interview as an instrument to organise and guide it. The interview can use specific questions, but the order and sequence of the questions can be altered to enable the interview to flow where the information takes it. Various question techniques were used, in particular, the use of open questions to enable the participant to speak freely and provide a detailed and personalised account of the phenomena. As the information emerged, probing questions were used to explore areas of interest in more detail or to seek an explanation should there be any confusion. The main aim of probing questions is to seek clarity, not offer a viewpoint or judgement. To determine specific facts or as an introduction to a new theme, closed questions were used. Closed questions ensured that a fact was fully understood using re-phrasing techniques to confirm the interviewer had accurately interpreted the participants meaning. Semi-structured interviews do not require a formal list of questions; however, an interview schedule is required to ensure that areas of interest are not missed. The literature has provided a framework against which the interview schedule has been constructed. The interview schedules are developed from the Conceptual Framework, Appendix B, and are shown at Appendices H and J.

3.7.3 Potential Interview Problems

3.7.3.1 Concerns

Patton (2015) suggest that the quality of the information obtained from an interview is dependent upon the interviewer’s technique. The interviewer must ensure that the preparation is of a high standard, which extends beyond the preparation of the interview schedule. This research is exploring the influence of national culture on knowledge

transfer, so Interviewee selection was crucial, as there had to be a representative cross-section of interviewees from different nations while maintaining methodological integrity.

During the interview, methodological integrity and adherence to research rigour were essential. The location of the interviews was critical to provide candidates with the appropriate degree of comfort and ease to facilitate honest discourse. The interview needed to be recorded, which meant the devices chosen had to be capable of picking up all of the comments. Saunders *et al.* (2016) also suggest that the interviewer's dress must be considered as this can have an adverse effect of the interviewee's perception of the interviewer. Consequently, I dressed appropriately.

3.7.3.2 Interviewer Bias

Interviewer biases must be controlled to prevent the introduction of leading or proposing questions or through verbal and non-verbal indicators, Ravitch and Carl (2016). Active listening techniques were used to emphasise the interaction, especially during periods of sensitivity, and I had to listen attentively, carefully and accurately, concentrating on the verbal and nonverbal cues offered so that any signals indicating an emotion or expression of feelings were captured for further exploration if required. This was particularly important during the focus group, where I had to focus on several individuals simultaneously.

The desire to seek out understanding as directed by the research question provided the rationale for using interviews. Semi-structured interviews provided the required degree of variety and flexibility, enabling me to facilitate the inductive data collection while satisfying validity requirements by maintaining methodological integrity via the interview schedule. The interviews would enable exploration of areas identified in the observations as well as my literature to investigate motivations, beliefs and experiences to be explored. My experience as a military interrogator provided the expertise required to safely and adeptly conduct the interviews, and this would help assure validity while easing the process.

3.8 FOCUS GROUP

3.8.1 Background

While interviews and participant observations provide data, information may have to be teased out of participants to get to the heart of any issues, and a focus group may provide the ideal vehicle to achieve this. While Bryman and Bell (2011) suggest that the term focus group and group interviews are often confused or employed interchangeably. Rosenthal (2016) suggest that a focus group emphasises questioning in a tightly defined topic to capture an in-depth understanding of experiences, perceptions and feelings. The focus group aims to encourage participants to engage in meaningful discussion to encourage the inductive release of ideas that would lead to meaning and provide information richness.

3.8.2. Rationale for Selecting Focus Group

The research question sought an understanding of the phenomenon, and this would require certain concepts, such as motivations and beliefs, to be challenged and investigated in detail while providing the clarity and qualification required.

The interaction between the candidates in the focus group could also generate ideas, identify concepts such as the use of language, and identify meaning and processes. My competency as an interviewer would facilitate the process, and this would enable me to focus on the data rather than assuring the process by concentrating too much on questioning techniques or focus group conduct.

3.8.3 Researcher's Role

To achieve this, the researcher has to build trust with the participants to ensure that they do not feel like they are being ordered to attend, suggest Saunders *et al.* (2016). The focus group could provide a deeper seam of information, as participants can interact, listen to other's views, and provide more ideas based on that. The researcher's role is fundamental to achieving this. Although I was always an outsider, my role within the training, such as involvement in activities, contributed towards building an appropriate trust level.

3.8.4 Candidate Selection

Selection of the participants was crucial to the success of the focus group. The participants selected represented the organisation demographics and provided sufficient

diversity to encourage debate. Those selected came from the same culture cluster from differing work areas. Saunders *et al.* (2016) advocate selecting participants using a horizontal slice through an organisation to avoid status and work experience perceptions, and this was achieved.

3.9 SAMPLE SELECTION

3.9.1 Sample Strategy

The sampling strategy can be either probability-based (probability of a case being drawn from population is known) or non-probability based (probability of a case being drawn from the population is not known). Saunders *et al.* (2016) suggest that probability sampling techniques are typically used in quantitative research, whereas non-probability sampling techniques are mostly utilised in qualitative research. This research adopted a qualitative approach, so employed non-probability based sampling techniques. Several techniques of non-probability sampling were explored, including quota, volunteer, haphazard and purposive. Etikan et al. (2016) suggest that data gathered for research must contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon and that sound judgement should be used by ensuring samples are chosen based on the qualities the participants possess. They describe this as a judgement or purposive sampling. This research used a purposive sampling technique as Etikan (2016) suggests that this provides a selection of information-rich sources from limited resources, although Sharma (2017) does warn that this technique can invoke researcher bias. This research sought to compare and contrast groups to determine similarities and differences. It used a group-characteristics comparison sample technique, as this enabled me to select cases that could create an information-rich group to reveal and illuminate important group patterns.

The key to achieving a good sample for this study was to ensure that every participant involved has sufficient information to provide the required level of richness of data, spoke openly and honestly, and was not trying to make a political statement or personal objective.

3.9.2 Sample Size

Saunders *et al.* (2016) suggest the aim of qualitative research is not to generalise to a population but to rigorously, ethically and assiduously answer the research question. Consequently, no rules govern the number of participants, with Farrugia (2019)

suggesting sample size depends on what you want to know, what will be useful and what will be credible, in the available time and resources. The aim is not to estimate statistical significance but to add depth to the breadth of analysis, and Weller *et al.* (2019) argue that large numbers of in-depth interviews can prove difficult to analyse effectively.

The heterogeneous and homogenous nature of the sample chosen is a fundamental requirement for this research as there is a requirement for a variety of different national cultures to add breadth, but a need for similarity within the national cultures, as are the selection criterion and the degree to which the criteria are nested. This proved a challenge, as the sample was chosen from volunteers from the training that was observed. External parties chose the training evolutions, so I was conscious of resource limitations. However, this is one of the challenges of qualitative research and was mitigated by having more observations than required to provide a redundancy capability.

3.9.3. Research Methods Considered but not Used

In addition to the methods described in this chapter, other methods were considered. Ethnography was considered as I believed my immersion within the organisation would provide the depth of exploration required to achieve the research objectives and answer the research question. However, the required degree of access to conduct an ethnographic exploration was not available, so this method was discounted.

Pre and post-training questionnaires were considered, but the candidates' details could not be confirmed until the training day; therefore, any pre-training work was not possible. There was a plan to use post-training questionnaires, but access to the candidates after the observations and interviews proved difficult due to the Covid pandemic that forced seven candidates to leave their positions and return to their native countries. I believed this would impact the validity of any data obtained, so this method was discounted.

Photography proved a useful tool for capturing a training room's mood. Photography supported candidate diaries was considered as a research method by providing each candidate with a camera to capture experiences while creating a diary to record the events. However, the lack of pre-training information about the candidates, the method's logistic challenges, and the lack of control over the captured data ruled this out as a method.

3.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.10.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework formed the basis of the research problem. It derived from the theoretical framework and was the foundation of this research. The conceptual framework for this research is presented in Figure 7 Integrating concepts found relevant and viable to facilitate the exploration of the influence that national culture has on the transfer of knowledge within the adult training market.

Conceptual Framework

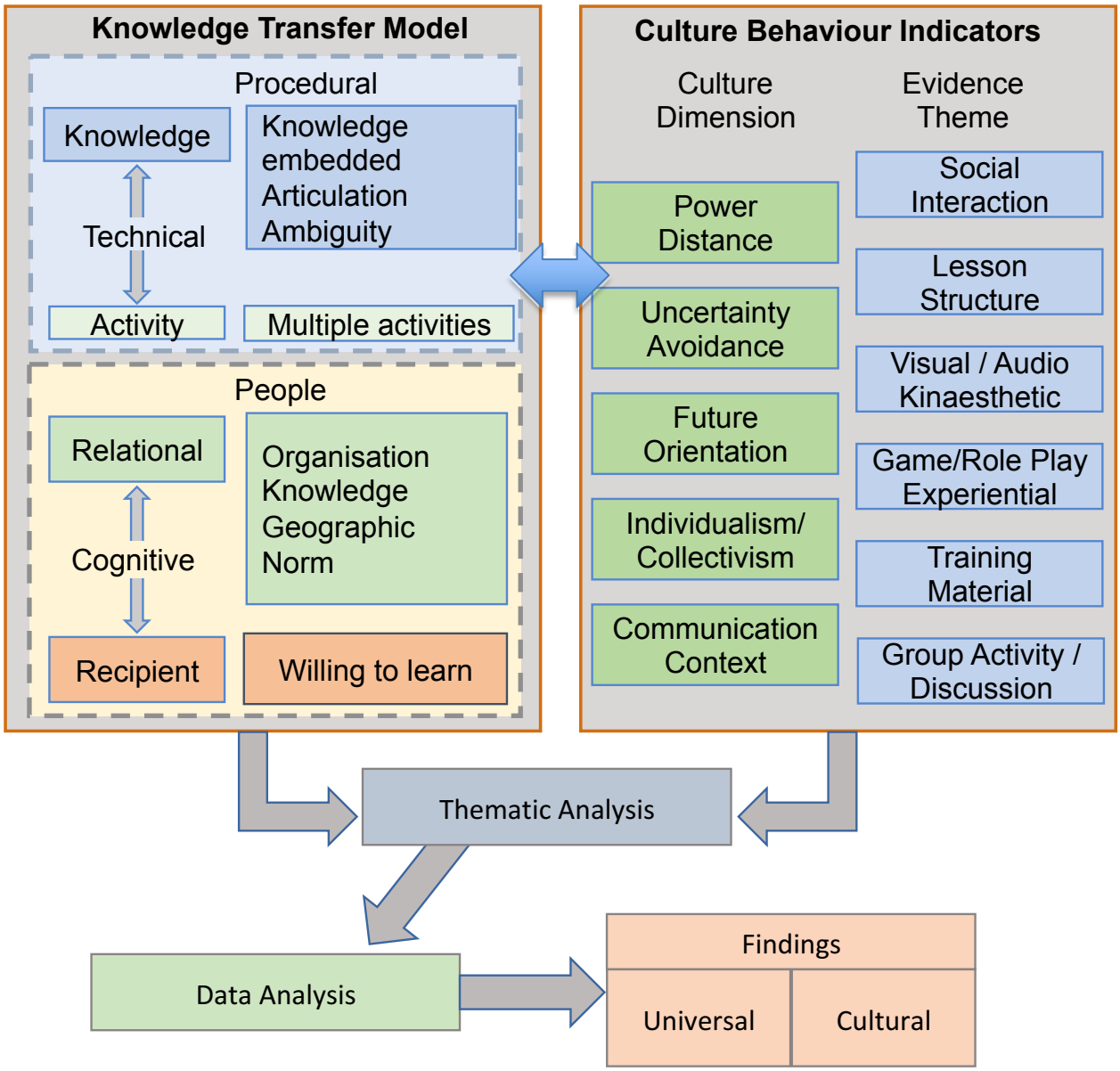


Figure 7. Conceptual Framework (Based on Cummings and Teng, 2003)

The concept is based on the theoretic framework that combines an etic and emic approach as suggested by Gerhrke and Claes (2014) to identify high-level culture differences, before performing more in-depth analysis at the individual level. The combination of an etic and emic approach will go some way to addressing the concerns of Romani *et al.* (2014) that a purely etic approach lacks the richness associated with cultural studies, while a purely emic approach can be situationally limited lacking comparative.

3.10.2 Training Observations Phase

The theoretic framework used the Cummings and Teng (2003) Knowledge Transfer Model to determine what areas should be observed to achieve the required detail. The research will consider two areas; Procedural elements of the training delivery to explore external factors that could inhibit knowledge transfer and aligned with an etic perspective and People aspects to analyse internal phenomena to identify training conditions that could be culturally significant and aligned with an emic perspective. The model highlights four contexts that will be explored. The first two are within the Procedure domain, and consist of Knowledge and Activity contexts that Cummings and Teng (ibid) posit are technical contexts. These were used to facilitate the capture of procedural/etic data. The remaining two, are Relational and Norm context, which Cummings and Teng (ibid) highlight are cognitive contexts. These were used to obtain emic data related to people. From the literature, specific areas appropriate to behavioural observation within the training context were identified and a Knowledge Transfer Observation Matrix, Appendix C was constructed to facilitate the data collection during the observation phase. These observations will be thematically analysed and compared to the data obtained during the interview phase.

3.10.3 Interview Phase

For the interview, I used a combination of my professional experience, the literature, and details from the observations to formulate the interview questions. My thirty years of professional adult training, (eight of which have been as an expat trainer) experience guided the interview questions; the Research Integration Model; Appendix D, and the interview schedules; Appendix H and Appendix J. The literature, and my professional experience, determined what culture dimensions would be used in the framework. The trainer and candidates would have subtly different interview schedules based on the same conceptual framework. From here, using my professional experience, I chose a

series of behavioural phenomena, and these provided the baseline from which the interview schedule was compiled.

The interview questions looked to address several areas of interest. To capture these interrelationships and blend the Knowledge Transfer Model and the Culture Behaviour Indicators, the Interview Design Matrix, Appendix D, was constructed highlighting various areas of interest and showing the various interrelationships using a colour code and numbering system. The information provided in this matrix was distilled to create the interview schedules, Appendices H and J. This system was further triangulated during the thematic analysis phase to ascertain whether the interrelationships were realised within the codes and themes.

On completion of the interviews, the data was thematically analysed before being compared to the analysis obtained from the observations. This enabled the observations to be verified while providing the desired triangulation to satisfy the validity concerns of the research. The data obtained were thematically analysed to determine common themes, and these were compared with the findings of the interview for similarities and corollaries.

3.11 CRAFTING THE RESEARCH

3.11.1 Researcher Background

During my twenty-five years in the RAF, I learnt the key to defeating an enemy was not counting their weapon systems, but by determining their desire and will to fight. This realisation involved learning about values and beliefs enculturated through various organisations and nations. This understanding started my hunger for knowledge regarding how people from other nations think, work, and exchange knowledge.

3.11.2 Research Change

Having moved to the UAE to work as a military advisor, I became immersed within a foreign national organisation, my desire to learn more about knowledge transfer developed further and was the catalyst for my DBA journey. The original research involved exploring how Emirati soldiers absorbed foreign military advisors advice. Initially, the military leaders embraced the research, were supportive and gave full access. However, following a leadership and regime change that no longer shared the previous regime's enthusiasm, and after considerable reflection, I decided to move my

research away from a military theme and focus on the knowledge transfer between commercial trainers and management training candidates from different cultural backgrounds.

3.11.3 Researcher Competency

I have amassed considerable experience during my years working as a military advisor, management trainer and consultant, which meant I could ensure the training selected was appropriate, with similar training delivery, method of instruction, and training environment. This satisfied the dependability and credibility aspects of the validity requirements and provided the required triangulation across the various sessions. My familiarity with the training environment ensured I could focus on the research and not be distracted by the training environment while enabling me to focus on maintaining fidelity to participant's experiences to enhance research rigour. This familiarity also mitigated the risk raised by Saunders *et al.* (2016, p.203) who argued that 'a significant risk to the validity of participant observations is the incorrect interpretation of the researcher due to unfamiliar with the settings and nuances of its characteristics'.

3.11.4 Researcher Values and Beliefs

I believe that life experiences play a pivotal part in individuals' perceptions of the world around them and I wanted to search for meaning deep within societies, to determine what factors were more pervasive than others, what factors had the greatest influence and shaped lives. I did not want to measure the effect or to seek out confirmation of any stated hypothesis.

These values, beliefs and desires formed the epistemic and ontological foundations for the research. I wanted the data to be grounded in experience, and this could only be achieved by exploring phenomena in as natural a state as possible. Consequently, the epistemic foundation was founded on an interpretivist philosophy, as this would satisfy the need to seek the contextual meaning and complexity that humans attribute to social sciences.

3.12 RESEARCH CONDUCT

3.12.1 Coordinating Research

To ensure the research satisfied the validity requirements while maintaining methodological rigour, there would be a minimum of four observations. From this, there would be a minimum of ten interviews from candidates and trainers. To satisfy the credibility requirement, each training session would last a minimum of two days to prolong the engagement.

I used the contacts made during my time in the UAE to seek assistance from eight organisations, to provide a degree of redundancy. I wrote to each organisation requesting formal approval and written consent to proceed, including a list of training evolutions that I would be permitted to observe. I received six positive responses from which I chose the four most suitable based on their ability to satisfy my requirements and kept the other two companies in reserve as a contingency. The businesses were diverse, representing insurance, engineering manufacturing, pharmaceutical, and luxury goods industries. I believed this would provide sufficient diversity for triangulation. However, none of the organisations could provide a list of delegate names or their nationalities. This lack of detail was a concern, as the observations might not offer the diversity of nationalities required. However, I believed that conducting more observations than required would mitigate this risk.

3.12.2 Research Detail

From the training details provided, I selected courses for observation. The first observation was a pilot study, of the observations and the interviews. This pilot study would take place one month before the main observations to allow procedural changes should they be required. Before this pilot study, I compiled the interview schedule and peer tested it with a fellow trainer who held an appropriate qualification to confirm the schedule was appropriate.

The organisations being observed determined the training locations, and this dictated the observation locations. I would play an active role in the training but had to be sufficiently separated so that I could take field notes as appropriate. My physical position was important, as I needed to see the faces of the various participants to evaluate non-verbal communication, emotions, engagement and understanding. I visited most of the training

rooms before the training events to assess the locations. However, for those organisations conducting in-house training, I would only see the training room on the morning of the training event. This posed a risk, but I was content as my extensive training experience would mitigate this.

I explained my positionality and explained my study aims and objectives before each training event. I included the trainer as my positionality could influence the trainer's delivery, and it was essential to capture and incorporate all contextual aspects of the research. Approval from those involved in the training, including the trainer, was achieved before the start of training.

The data for the observations were collected using the mind-map methodology. I have used mind-maps for many years believing that mind-maps enable data to be captured and thematically linked as observed. The mind-maps were compiled during the event, and the field notes were written on completion of the training. Photographs provided additional environmental details.

On completion of the observation, I selected several participants and the trainer to participate in the interview element of the study. To maintain interviewee's memory of the event, the interviews were conducted as soon after training as possible. The interviews were primarily one-to-one, although two interviews were conducted with two interviewees. The individuals chose the interview locations to provide a degree of familiarisation and comfort for them to ease the flow of discussion. The interviews followed the interview schedule; although this is purely a guide to allow the information to emerge in line with the methodological rigour. The interviews were recorded using two devices, a Dictaphone and an iPhone. Once recorded, the files were transferred onto the research hard drive and transcribed using proprietary transcription software.

3.13 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

3.13.1 Interviews

Candidates representing differing culture clusters were chosen from each of the observed training events. Being a voluntary process, only those candidates that volunteered to participate would be considered. Gender could be a factor contributing to the findings of this research; however, gender is outside of this research scope, so men and women are

considered suitable for selection. The interview aimed to obtain information from the candidate. Therefore, there was a requirement for rapport and trust to be established between the candidate and myself. Similarly, the research requires individuals that were comfortable to speak openly. Consequently, I decided during the training observations the individuals I would like to interview based on the quantifiable factors plus their degree of interaction during the observations.

3.13.2 Focus Group

The focus group selection aim was to isolate a cluster so the group would be made up of one culture cluster. Being a voluntary obligation, only volunteers were deemed eligible. Similarly, any candidates that appeared to be coerced by colleagues were eliminated on ethical grounds. The group aim was to develop greater meaning by generating in-depth discussion; therefore, age was not a limiting factor. A total of four observations were conducted. The breakdown of the interviews chosen is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Candidate details.

		Company				Trainers
		A	B	C	D	
Culture Cluster	Anglo	1				2
	Germanic Europe		1			
	Arab		1		1	
	Confucian Asia	1				
	South Asia	2[1]		7[2]	1	1

[1] Included one interview of two candidates
[2] Included focus group of five candidates

Trainers

All of the trainers were interviewed.

Candidates

Company A - Eight Candidates, seven volunteered.
Two of the Candidates wanted to be interviewed together.
Four selected. (Two interviewed together)

Company B - Twelve Candidates, Nine volunteered.
Two not available to interview
Two senior managers
One withdrew
Two selected

Company C - Ten Candidates, eight volunteered
One withdrew
Two selected
Five selected for focus group

Company D - Eight Candidates, six volunteered
Two withdrew
Two selected

3.14 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

Once obtained, the data was integrated into NVivo for analysis. To satisfy the confirmability criteria of the validity requirements, and be true to my methodological choice the themes were allowed to emerge from the various data sources. A simplified

illustration showing the coding process based on the work of Saldana (2014) is shown below, Figure 8.

Streamlined Code to Theory Model

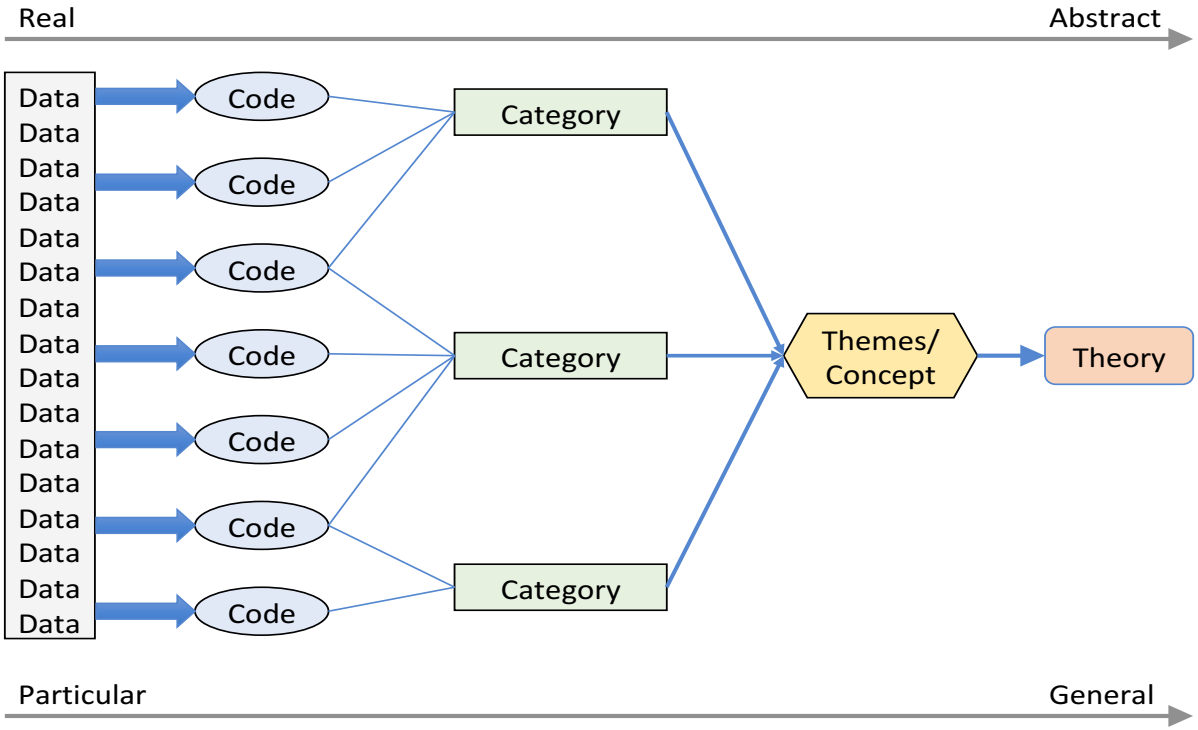


Figure 8. Streamlined Code to Theory Model. Source: Sandana, 2016, p.14

.

Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019) suggest the first phase involves developing initial codes by continually revisiting the data, to interact and reflect with it allowing the researcher to focus and elucidate characteristics to move from unstructured data to more meaningful development of ideas. During the process, I identified significant sections of text and attached codes to index areas based on themes or ideas, see Appendix E. The codes were further developed into categories to enable the data to be shaped to gain representations of meaning, as suggested by Richards and Morse (2013). Once the categories had been identified, they were collated into themes.

Adu (2019) suggests a theme is an abstract entity bringing identity and meaning to phenomena, capturing and unifying the nature and basis of the experience suggest. They can be generated inductively from the raw data or deductively through prior research. This research is inductive, and the themes will be data-driven, Braun and Clarke, (2006). Once the themes were identified, they were analysed to identify any coherent patterns and the validity of the themes checked to confirm that they accurately reflected the

meaning as suggested by Nowel *et al.* (2017). Patterns are not just stable regularities warns Hatch (2002) but are varying forms that can be categorised by similarity, predictable difference, frequency, sequence or causation. Some themes would collapse when the data is deemed insufficient to support them, and some themes would be broken down into separate themes. I refined the selected themes to ensure they were specific enough to be discrete but broad enough to capture the ideas in the data sets, as prescribed by Nowel *et al.* (2017).

From here, I determined what aspects of the themes capture the interest areas and begin the process of writing a detailed analysis of the story associated with the theme, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Finally, collation took place, and the final story prepared. This stage is a crucial aspect of the data collation and Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019) suggest this could go on for several evolutions. The ability to show the interrelatedness of the themes, categories and data are fundamental to the success full development of theory advises Corbin and Strauss, (2015).

From here, the analysis of the influence of national culture will take place.

3.15 NATIONAL CULTURE ANALYSIS

Having reduced the various codes to themes from the interviews and observations, the next task was to determine whether National Culture influenced the data within the themes. To achieve this, the data was analysed to determine if actions, behaviours, discourses, and observations were homogenised around a specific culture cluster. For example, was there a behaviour manifest by one specific group of individuals different from another group, and if so, did this grouping align with a culture cluster? If there was evidence of such clustering, then behavioural manifestation could be an indicator of cultural influence. Consequently, in this situation, the finding would be assessed as a cultural influence. However, if the behavioural indicators are the same for all individuals, irrespective of cultural background, this would be assessed as a universal characteristic in line with what Schein (2017) terms Human Nature in his human behaviour model.

Many contributing factors could create behavioural manifestations such as socio-political, environmental and organisational contexts and personal differences. Therefore, to

isolate the cultural factors associated with behaviour, culture dimensions were employed to provide and a cultural dimensions comparison diagram was created, Please refer to Figure 9, to aid the process. The diagram below illustrates the cultural comparisons across the various dimensions. This diagram shows the relationship between the various culture clusters. I designed the diagram by interpreting data from Hofstede (2001), GLOBE (2020) and Meyer (2015), and taking an average position from all three sources. This diagram indicates relative relationships only, not to provide a quantitative measure between dimensions.

The key to this investigation's success in identifying culturally influenced findings from other influences would be the richness of the data and the validity and quality of the research.

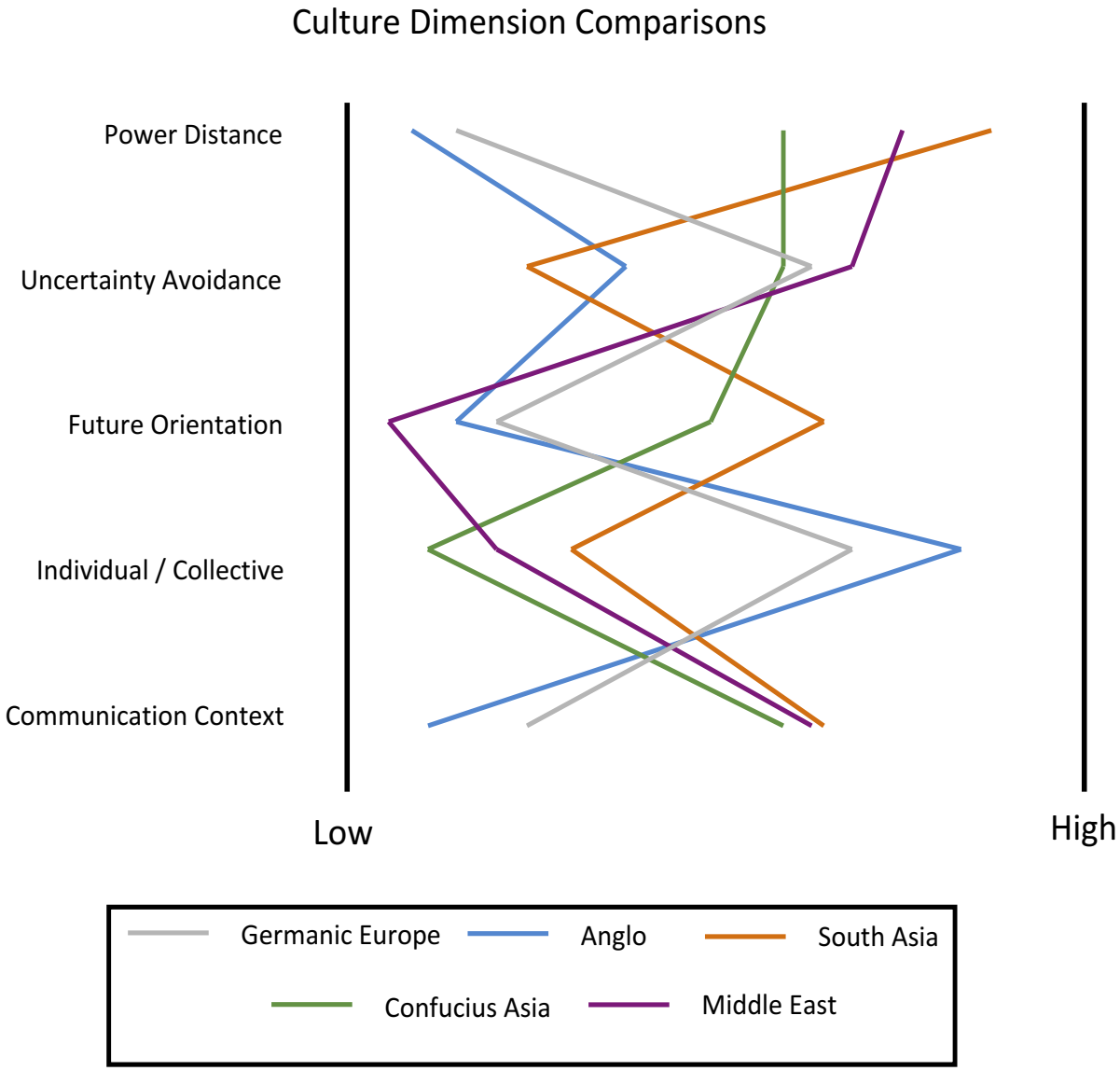


Figure 9. Culture Dimensions Comparisons. Sources: Hofstede, 2001; GLOBE, 2020; Meyer 2015)

3.16 POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND CONTINGENCIES

One of the biggest challenges facing any research is a loss of data due to a data source deciding that they no longer wish to participate. To reduce the impact of this happening on this research, more organisations than required were aligned to support this research. Fortunately, no one withdrew from the research.

The research was dependent upon the quality of the training and the trainer. If the trainer did not provide the appropriate degree of knowledge transfer opportunities, the research would be compromised. This risk was outside of my control but mitigated by arranging more observation opportunities than necessary. Should an interviewee subsequently change their mind within the fifteen-day limit of the consent form, they would be removed from the data. Sufficient interviews were arranged to ensure this would not be a problem.

Another concern regarded my ability to understand the phenomena and put aside personal biases to seek the true meaning associated with a phenomenon. While this was a significant threat to research success, I was aware of my biases and used reflexivity to ensure my beliefs did not corrupt the data.

Poor quality interviews would undermine this research. The interviews were piloted and peer-reviewed by a suitably qualified colleague to determine validity, but my ability to successfully conduct an interview was critical. I have completed several interview technique courses and was an interrogation-training instructor in the military, so I was comfortable with my interviewing skills. The interviews could be affected if the interview location was not suitable, but my experience and the ability to move the location slightly mitigated this research risk.

Recording the interviews to a quality that could be transcribed was essential. Therefore, I recorded using two devices for redundancy. Two transcription services were tried and tested using sound bites recorded on the various devices at different locations, and the best one selected. The transcription service provided written interview transcripts, although I had to go through every recording and transcript to confirm accuracy. This analysis formed part of the data immersion and thematic analysis process.

The focus group made significant demands of my interview techniques. I have not conducted a focus group before, so I practised this as part of the pilot study before the live focus group to ensure the interview schedule and recording devices worked. The challenge was to generate an environment where the interviewees felt sufficiently relaxed and trusting of me to speak openly and honestly without exhibiting groupthink. I had spent time training with them and built a good rapport. This period should have made any groupthink stand out. One concern I had centred on a candidate deciding they did not wish to continue after the interview. While their data could be physically removed from the dataset, a more difficult task would be to determine the impact that their contribution made to themes and discourse threads. The impact of this could only be judged should the event arise, and no mitigation could be made before the event.

3.17 RESEARCH ETHICS

3.17.1 Initial Interpretation

The initial research for this study focussed on the military sector and within an organisation that I worked. Consequently, I perceived a few ethical issues as I had full approval and access. However, this security was quickly expunged when the organisation hierarchy changed to be replaced by one that viewed expatriate workers in a very different light. It became apparent that my position was vulnerable, highlighting the risks associated with social research surrounding a large organisation. Consequently, the research theme was changed, and the research altered. This proved to be a great learning experience for me and altered my perspective on the researcher's role and the significance of ethics.

It was clear after the military event that the researcher has to place a greater emphasis on viewing his research through the eyes of the individuals and the organisation's participating in the research, and this will be discussed now.

3.17.2 Research Affects

3.17.2.1 Individuals

To the individual's, I was always an outsider, despite the various proactive ways I tried to break down this barrier. Their perceptions would be of paramount importance as they,

and their safety, are the primary research concern, Ravitch and Carl (2016). They would have to trust me, in my guise as observer, participant and interviewer, and it would be crucial that I achieved an appropriate level of trust. Without this level of trust, the participants would always be looking for the 'angle,' they could question my intentions and perceive me as a spy for the company. This lack of trust would prove a significant barrier to information gathering and could limit my research, especially if a candidate wanted to make an expression that could be controversial or disparaging towards the organisation.

3.17.2.2 Organisation

The trust with the organisation was equally important, and could only be achieved through open and honest dialogue between the organisation and myself. I approached the various organisations using a friendly gatekeeper, and this went some way towards building trust. I explained to the organisations involved that I would be happy to feedback my research as a way of thanking them for enabling the research, but I would be vigilant regarding any offers that could be aimed at influencing my research, such as incentives or inducements.

3.17.2.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was a significant part of this research. To achieve this degree of privacy, the organisation names were redacted and replaced by descriptors that describe the organisation's role and sector in such a way that the company could not be identified.

Individuals participating in the observations and interviews were not named but allocated a random identification number. The link between the individual and the identification number was only held on my computer and password protected. Any names spoken during interviews or quoted during observations were removed.

3.17.3 Approvals/Authorisations

Those involved in the observations were informed of my role and my reason for attending. The candidates were also informed that I would cease any research activity should they not be happy. Authorisation to proceed with the observations was implicit with the organisation approval. For the interview phase, each interviewee was asked to complete

a consent form, Appendix K. Formal written approval by the individuals was received before any interviews taking place.

3.17.4 Data Management

Non-confidential data was stored on two password-protected hard drives and a digital cloud account. Non-digital data was held in a secure file in my office. All formal documents, including approvals, were scanned and saved within the various digital domains.

Confidential data is held similarly but with more rigorous security measures, including enhanced password protection, in place for data protection. Only myself and one companion have access to the data until it is published. The companion has no role within the research process and is a custodian should there be a problem. Confidential hard data will be secured in my safe. The raw data is not accessible for any third parties, including the organisations supporting the research. The findings are available at their request.

3.18 CONCLUSION

This chapter explains the processes and procedures used during the design and conduct of this research. It highlights the various stages of the research process from the initial concept and the supporting epistemological and ontological foundations through to the day-to-day running of the research. One crucial element of the research is the achievement of validity. Without this validity, the research lacks the quality and rigour to be valued. Several strategies were utilised to enable this validity to be achieved, including the provision of credibility, dependability, confirmability, reflexivity and rigour.

The research sought to explore the influence that national culture has on knowledge transfer. To achieve this, I wanted to observe individuals from the same national culture cluster but who worked for different companies doing different courses. By doing this, I could isolate the culture clusters while observing in naturalistic environments. I believe this would provide the breadth this research demands but would also enable triangulation across several culture clusters in subtly different situations but seeking the same outcome, namely the acquisition of knowledge.

Extensive observations looked in detail at everything from the discourse, through the manner of dress, group interaction, commitments and interest levels to determine meaning where possible. The observations were triangulated through interviews and focus groups to provide the required research rigour. The next chapter will explain in greater detail how the data was analysed.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS PROJECT ACTIVITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the data analysis process from the training observations and the interviews to explore how national culture influences the transmission of knowledge from a trainer to a group of individuals within the management-training context. The chapter starts by describing the company and candidate details with the observance of ethical requirements, before moving on to explain the sample selection process for the companies and candidates chosen. The next section moves on to explain the pilot study and the lessons learnt during these studies. The pilot study was invaluable because it exposed potential problems that had not been identified before the pilot. The pilot studies were peer-reviewed, and the observations from the peer review were incorporated into the research.

The data capture process is explained in the next section. A critical contributor to the success of this research was the integration of theory and practice, namely operationalising the theory into the observable phenomenon that could be explored in detail using interviews. This operationalisation was achieved by developing the conceptual framework to build models to build behavioural observations criterion. The section starts by explaining the participant observation phase illustrating how the model was designed and developed to provide the required observational data, how this data was captured, recorded and prepared for coding.

An explanation of the origins of the interviews questions and the compilation of the interview schedules make up the next section. As with the observation requirements, the challenge for this research was the integration of theory and practice. Once again, the conceptual framework provided the backbone from which further models were developed to ensure the interview questions addressed the knowledge transfer and cultural influence requirements. Having obtained the data and prepared it for analysis, the next phase of the chapter focuses on how the data was coded. Saldana (2014) suggests there are no algorithms or formulas for calculating the mean average of words or observations, but coding synthesises the collective, not to arrive at a reduced answer, but to obtain a greater understanding of the meaning. Extensive reference to literature was used to corroborate the coding decisions. The section will illustrate the development of the codes

to themes and from here to theory development, Corbin and Strauss (2015). The theory development will be explained in the following chapter.

A schematic showing the data capture process is shown below in Figure 10. The various tools that I designed, developed and used to explicate the various elements are shown on the diagram and explained in this section. The schematic highlights how the various tools interact.

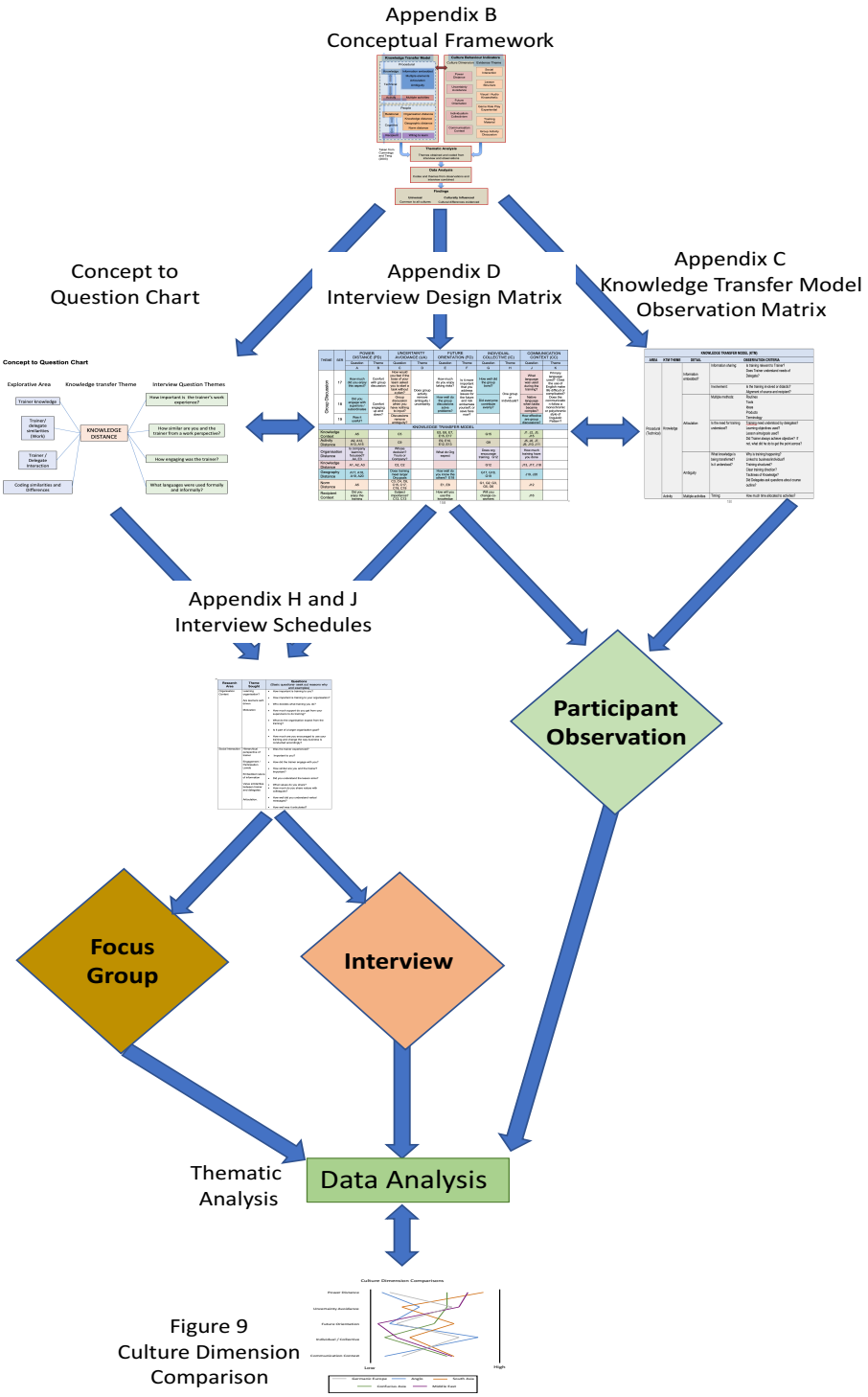


Figure 10. Data Analysis Design Schematic. Source: The Author.

4.2 COMPANY AND CANDIDATE DETAILS

Initially, eight companies were identified and approached. The aim was to obtain as much diversity as possible in order to get a broad scope to the data. Access would be an essential requirement, so I had to have some alliance with the organisations.

4.2.1 Company Details.

From the initial approach, six companies showed an interest in aiding the research, and I met with key managers and obtained written formal consent. One organisation was a military unit that required me to obtain formal consent to gain access to the base where the training would take place. This clearance was never achieved, so I decided not to use this company. Another company offered to facilitate but did not provide any details of training opportunities so where not used. This lead to four companies being used, their details are at Appendix F. (The two companies not chosen were held in reserve).

All of the companies that facilitated the research gave unlimited access for me to observe training and to visit company sites to perform interviews as required. This access significantly eased the research process and enabled the interviews to be conducted within a comfortable environment for the interviewees, which significantly eased the interview communication process.

4.2.2 Candidate Details.

An essential criterion for the interviewee selection was cultural diversity. While this did not appear to pose a problem before the selection process starting (over 200 different nationalities living in the UAE in 2019), it soon became clear the large proportion, 61.07%, came from the same culture cluster, with Indian workers making up 27.49% of the UAE population, Global media insight (2020). This would make the challenge of diversity seeking more difficult as the research relied on volunteers. However, in line with the methodological requirements for rich, deep data rather than narrow, broad data, it soon became apparent that the diversity could be achieved. The interviewees were chosen during the training observations. Before any training, I introduced himself and stated that

I wished to conduct interviews on completion of the training. The response was encouraging, with a large proportion volunteering to assist.

The courses were all aimed at middle management managers, so all of the candidates satisfied the job scope requirement in that they all had similar job position roles. During the training observation, I selected interview candidates based on their involvement in the training, their openness and their enthusiasm towards the research in order to assure fulsome data.

The trainers had agreed to be interviewed before the training confirmation. Those selected for the focus group all came from the same culture cluster to ensure a degree of cultural homogeneity. The interviewee details, personal identifying details removed for ethical reasons, is Appendix G.

4.3 PILOT STUDIES

4.3.1 Observation Pilot Study.

One of the main challenges facing participant observations is ensuring that what the researcher's observations reflect reality what Ravitch and Carl (2016) refer to as credibility, that is the researcher's ability to take account for all of the complexities presented in a study and to deal with the patterns not easily explained. The observation phase relied on identifying behavioural episodes that would reflect a conceptual proposition. This meant that I had to have the skills to recognise the behaviour and the contextual awareness to align it to a phenomenon such as understanding. As an experienced management trainer, I was confident that I possessed the situational awareness required to gain the necessary contextual appreciation. However, to ensure the success of the observation, I would use the Knowledge Transfer Observation Matrix, Appendix C, as a guideline. The pilot study enabled the credibility to be tested and adjustments made as required. The observation pilot study highlighted several areas that needed to be addressed, in particular, the field-note taking. One of the key factors towards the success of this research is the building of trust to ensure those observed provided truthful data, not data that they thought I required. Observing events and then taking notes made the candidates inquisitive as to what was being written and this damaged the trust. However, once the need for note-taking was explained, and the notes

left open for the candidates to read should they want to, the trust was quickly re-established.

4.3.2 Interview Pilot.

Two pilot interviews were conducted, the first with an academic peer to gauge the accuracy and efficacy of the interview questions. The questions were all assessed as effective and were aligned with the Knowledge Transfer Model and the research aims.

However, the interview schedule was far too prescriptive, and during the interview, it became clear that I was at risk of doing more talking than the interviewees. There was also considerable repetition as many of the questions were chronologically aligned with the requirements of the model. Consequently, the Concept to Question charts, Fig's 8-16, were compiled and the interview schedule was re-written to capture those questions relevant to several research aims.

A further observation was the lack of follow up questions to delve deeper into some areas if the interviewee 'dried up' on a subject. Consequently, the interview schedule was re-written with an initial theme for questioning with several supplementary questions should they be needed. From a practical perspective, the interview schedule text was too small to read quickly, causing me to break eye contact with the interviewee thus breaking the engagement. The iPhone performed very well as a recording device, but a message received during the interview stopped its recording, and data was not captured. For these reasons, a second pilot was conducted with a training peer, and this proved highly successful, although I noted that both peers 'helped' when I had difficulties as they were peers and knew what information I was looking for.

4.4 DATA CAPTURE

4.4.1 Participant Observation Data Capture.

4.4.1.1 Course Observation Suitability. One of the biggest challenges with this research was selecting courses that would provide the correct balance between didactic learning and candidate participation. Too much of one or the other would stifle the breadth of observations the research demanded, would reduce the richness of the data obtained, would fail to reach the desired saturation, and would not provide sufficient evidence to answer the research question. The courses selected included presentation

skills training and key customer account training. Both of these courses had elements of theory teaching as well as significant participative interaction. The course selection proved highly effective.

4.4.1.2 Operationalization of concept. One of the most substantial challenges with participant observation is ensuring that observations reflect the true meaning. The Cummings and Teng (2003) Knowledge Transfer Model and Knowledge Transfer Observation Matrix, Appendix C, would be critical factors contributing to the achievement of this aim. The Model and the Matrix both proved highly effective but, in line with the methodological rigour of this research, the data was allowed to evolve inductively. Therefore, I was mindful of using the tools as guidelines only, while allowing the data to develop as required as was evidenced by the data captured during social breaks and lunch breaks, neither of which featured in the models but provided essential data, such as the use of native versus the English language.

4.4.4.3 Observational Data Capture. The data was captured initially using mind-map techniques before turning into formal notes uploaded into NVivo 11 for analysis. The pilot study illustrated the complexity of participating, observing and simultaneously recording data, but the mind maps proved highly effective due to the speed with which they could be completed, and the themes interlinked. Trust was maintained by explaining the process at the start of the training event and ensuring that note taking was open to all. I showed the candidates my notes early in the process, and the candidates didn't feel the need to look at during the training.

4.4.4.4 Researcher's Role in Observations. I aimed to become involved to such a degree that I built trust and understanding while maintaining sufficient distance to observe objectively. This distance proved a challenging task initially, as highlighted in the observation pilot study where I was so involved in exercises it was impossible to take notes without breaking the trust, and it was challenging to observe the more nuanced observations such as candidate reactions away from the main action.

These lateral observations became key indicators as candidates tended to react more naturally when they felt they were not being observed. I learned this by accident during an exercise that one delegate felt lacked value. The trainer announced the details, and the delegates all rose to take on the task, but one delegate exhibited extreme negative

non-verbal communication (grimaced briefly, let her shoulders fall, looked away, started using her phone to text, and asked another candidate to do her role in the assigned task.) This observation was fleeting but spoke volumes of her beliefs and could have easily been missed. From this moment on, I used my experience to know when a task was coming and to step back and observe candidates on the periphery rather than at the centre.

4.4.5 Researcher's Positionality.

Creswell and Miller (2013) suggest, our interpretations reflect the constructs, models and theories that structured the research, and the researcher's lens will influence all methodological, ontological, epistemological, and interpretive decisions. However, the researcher's positionality is a key quality of qualitative enquiry as all interpretations, and coding decisions are individual judgements, and the richness of the enquiry is achieved through the inclusion of subjectivities, personalities and predispositions add Sipe and Ghiso, (2002). Consequently, my positionality would be fundamental to the interpretation of the data and subsequent analysis.

4.4.6 Interview Data Capture.

4.4.6.1 Timing. The focus group was the only interview conducted on the same day as the training as several of the candidates had to return to other countries in the region. While this ensured the training was fresh in the candidate's minds, they were fatigued, and this was apparent in the way they answered the questions. There was little interest, and I had to use all of my skills to maintain a flow of information. In certain areas, such as when talking about the use of the English language, the discussion flowed and was enthusiastic. However, a lot of the time, I had to prompt candidates to answer.

Consequently, the interviews were all conducted after the training event.

4.4.6.2 Locations. The interviews were conducted at the candidate's place of work except one interview that was conducted at a local café. I had concerns this would introduce interruptions and distractions. To prevent this, the interview rooms were set up so that no internal phones were available, and the candidates had their backs to any

windows. However, my initial concerns proved unfounded. All of the interview locations proved useful, as the candidates were comfortable and spoke openly.

4.4.6.3 Interaction and Trust. I participated as fully as possible in the training; especially the activities within the training and this helped to build a great deal of interaction and trust. I was also invited to contribute to any feedback by the trainers, so this also strengthened my credibility. Consequently, the interviews were relaxed and open which meant that the data obtained was rich but was also accurate, reflecting the beliefs of the candidates. This was particularly evident with a male Arab candidate who spoke very frankly about his aversion to risk and making decisions without all the information, and a female candidate who told of previous management failings that had deeply affected her confidence. This level of openness would not have been achieved without a high degree of trust.

4.4.6.4 Interview Questions. The success of the research would rely heavily on me obtaining the appropriate information to answer the research questions, and fundamental to this was the interview questions, in particular, how they would link with the Knowledge Transfer Model and the subsequent observation data. To facilitate this, the questions were built around the framework with the knowledge transfer themes as the central proposition.

The use of semi-structured interview enabled the interviews to go in the direction that the candidate wanted within reason. Occasionally, especially during the two-candidate interviews, the theme wandered off-topic, and I had to regain control, but this was rare, and the interview schedule proved to be invaluable, especially after the post-pilot study interventions. By putting the interview questions into categories of exploration, I had the freedom to wander around the categories rather than sticking fixedly to the interview schedule. This freedom ensured I could maintain eye contact, was not drawn to the schedule, and enabled the interview to become more discussion than an interview, this facilitating the flow and richness of information.

4.4.6.5. Interpreting Data. The interviews were recorded digitally on a mobile phone and dictaphone. The interviews were subsequently digitally transcribed and uploaded into NVivo 11 for analysis. This process was straightforward although some time was taken correcting the transcriptions.

4.5 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION DATA ANALYSIS

4.5.1 Operationalising the Participant Observations. The biggest challenge to the success of the observations was ensuring the Knowledge Transfer Model was operationalised so that the data collected was appropriate to the area being explored. The knowledge Transfer Observation Matrix, Appendix C, was designed to facilitate this, for example, Cummings and Teng (2003) postulate that when looking at knowledge transfer from a technical perspective, one of the areas of interest is the embedded nature of knowledge. Consequently, the observations needed to highlight how the embeddedness of knowledge could be mitigated and reduced. Cummings and Teng (ibid) suggest that this can be achieved if the knowledge transmitter and receiver are aligned around the knowledge. To operationalise this concept, I looked to see if the training was relevant to what the candidate required and did the trainer understand the candidate's training needs manifest through an aligned understanding of the training. Also, Cummings and Teng (ibid) argue that the articulability of knowledge can be a barrier to knowledge transfer that can be overcome through the use of everyday routines, rituals, ideas and terminology.

To operationalise this phenomenon, I would be looking for examples of common technical jargon, the citation of specific work-related tools or products. In both examples, I was able to observe manifestations that highlighted the phenomenon both positively and negatively. For example, with company A's Presentation Skills training, the training was configured for scenarios that the delegates would use daily such as the bi-weekly management brief that candidate D11 had to provide to her senior managers. It used techniques that were common in the organisation, such as the use of the company daily update presentation briefs and used company products. The training also used actual customer issues to highlight examples such as a particular insurance policy that was introduced for specific professional individuals and used company jargon such as referring to customers as clients. Enthusiasm, energy and enjoyment were evident throughout, manifest through interesting questions, exuberant involvement, and positive non-verbal communication such as leaning forward heads raised, bodies open and displays of active listening. This enthusiasm aligned the trainer and the candidates and ensured that when deeply embedded knowledge, such as complex theoretical concepts,

had to be explained, the process was made more accessible because of this shared alignment.

Conversely, during the Key Account Management course, there were several examples where this alignment was not present, and the ability to explain complex concepts proved difficult. This observation was evident during the stakeholder engagement phase of the training, training the candidates had already conducted previously as part of their Project Management training. Instead of acknowledging this fact and moving to the area of the phase that the candidates had not covered before, the trainer continued to repeat the basic concepts. The candidates started to demonstrate a lack of interest, one started using his mobile phone to text, and another started working on his computer, several others talked to each other, and one left the room to get refreshments.

Those that remain engaged demonstrated lethargy when asked to participate in an activity, discussions were stilted and unenthusiastic, and there were no questions. Similarly, the trainer did not use common terminology, although he did use ideas that were common to the candidates and asked the candidates to use real-life customers as their examples. Notwithstanding this, when the trainer was attempting to explain the complex subject of assessing the power of a key account holder, the evident lack of alignment between the trainer and the candidates meant that the candidates were not paying attention and the knowledge was not transferred.

4.5.2 Training Environment Influence. The training locations were all high quality with good lighting, sound qualities and size that enabled the candidates to focus on the training. All of the training rooms enabled me to work closely with the delegates when required, but also enabled me to remain at a distance for group observations. Companies A and B trained in their own training facilities which meant that during breaks, several of the candidates returned to their work areas, whereas companies C and D trained in hotels. This meant there was a great deal more social interaction during breaks, and this provided a significant amount of data. An example was during a phase where the candidates were required to focus on voice control that many struggled to understand. During the break, it was evident that those that did understand the concept explained in the native language, not English, and the explanation was considerably more animated and enthusiastic. These breaks, and the social interaction thereof, soon became vast repositories of data, as individuals morphed away from their assigned training groups

back to their native groups, so the Indian workers sat together during lunch, as did the Philippine workers and tended to speak in the native language. Of interest, when I joined them, they all reverted to the English language.

4.5.3 Physical Observations. In order to operationalise the Knowledge Transfer Model, it was essential to observe physical interactions to explore their influential effects. For example, Cummings and Teng (2003) argue that the cognitive element of knowledge transfer has a people aspect, and part of that is connected to the various knowledge distances. In line with these requirements of their Knowledge Transfer Observation Model, physical observations of the trainer and the candidates were key aspects of the research. An example of this operationalisation was an observation of the trainer's use of his non-verbal communication and voice and the influence that had on the candidates. I observed how the trainer used gestures to add emphasis and how he used proximity to build trust. Also, how he used his voice to make it more exciting and to emphasise key elements. The reactions of the candidates would also be observed. This observation provided essential data; for example, during the presentation skills training for company D, the trainer wanted to stress the importance of a strong introduction to a presentation. He became incredibly animated, lowered his voice in volume and pitch and moved closer to the candidates as if to let them into a secret. This proved highly engaging for all, and the candidate's reactions were interesting and highlighted the effectiveness of this technique for addressing geographic and organisation distance elements of the relational component.

4.5.4 Data Recording and Initial Coding. The data was captured using a mind map, and the information was subsequently written into formal notes. From here, the information was uploaded into NVivo for analysis. The pilot study highlighted the difficulty of capturing data while maintaining activities and trust. This proved to be the case, and it was clear that the element that was being missed was the appreciation of the training atmospherics, in particular the mood of the room. As a consequence, this was also captured. Similarly, when uploading the data and analysing it several days after the training event, it became clear that the context was a significant element with regard to explaining the data. To address this, the training context was also captured and factored into the analysis. This context capture provided a far richer understanding of key situations.

Achieving and maintaining trust did not prove to be the problem the pilot study indicated it might be as before each training evolution I gave a brief to the candidates and explained what I was doing and why. After the first activity, I also showed the candidates what information I was collating and why. This openness satisfied the candidates and enabled the trust to be maintained. This enhanced trust increased my confidence that the data being obtained was an accurate representation of the trainer's and the candidate's true beliefs and values.

4.6 PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA CAPTURE

4.6.1 Operationalising the Interview Concepts. The key to capturing relevant data for this research was the operationalisation of the Knowledge Transfer Model concept to interview questions. This process was achieved using the Interview Design Matrix, Appendix D to create the various Interview Concept to Question charts, Figs 8 to 16, that subsequently made up the Trainer and Candidate Interview Schedules, Appendices H and J.

The Interview Design Matrix was a three-way matrix constructed to integrate the culture dimensions explored with areas of the management training process that would be observable, and the themes derived from the Knowledge Transfer Model at a higher level. This helped to define the interview questions, ensured that the cultural elements being analysed were unified within them, but also allowed questions to gather data from different areas, for example, questions regarding the structure applied to the Power Distance and Communication Context dimensions.

However, not all aspects of the Knowledge Transfer Model were captured in the Interview Design Matrix as not all phenomenon are training process derived, for example, the similarities between the trainer and the candidates is a key aspect of the knowledge transfer mechanism. To address this, a more detailed operationalisation was required, and this was in the form of the Concept to Questions charts, Figs 8-16. These charts looked deeper into the Knowledge Transfer Model at the areas being explored and questions were created to examine these areas.

From these two matrices, two lists of interview questions were created. These were cross-referenced, and the Trainer/Candidate Interview Schedule was created.

Concept to Question Chart

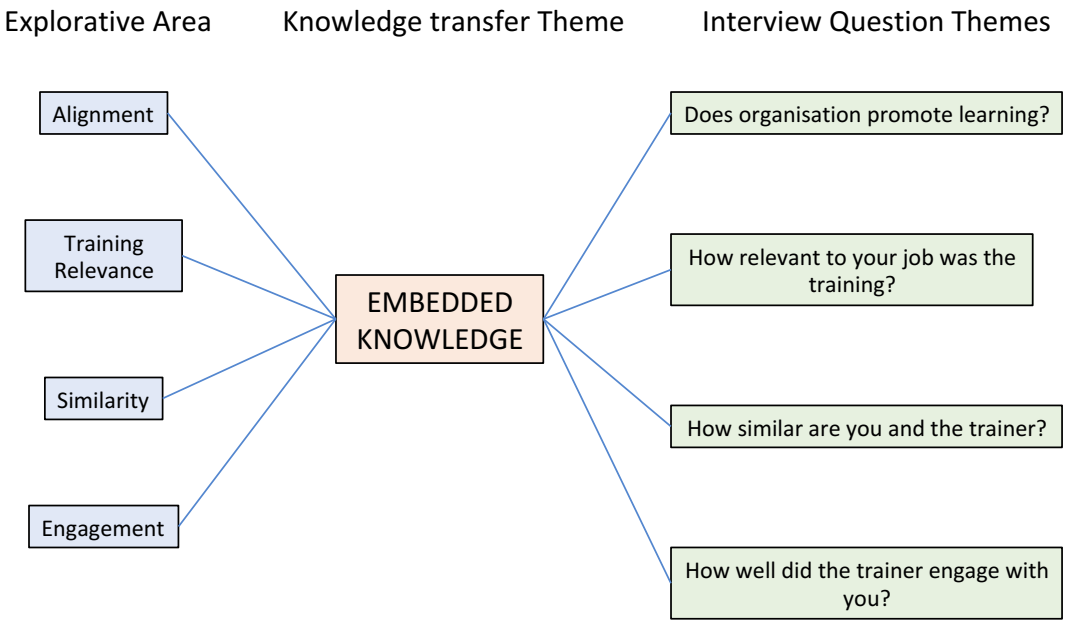


Figure 11. Concept to Question Chart(Embedded knowledge). Source: The Author.

Concept to Question Chart

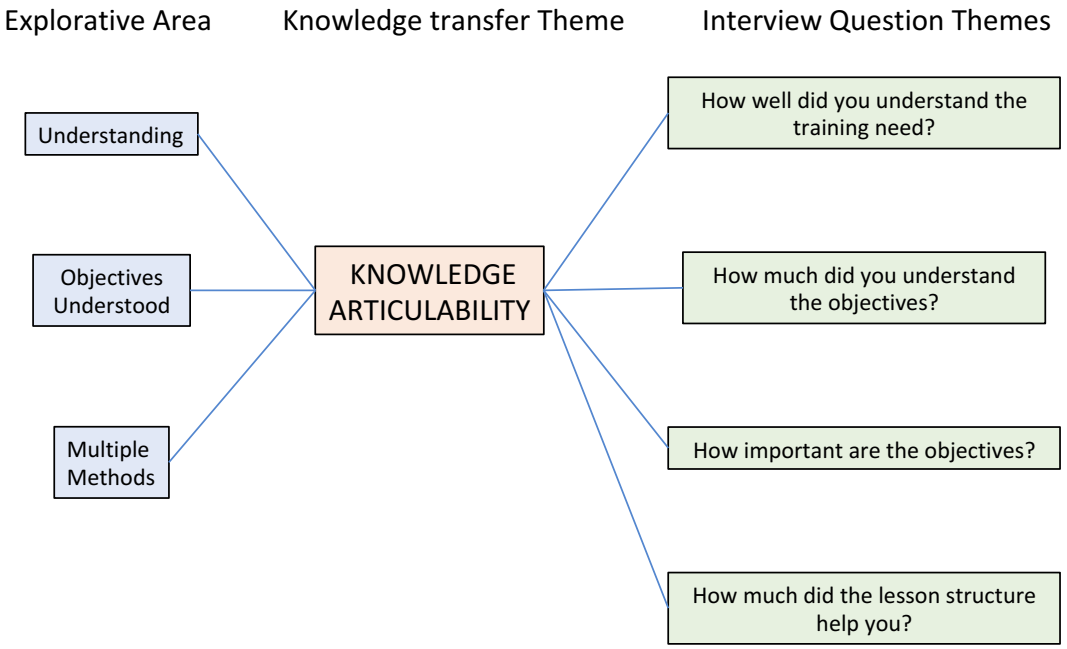


Figure 12. Concept to Question Chart (Knowledge Articulability). Source: The Author.

Concept to Question Chart

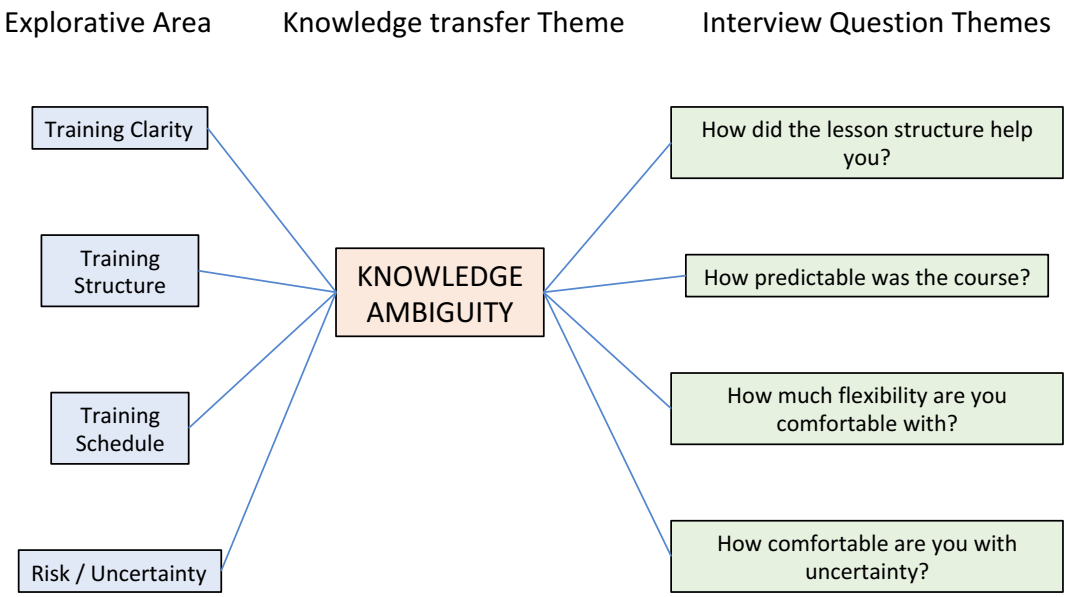


Figure 13. Concept to Question Chart (knowledge ambiguity). Source: The Author.

Concept to Question Chart

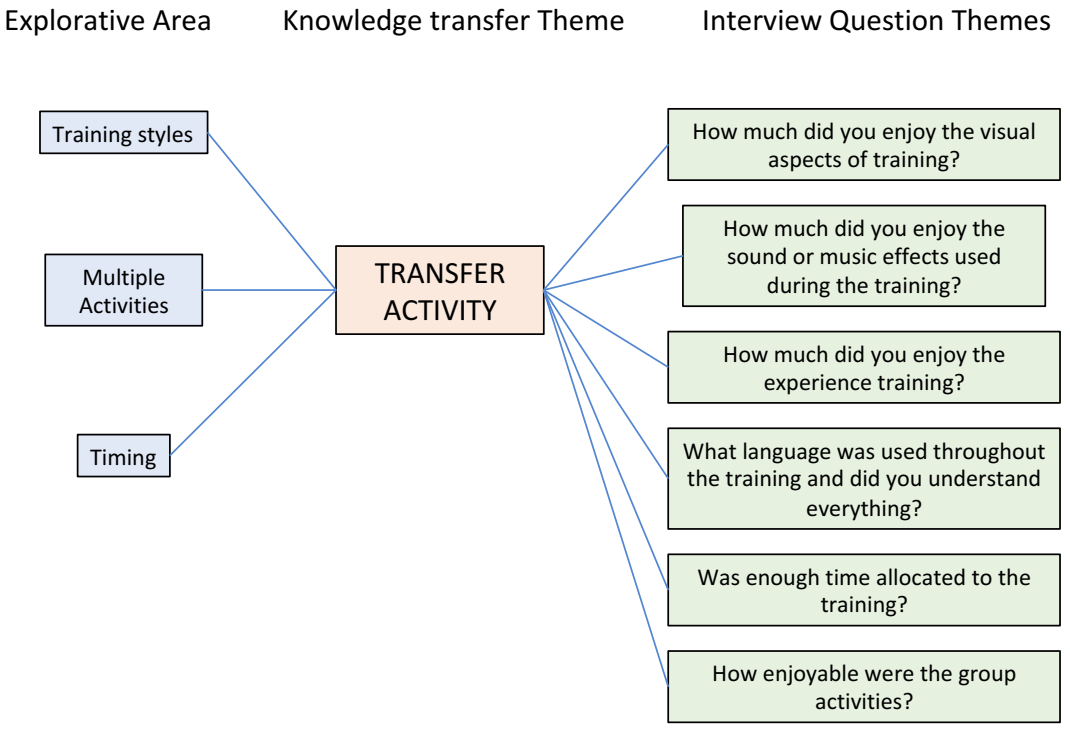


Figure 14. Concept to Question Chart (Transfer activity). Source: The Author.

Concept to Question Chart

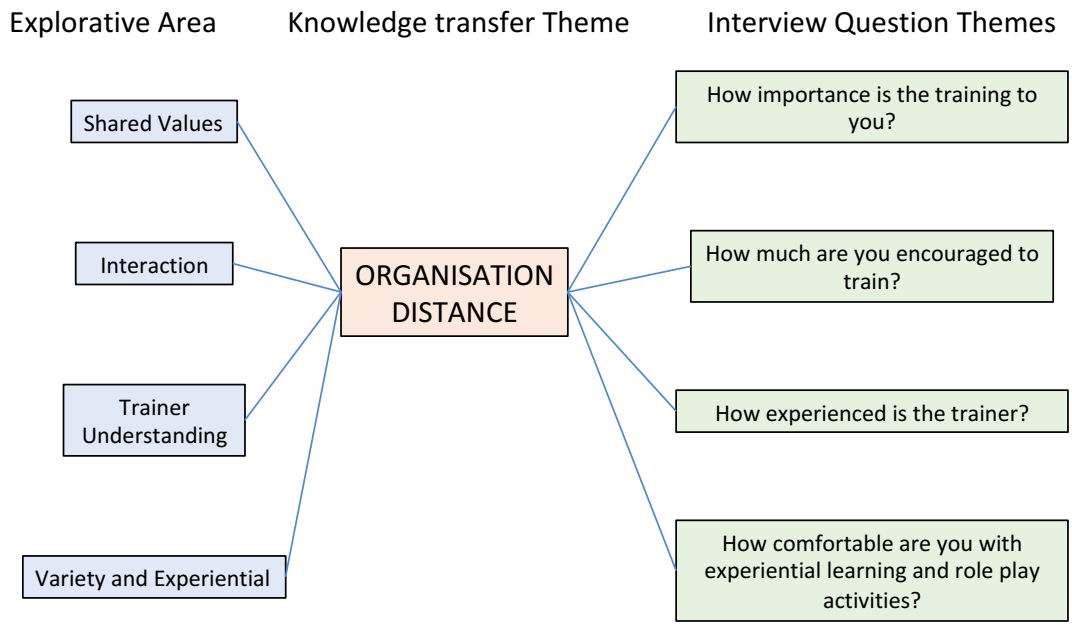


Figure 15. Concept to Question Chart (Organisation distance). Source: The Author.

Concept to Question Chart

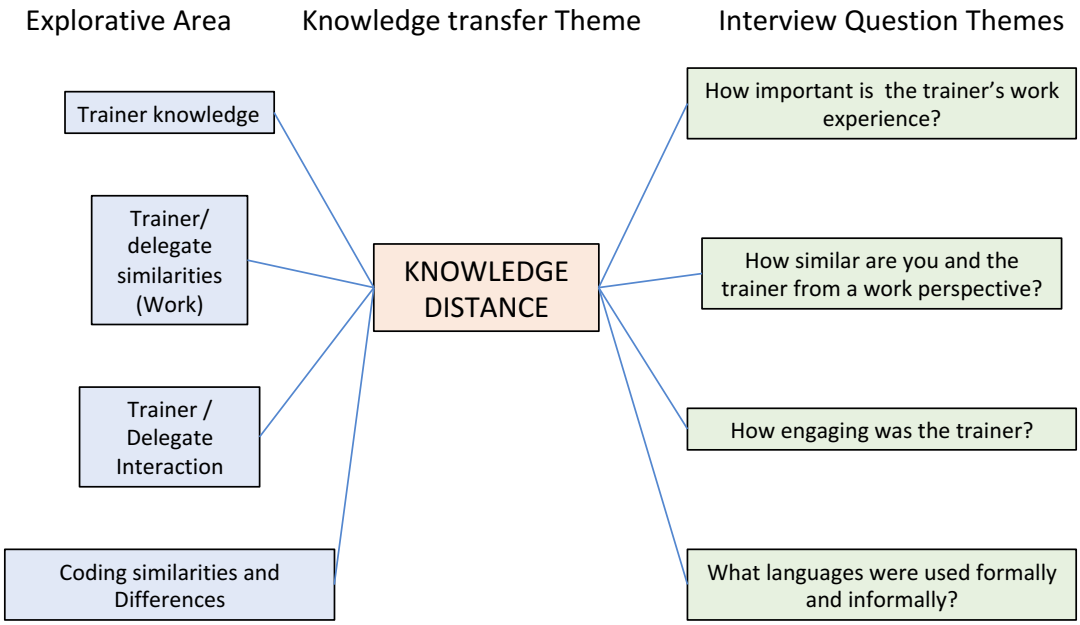


Figure 16. Concept to Question Chart (Knowledge distance). Source: The Author.

Concept to Question Chart

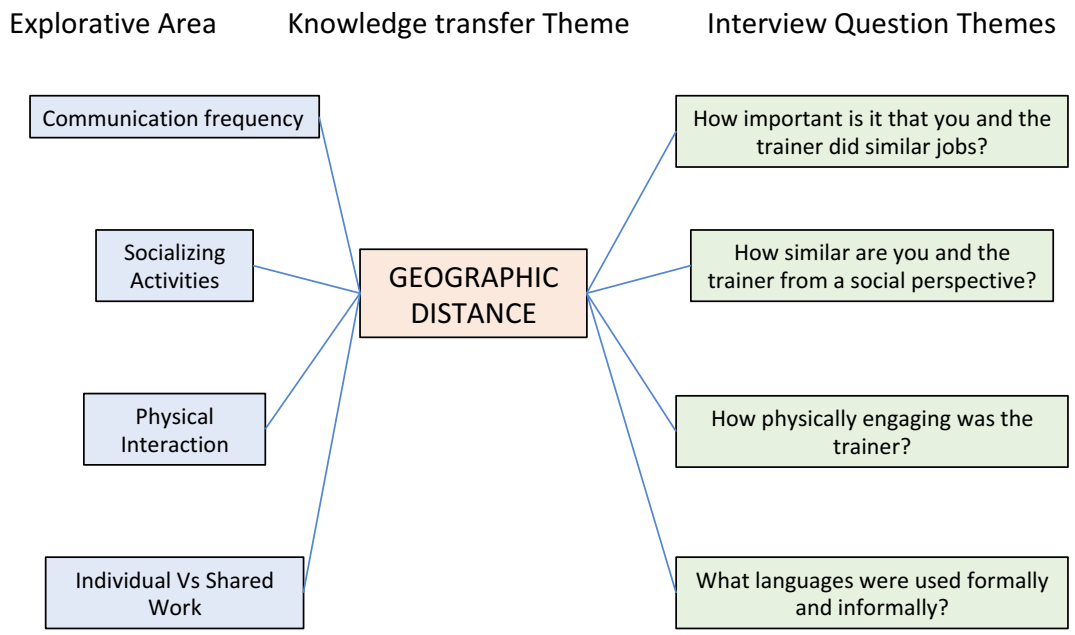


Figure 17. Concept to Question Chart (Geographic distance). Source: The Author.

Concept to Question Chart

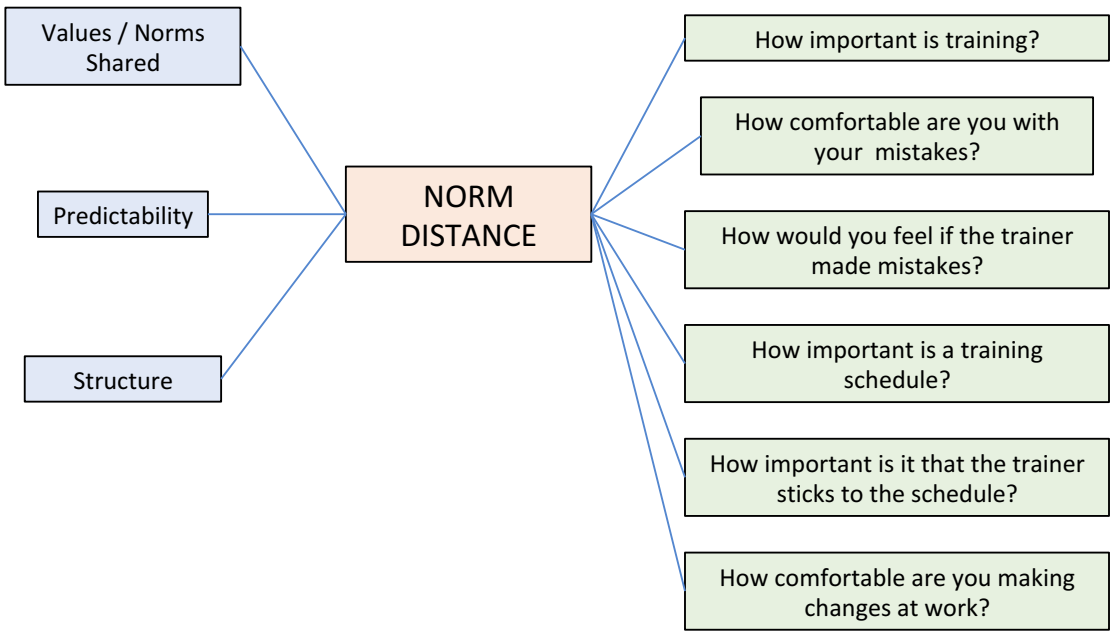


Figure 18. Concept to Question Chart (Norm distance). Source: The Author.

Concept to Question Chart

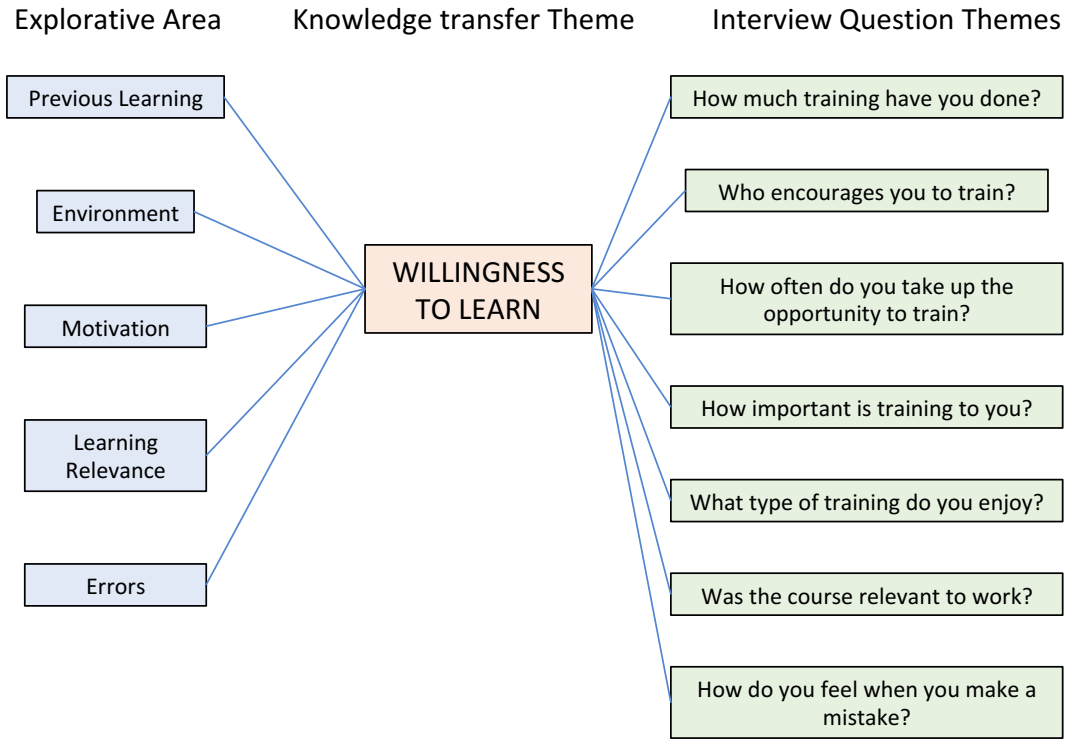


Figure 19. Concept to Question Chart (Willingness to learn). Source: The Author.

4.6.2 Interview Recording and Transcription. Two recording devices where used, and these proved highly successful. The best quality recording was achieved using the mobile phone although a recorded section was missed as a text message was received. The phone was switched to aeroplane mode after that lesson was learnt. The phone also had a large time display that enabled me to track the interview time without breaking eye contact with the candidate and losing rapport.

The transcription was achieved digitally, and this proved to be about 80% accurate. This lack of accuracy forced me to go through the interview and correct any mistakes. It was during this process that I realised just how much of the context was lost between the interview and listening to the recording, and, more significantly, between the interview and reading the transcript. For example, during the interview, candidate D11 stated, “I feel that when I have the empowerment from (supervisor name) and the organisation, this is almost like being able to breathe fresh air. I feel like I have space around me for which I could stretch out,” the candidate was so animated, so enthusiastic and so full of life. She moved closer to me, her body opened, and she almost sang the words. When reading the transcript, a great deal of the emotion was lost. This experience is an

example of what Fybish (2019) terms codable moments, and these were subsequently recorded simultaneously as recommended by Creswell (2013).

Recording the focus group and multiple people interviews was not a problem. However, the transcriptions did prove a challenge deciphering who was speaking. The digital recording did a good initial job of this, but I had to listen to the focus group recording multiple times before I was content the individuals had been correctly identified. After that, the transcription was straightforward.

4.6.3 Interviewer's Positionality. Saldana (2014) suggests that researchers wear an analytic lens when interpreting data and how we perceive and interpret what is happening depends on the filter being worn.

I was conscious of my positionality but still experienced contradictory feelings, especially when the individual expressed an opinion that was not expected such as when Candidate D13, an Arab male, when talking about risks stated, "I'm not afraid of taking risks. If I have to take a risk, I will take it." However, during the observations, he rarely voiced an opinion, was quiet, polite, and reserved, and appeared to epitomise the stereotypical image of an Arab male. Instances such as this were a reminder to me that I was looking through my lens and should always be mindful of that.

4.7 DATA CODING

Though coding is not the only method of analysing qualitative data, I felt that with the variety of data sources being analysed, plus the complexity of the various models used, coding the data would be the most effective way to scrutinise the data, but more significantly, to interpret it. The research was also looking to find similarities, patterns and order in the data, and this suited a coded approach. The Thematic Analysis Coding Breakdown is at Appendix E

4.7.1 Initial Coding. Once the data had been transcribed, I performed the initial coding, or what Saldana (2014) refer to as First Cycle Coding. The coding would adopt what Miles *et al.* (2014) term Simultaneous Coding were several codes are applied to the same text. This was done because the data suggested multiple meanings that necessitate more than one code as, 'Social interaction does not occur in neat, isolated units', purports

Glesne (2011, p192). Furthermore, I believed that the data represented descriptive as well as inferential meaning. Although Saldana (2014) warns against the overuse of simultaneous codes that can indicate indecision or lack of focus, the simultaneous coding made the data more meaningful, especially when combining interview data with observational data. An example of the successful use of Simultaneous Coding can be seen by D6's who, when discussing the importance of training to the company and herself affirmed, 'You can go the extra mile and you can plan, and you know you would get the support'. This observation was coded as Appreciating Support, Training Importance, Learning Environment and Engaging to capture the different elements.

Similarly, during a presentation skills exercise that called for the candidates to practice vocal techniques, D4 showed great apprehension about the exercise, but he did it and performed well. When I asked him why he felt apprehensive he stated that he did not want to make a fool of himself, but he knew that he had to do it, as it would improve his performance and, to quote him, "Let's see how it goes." This observation was coded as Face Saving, Understanding Risk, and Feeling Confident. Both of these examples illustrate how Simultaneous Coding can add greater richness to the data and provide a more rounded picture. Several of these initial codes were combined after the first coding phase as they overlapped. As well as using Simultaneous Coding, the strategy employed for the initial coding phase used a combination of Structural and Process Coding techniques.

Structural Coding technique represents a topic of interest relating to a segment of data that relates to the question raised at the interview (or observation requirements of the Knowledge Transfer Model) suggest MacQueen *et al.* (2008) This technique is appropriate as it acts as an indexing and labelling device, Namey *et al.* (2008) and is a useful technique for initial categorisation of large data sets. Examples of this technique occurred during interviews concerning the use of English Language such as when T3 suggested, 'Everyone knows that English Language is difficult to grade and it hinders all our training'. The initial codes, English Language, Understanding Language, Using Idioms, all indicated related themes but from a different perspective and provided a much richer seam of meaning understanding. This enabled similar themes to be captured from the data.

Process Coding techniques are useful for exploring the routines and rituals of human life, Saldana (2014). The technique is favourable for analysing the action-interaction when persons seek to solve problems or reach a goal suggest Corbin and Strauss (2015) and is particularly effective at analysing psychological concepts such as trust, prejudice, and elements that make up culture dimensions as the technique highlights what people do rather than what they have adds, Willig (2008). The literature warns against using this as the sole coding method, hence the use of complimentary Structure Coding. However, this technique proved highly effective at highlighting action factors, for example, D11 was talking about her proactive approach to learning being appreciated by stating, 'I like to feel that I can express myself and that I am valued by the organisation'. This section was coded Appreciating Support, Feeling Confident and Empowering. Once complete, the Initial Codes were placed in ascending order of times referenced as shown in the Thematic Analysis Coding Breakdown using Excel SORT feature.

4.7.2 Developed Code. The initial coding highlighted common themes and codes and came to eighty-five codes. These were analysed for similarities or codes that described the same phenomena, and the list was reduced to sixty-seven codes. The next phase of coding involved explicating the codes to ensure I had accurately understood the meaning of the code. This explication did not involve any particular strategy or coding model but was a simple process to ensure code meaning was understood. For example, the Initial Code Lesson Structure seemed vague and could have many interpretations; consequently, for the Developed Code, it was expanded to Lesson Structure for Knowledge understanding, which highlighted the relevance of the code and clarified the code reference. No codes were reduced during this process. The new codes were then grouped according to similarities and themes.

4.7.3 Category Coding. The aim of the Category Phase, what Saldani (2014) calls the Second Cycle Coding Method, is to group the sixty-seven Developed Codes into categories, concepts or themes to identify emergent themes or explanations. The technique used was the Pattern Coding technique as this technique pulls together the information gathered in the previous coding exercises to make a more meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis suggests Miles *et al.* (2014). They add that Pattern Coding is particularly effective for condensing large amounts of data, examining social networks and human relationship patterns, and for forming theoretical constructs.

The Categories were defined by looking for common themes and patterns within the Developed Codes, for example, Communicating, Shared Verbal/Non Verbal Language Understanding, Knowledge Transmission, and non-verbal communication, where all forms of Communication and subsumed into a single Category titled Communicating.

4.7.4 Theme Development. The culmination of the analysis is the development of the themes. The term theme is often misunderstood but is explained by Rossman and Rallis (2003) who state that a code is a word or phrase that describes a specific segment of data, whereas a theme is a more subtle and tacit process. The analysis process had provided a great deal of clarity, and the various themes were beginning to generate themselves naturally. A Concurrency technique was used where two or more categories influence the third as well as a Network technique that highlights different codes that interact along complex pathways. The initial attempt at defining the themes provided five themes, but there were Developed codes that just sat on the periphery and did not seem to fit with the themes.

A Code weaving technique was used to determine if the categories had accurately captured the significance of the codes by creating contextually based sentences centred on the themes to determine if the context of the sentence matched the concept of the data corpus. It was found that several of the analysis sentences created to test the themes did not capture the essence of what the data suggested. For example, in the sentence, 'Teambuilding is a fundamental part of an organisations' I believed that Teambuilding was an Organisational function. However, the context of the interviews and observations identified Teambuilding as an individual trait or requirement that was identified by individual needs, not an organisational need. Consequently, the initial code Teambuilding was maintained, but the Developed code was altered to read Significance of Teams and Team Spirit to the Individual as I felt it better aligned with managing training. The category was moved to the Training Process theme. This modification was more aligned with an individual's motivation, and this addressed the my concerns.

Other examples include Training Relevance that originally sat within the Training Process theme but, again, the relevance of the code was missed as the code was not necessarily referring to providing the training relevance to improve the course process but was there to address knowledge embeddedness and ambiguity. Once the Developed Code was

altered to Ensuring Training Relevance for Clarity, it sat better with a Communication theme.

4.7.5. Example of Coding Development Process

Below is an example of how the coding process was conducted:

Narrative:

Researcher: *'Why do you think that is?'* (referring to use of English language)

Interviewee 3: '*I think that, you know, you couldn't progress any further. Everyone for example, knows that English language level is a mmm difficult point to, uh, to grade and it hinders all of our training*.'

The text highlighted in blue was used for coding.

Initial code:

From this text, three codes were selected,

English Language (the interviewee specifically mentioned English)

Understanding Language (the emphasis was on understanding)

Communicating (this was part of relaying and understanding a message)

Developed Code:

From this dialogue, the initial coding, observations noted during the observation phase, and non-verbal keys picked up during the interview, the following Developed Code was created:

Shared verbal/non-verbal language understanding.

I felt that this developed code captured the essence and meaning of the comment, explicating the dialogue from pure utterance.

Category:

This Developed Code, as well as the Communicating, Knowledge Transmission, Non-Verbal Communication, and Unconscious use of Idioms Developed Codes, were all subsumed into a single category:

Communicating.

I felt that this Category captured the meaning of the various Developed Codes and focussed the attention of the research onto what was a key area, namely the successful transmission of a message from sender to receiver.

Theme:

The Theme emerged by combing various categories that I felt shared a common idea, these Categories were Communicating, Engaging, Ensure Correct Use of Language for Clarity and Trainer Error Notification. The Category was titled:

Communication.

I believed that this theme encapsulated the ideas, meanings and concepts highlighted by the various preceding codes.

4.8 CULTURE INFLUENCE AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

The final stage of the data analysis was to use the themes to develop the theory. Using the themes identified, the data corpus and initial codes were used to find confirming or disconfirming evidence of cultural influence within the data with quotes from candidates and observational evidence that supported assertions extracted for evidentiary accreditation. This process formed the basis for the research findings and contributed to answering the research question.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter looked to explain how the data was obtained and analysed. The success of this research depended on the integration of theory and practice, namely, going from the theory of knowledge transfer and cultural, and assimilating it into observational manifestations that could be explored in greater detail through interview. The conceptual framework was built around the Cummings and Tang (2013) knowledge transfer model. This provided the basic framework from which the research was designed and developed.

Operationalising the theory into observable data that could be investigated through an interview method was achieved using various models that integrated knowledge transfer and culture to create the necessary observation criterion that could be challenged through interview.

The initial research focussed on a participant observation research method and the observational criterion were created using the Knowledge Transfer Observation Matrix. This highlighted to me what I should be looking for during the observations to remain true to the conceptual framework. The interview questions were generated using the various Concept to Question Charts that synthesised the observational criterion of the Knowledge Transfer Model to highlight appropriate questions that would explore key topics. The Interview Design Matrix assimilated the culture dimensions chosen and provided the integrated design model that would synergise all of the areas of exploration. This would ensure that the data obtained was suitable to answer the research question.

CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research question asks what impact National Culture has on the transfer of knowledge between trainers and learners from different nationalities in the management context? This chapter answers the question by first explaining the research findings before discussing how these findings align with the literature before suggesting contributions to professional practice. The chapter will be critically structured based on the themes derived from both the literature review and the data during the data analysis phase. The data supporting the themes will be explicated with detailed, rich and expansive examples provided. Analysis will determine whether the findings illustrate a cultural influence aligned with the culture clusters or a universal influence that is common to all candidates irrespective of background. During each section, the discussion element will compare the findings with the literature to ascertain congruence with it.

As detailed in Chapter 4, the data was captured and thematically analysed, the coding detail is at Appendix E as per the Conceptual Framework, Appendix B. The initial coding process was taken directly from the raw data using code names that I felt appropriate to the data during the first analysis. The codes from the observations and interviews were placed in rank order based on the number of times each was referenced to determine a hierarchy of significance before being combined to create the Initial Code list. Each code was then separately analysed to determine whether it remained appropriate to the data and altered as required (shown by red text in Appendix E), and this refinement formed the Developed Code. For example, the initial code 'Understanding Language' appeared vague after re-reading the data and was altered to 'Shared Verbal/Non-verbal Language Understanding,' and 'English Language' felt ambiguous and did not reflect the context of the data so was altered to "Use of English Language for explanations.' The codes were then grouped in clusters based on similarities to reduce the list into categories as illustrated by the use of colour coding in Appendix E. Some codes were dropped, as they no longer appeared valid. Further refinement of the Categories produced the Themes.

5.1.1. Themes

From the findings, five Themes emerged:

Communication
Training Process
Individual Aptitude
Ambiguity
Organisational Culture

These Themes will form the critical structure of this chapter, and findings obtained from the observations and interviews for each theme will be broken down by category, for example, the initial theme is Communication and the Categories supporting this Theme are Communicating, Engaging, Ensuring The Correct Use Of Language For Clarity, and Trainer Error Notification. Rich data will support each finding before a discussion with the main propositions of the literature will demonstrate how these findings are critically evaluated within the current academic debates. Each section will conclude with practical advice for training practitioners.

5.1.2. Emergence of Themes

The various strategies and techniques employed to drive the data through the coding process to theme generation were aided significantly by the amalgamation of the raw data captured during the research, and the subjective feelings that the various codes provided. Throughout the process, the raw data was read and re-read, the interviews were replayed, and the various photographs and notes regarding mood and feeling were analysed together. This brought the categories and themes to life, which provided the meaning associated with the various themes. For example, the Training Process theme emerged as a desire for training and a process to manage this, but by reflecting holistically on all of the data, it was possible to garner the understanding and meaning attributed to each piece of data and place it within context to gain a richer and more valid finding. This reflection and holistic approach brought me far closer to the data, and this was a significant contribution to the success if the coding process.

Coding has been used to identify candidates.[3]

5.2 COMMUNICATION

5.2.1 Communicating. The first category identified from the data analysis concerns communication, in particular, the use of the English and native language as communication tools. English was the language used throughout, and there were occasions during the training that the native English-speaking trainers used pragmatic terms and idioms that some of the candidates struggled to comprehend due to their non-propositional effect, for example, during the presentation skills training, T2 was highlighting the need to plan a course and used the expression, '*Don't put the horse before the cart by starting your presentation without a plan*'. This pragmatic use of idioms was further demonstrated when the trainer was explaining to the candidates that they should not reveal PowerPoint slides before they are ready suggesting it would be '*closing the gate after the horse had bolted*.' These were two critical elements of the training, but both training opportunities were lost because of the confusion caused by the English speaker's use of idioms. This confusion is an example of the miss-use of English language by a native English speaker who assumes that everyone understands the terms being used. This assumption leads to a communication breakdown and impedes knowledge transfer.

In contrast, T1 was very focussed on his use of language highlighting, '*I spent a lot of time perfecting my English as best I could ……. I have not had problems with people understanding what I am saying*'. In conversation, his language felt slightly forced and unreal, but when training the precision and use of simple language made him linguistically effective. The language used by T1 seemed exact, straightforward, but highly effective. It was also delivered in a slow and controlled manner with a great deal of eye contact and expressive non-verbal communication that greatly enhanced the delivery. By observing the candidates increased involvement, interest, and the quality of the engagement, it was clear that by utilising correct English, T1 enhanced knowledge transfer and established inclusivity with all the candidates.

[3] For ethical reasons the identity of all candidates has been anonymised, however, a coding structure has been used, Annex G, where the prefix 'T' denotes a trainer, and the prefix 'D' denotes a candidate.

The above findings from the interview and observation support the argument that the use of a common language for communication (English for example in this research) could associate with challenges and limitations associated with the pragmatic linguistic influences. English and Marr (2015, 79-81) suggest the speaking of a common language does not mean common understanding and this was evident throughout with many electing to enter what Ahmed and Widen (2015) call language clusters. Piekkari *et al.* (1999) suggest the use of language clusters can dampen cross-cultural linguistic exchange leading to a linguistic driven activity rather than expertise-driven activity. This was evident throughout, especially during breaks, where many candidates were expected to discuss what they had learnt, the applicability of new skills, and knowledge. However, this did not happen, as they appeared to socialise aligned with their language cluster, possibly because they were more comfortable communicating with their culture cluster. Native language was used throughout, and there was always a noticeable increase in enthusiasm evidenced through greater interaction, higher vocal volume, and more laughter. When I joined them during such breaks, they resorted to the English language, and there was a discernible reduction in the speed and volume of the discourse. This observation would imply that the candidates are far more comfortable talking in their native tongue, which greatly enhances discourse and interaction that will enhance knowledge transfer.

Consequently, this could be a critical factor impeding the knowledge transfer process, which is a research objective. This also implies that this category is culturally influential, although this could be attributable more to language capability, in particular the de-facto organisation language, than culture. The practical recommendations are to design courses that encourage candidates to mix in an attempt to address any inclusivity issues. Notwithstanding this, the findings indicates the communicating category of the communication theme is more likely culturally influential.

The research findings support Cummings and Teng's (2003) argument about the Knowledge Transfer Model that potential barriers to knowledge transfer are code differences within a language as part of the knowledge distance element. Misunderstanding of meaning caused by indeterminate and non-propositional effects of pragmatism can also lead to a communication breakdown despite the speaker and hearer speaking the same language, Wilson and Carston (2019). This is in line with the views of Kogut and Zander (2003) who argue that if information and codes differ, then there will

be a loss of understanding and transfer will prove difficult. This goes some way to answering the research question in that the research suggests that communicating is culturally influential.

5.2.3 Engagement. The candidates all stated that they were comfortable with the trainer's interaction with them and appreciated the engagement stating that engagement helped them remember vital elements of the training as D9 highlighted, '*If he was not much engaging as he was just standing out doing something else, no one will be remembering*'. The trainers all used stories and experiences, and this was welcome by all those interviewed as expressed by D13 who said, '*He gave examples to get our thoughts out …….. and this helped us engage*'. The trainers used different techniques to engage, T2 made a point of remembering the candidate's names and several details so that he could call them by their name and relate along the knowledge line that he had acquired, This use of names was a very popular tactic that the candidates all appreciated, D17 stated, '*When he calls you by your name you feel very special*'.

These research findings highlighted the significance of engagement across the whole group, which aligned with the literature as engagement factors are recognised highly within the Cognitive, relational aspects of the Knowledge Transfer Model concerning organisation and knowledge distance. Engagement is a form of networking, and Argote and Fahrenkopf (2016) argue that tacit knowledge transfers across networks more than independent organisations. Hence, this research validates that argument. These elements of the research were shared across the group irrespective of cultural background. Consequently, it is analogous to the Universal level of human behaviour as articulated in the literature by Dan (2020). It confirms the attestation of Lewis (2018), who suggests such behaviour is typical of all humans in one way or another and is not considered culturally influenced. In answering the research question, engagement does not appear to be culturally influential but is clearly a key factor in the knowledge transfer process.

5.2.3 Ensuring correct use of language for clarity. The need to focus on the use of his language was highlighted by T3 who argued, '*We have to simplify the language and reduce the complexity of terms use*', going on to cite an example of a piece of machinery that had the same English term, 'Cyclic Trim', used for two different components on the

machine that caused constant confusion with workers as they were never sure which component the trainer was talking about.

This precise use of language to achieve common understanding was echoed by many of the candidates; for example, D13 was explaining why he used English when speaking to the trainer but Arabic to his colleagues at the table during the training, *'….it is easier to speak Arabic as we know what we want to say and it is far easier in Arabic. Sometimes the trainer say something in English, and we have to change it to Arabic to understand it*'. D11 clarified the point stating, '*I did a course in Excel, but it was easy to understand because the terminology was so precise……*' adding, '*I did a mindfulness course, and I did not have a clue what the Arab lady was telling*'.

The research observations supported these views. When talking about a technical element, such as the functions of PowerPoint or the Stakeholder Engagement elements, the use of technical language ensured they all had a common language understanding using terms they all understood as evidenced by the continued use of English language, even during group discussions. However, once a subject was less technical, the candidates resorted to native language when within a common culture group, for example during the presentation skills training for Company D, the trainer was attempting to explain the use of silence and how that could be used to draw attention to the subject. During this discussion, the Arabs all spoke in Arabic to each other to explain the concept while the Philippine candidates resorted to Tagalog. This confirmed the significance of pragmatism, in particular the reduction of interpretive indeterminacy within the linguistic boundaries that lead to misunderstanding. The technical language was formal using standards terms and words with common, understood meaning. However, the less technical terminology meant the trainer used non-standard terms and phrases not understood by all requiring some candidates to translate for each other. With regard to the research question, this is a cultural element that negatively impacts knowledge transfer as it constitutes a candidate's interpretation of the concept with no way of confirming as the trainer does not speak their language.

The only trainer that did not work for the company that he was training was T2, and it soon became apparent that he lacked the technical terminology the candidates were using and this broke down some of the engagement. This was most obvious during the observations where the two in-company trainers were referring to techniques, products

and examples that were familiar to all the candidates. In contrast, Candidate T2 was frequently asked technical questions to explain key areas for example during training for company C; the trainer used the phrase Key Stakeholder whereas the candidates called this position a key account holder. A perceptive drop in enthusiasm was noted each time the trainer incorrectly used the candidate's common terms, evidenced by an increase in small talk and distractions such as the use of a mobile phone. While this could be perceived as analogous with Sevinc and Backus (2019) argument that the linguistic limitations impacted the candidate's professional appearance, I do not believe this to be the case. In fact, the opposite was apparent with the candidates questioning the trainer's professionalism evidenced by a reduction in interaction and questions to the trainer. Although Ahmed and Widen, (2015) suggest that language can disconnect speakers implies a different national language, I believe this can mean any language context from organisational codes, through to technical language. This linguistic observation has significant implications for professional practice as it re-affirms the need for the trainer to learn and understand the organisational and technical language to transfer knowledge successfully.

Literature regarding the use of technical language to facilitate understanding is sparse. While Jandt (2016) suggests some languages experience grammatical/syntactical equivalence, they do not suggest that the use of a more technically correct language, such as a reduction in the use of idioms, can moderate this effect. Similarly, there is no mention of language within the Procedural area of Cummings and Teng (2003) Transfer Model. However, this research has shown that technically correct language can assuage many of the language concerns as well as address several of the barriers to knowledge transfer that had not previously been considered. However, it did not highlight any cultural specific influences and is, therefore, considered a universal trait. Consequently, this research will extend the literature in this area and add to practical knowledge.

5.2.4 Trainer Error Notification. One category that proved particularly divisive was the Trainer Error Notification theme. This theme highlighted the most significant divide amongst the different culture clusters. This was evident during the observations where the questioning of the trainer was far more direct from those from Anglo, Germanic Europe and Confucian Asia while the South Asia candidates were more than happy to accept what was told to them, even when they did not necessarily agree as was evidenced during the presentation skills for company A. Candidate D4 (South Asian

origin) was told to stand perfectly still when presenting but was unable to do so. He challenged the trainer once, but after that, he focussed all of his efforts onto standing still to the detriment of his overall performance. The result was a less engaging presentation evidenced by the waning audience attention such as mobile phone use and informal chatter. Despite knowing the trainer had provided erroneous advice that had negatively impacted his performance, the candidate still thanked the trainer reverently, in line with the high power distance culture dimension.

This observation indicated that the participant was aware of the problem and knew that he should say something, and wanted to, but chose to ignore his feelings seeming to lack the motivation to raise a concern about the level of training although he was aware of the problem in the training setting. This reluctance to raise an issue was witnessed several times during the research. Conversely, when I asked D11 (Germanic European origin) what she would do, she stated that she would challenge the trainer and say that she disagrees with him. She added, '*It doesn't mean that it is wrong, but we may have different views. I may even change my view, but I would want an explanation*'. These differences highlight a culturally sensitive influence that may have practical implications for knowledge transfer.

Several of the candidates stated in the interview that they would tell the trainer if the trainer had made a mistake, for example, D8 spotted a mistake in the training manual that he highlighted to his team and me. I advised him to inform the trainer, but he didn't. However, when asked in the interview whether he would highlight a mistake or error, he stated, '*Of course I'm going to tell*', but interestingly, he then went on to say, '*This area was not good, so I will only copy the good things and leave the bad things on the side*'.

This is an example of what Schein (2017) calls the Espoused Beliefs Level of human behaviour that illustrates upheld ideals and goals but not necessarily the true values. This research aligns with Schein's argument that true values are only exhibited through behaviour, for example, when the candidates refuse to confront the trainer. Those candidates that were reluctant to raise issues or question the trainer hailed from high power distance cultural backgrounds where there is a reliance on centralised management and formal rules, Daniels and Gregarus (2014), whereas the candidates that were comfortable challenging the trainer came from lower power distance cultures. Additionally, the cultural argument is further strengthened as those candidates also came

from a low uncertainty avoidance society characterised by a reluctance to go against directives. In contrast, people from low uncertainty avoidance condone deviance and abnormal behaviour such as challenging authority suggest Tu *et al.* (2020). This research supports these arguments, as those from high uncertainty avoidance were reluctant to raise an issue even though they felt that they had been wronged, and this goes some way to answering the research question in that national culture does have an impact on knowledge transfer.

These findings suggest that the use of a second, or de-facto, language has understanding limitations, especially if advanced linguistic techniques, such as idioms, are used. The use of technical or organisational terminology mitigates the limitation for candidates, but given a choice, candidates will migrate to their dialectal culture cluster. Engagement reduces the linguistic limitation by enabling greater exposure to universal non-verbal cues.

5.2.5 Practical Professional Advice. Communication is a fundamental element of knowledge transfer and is culturally influenced. Care of the use of the English language must be taken, and trainers must avoid the pragmatic use of idioms or slang terms that will not be understood unless they are contextualised. This linguistic care is particularly important to natural English speakers. The language should be simplified using plain, technical language and, where possible, organisational terminology should be used. Trainers must be cognisant of language clusters and take steps to remove them or find out their cause. Trainers should engage with candidates, and an engagement strategy should be used, and they should be aware that different cultures will approach challenges and problem identification in different ways due to perceived language limitations.

5.3 TRAINING PROCESS

The second category that was developed from the data was that of Training Process. This category focussed on the mechanics of the training delivery to determine if any cultural influences could be highlighted and raised to further professional practice.

5.3.1 Utilising Learning Styles. All the candidates appreciated the use of different learning styles, and the trainers employed them all to varying degrees. It was clear from

the spike in enthusiasm observed as the trainer altered from one style to another that the candidates were immersed in the training process.

Some methods were more appreciated by the candidates than others; for example, when given case studies to read there was a palpable groan in the training room as the candidates started to read. In contrast, when a video was played there was a considerable increase in enthusiasm, evidenced by a raised seating position, bodies leant forward, greater attention and a general increase in chatter until the video started after which there was very little noise. Candidate D5 summed up the feelings of the group when he stated, '*It'll be very boring simply looking at the person talking, I'll get bored. I might not listen to him anymore, I'll just look at my phone*'. Visual aids such as slide pictures were also appreciated, and many of the candidates praised the use of pictures that related to the subject matter, especially if it made them think laterally about the link between the picture and the subject as D4 highlighted, '*If the picture is different and I have to think about how it relates to the topic I will always remember the topic because I always remember the picture*', D16 furthered, '*Pictures let you see how things they are joined together*', and D10 strengthened the argument commenting on the lack of visuals in her session, '*I don't like it at all. It just felt like we were there for a chit chat'.*

However, not all of the learning styles were universally appreciated. When asked about game playing and role activities, the interview reactions were very mixed with the majority stating that they liked it but several being quite vociferous in their condemnation of the method as D6 expressed, '*I don't like games as some people just take over and I don't get to be involved*'. Interestingly, her colleague, D7 (this was an interview conducted with two interviewees) countered, '*I am sorry, but I love to be involved. I love to play games, to get involved and be at the front, making all of the noise*'. However, D15 was the most assertive and raised a key point that was echoed by the remainder of the focus group, '*I hate playing games. Even at home, I will not play games, so I do not want to make a fool of myself*'. When I challenged that the training room is a safe environment he countered, '*Yes, but these people I work with if I make a fool of myself that is all they will remember of me*'. This aligns with the argument of Yang *et al.* (2019) that Power Distance dimension is influenced by losing face, and a perceived loss of positional power with candidates coming from a high power distance (for example, South Asia and Middle East [D15 is from a high power distance society]) society being more greatly influenced by losing face than those of a low power distance society (for example, Germanic Europe and Anglo).

Management training is designed to homogenise the learning experience argue Hughes *et al.* (2017) with learners organising and processing information aligned with training methodologies add Sadler-Smith (2004). The findings of this research support both those attestations as all candidates felt a great desire to experience as many different methodologies as possible. The findings highlighted above also back the Multiple Intelligence Theory, Gardner (1983) as the variety seems to be the motivator, not a preference for one over another. This somewhat contradicts Kolb's assertion that individuals developed preferences for specific ways of learning, Kolb (1984). However, the findings of this research do corroborate the Cummings and Teng's (2003) Knowledge Transfer Model's edict that multiple activities support the procedural aspect of knowledge transfer and endorse Nazmi and Fleura (2020) suggestion that multiple intelligences enhance knowledge transfer. The findings appear to support the willingness to learn element of the Cognitive (People) area of the Knowledge Transfer Model in that the enthusiasm to join new activities was evident during the observations as evidenced by the increased energy each time a new method was introduced. From these findings, it was clear that the advice to practice is to create inclusive training sessions that develop different learning mechanisms and meets different needs for individuals and organisations.

However, not all of the activities received the same enthusiasm, and, from the interviews, it became apparent that several of the candidates did not enjoy game playing as they had a great fear of looking foolish. The observations did not support those views, as all games seemed to be entered into heartily by all, but clearly, there were underlying issues that influenced how certain candidates felt. Some shared these views but not all, which suggests that they are more universal behaviour manifestations, Lewis (2018). This observation is corroborated to a degree as the differences tended to be aligned with culture clusters in that those from a South Asia and Middle East cluster expressed deep negative feelings for game-playing whereas those from Anglo, Germanic Europe, and Confucian Asia did not.

Nonetheless, when interviewed, the Confucian Asia candidate stated that she loved playing games and wanted to be at the front, making lots of noise, which significantly contradicts the literature. Many factors could contribute to this, not least the varied and dynamic nature of cultural influence. The findings obtained from the other candidates

generally support the literature, although there are evident contradictions that highlight the complexity of cultural influence. This element of the research did not provide a conclusive answer to the research questions, although it can realise a research aim by recommending to professional practice the significance of inclusivity within the training domain. Management trainers are to be aware of the significance of this trait when delivering training to ensure all candidates have equal access to the training and are feel equally included in it to maximise the knowledge transfer process.

5.3.2 Managing Training. The category managing training was another universal trait that all candidates supported and captured several developed and initial codes, such as training importance and training to meet company needs. All of the candidates seemed to believe that training was vital for themselves and the company, and all recognised the benefits, although several highlighted that the training often lacked purpose other than to complete a package of training. The training observed from two of the companies as part of a developing leaders type package, and several of the candidates did not know what the training was for or why they had been selected as highlighted by D4, '*I do not have any idea why I was selected, I was thinking why me'?*

Several candidates raised the management of training as significant, and there was a general feeling that the training lacked direction and purpose and was arranged by the training department. For some, this was satisfactory, and they were content to be provided with a training package that they could volunteer to attend. Hofstede (2001) suggests that those from a high power distance culture rely on authority, and the observations of this research seem to support that proposal as the candidates that seemed content to accept whatever training was offered came from the South Asia/Middle East culture. From a knowledge transfer perspective, this trait reduces the alignment between source and recipient and conflicts with the idea of Yen *et al.* (2018) who argue that source and recipient need to be aware of the knowledge source as the recipients will not fully understand how the knowledge is embedded in the original context as argued by Song *et al.* (2003). Consequently, the managing training category could impact the knowledge transfer appears to be culturally influenced

5.3.3 Predictability. The predictability category was evidenced through the lesson structure observations. This section created a great variety of responses with some feeling the lesson structure was essential as articulated by D6, '*I like to know what is*

happening, I like to have a plan in my head. When it wasn't given, I made up my own agenda mentally'. When asked about how comfortable the candidates would be without a structure, there was also a mixed response with several stating that they would be uncomfortable without structure as D17 stated, '*If we go from one to ten then we know that two will follow then three. But if we go from two to seven, we will be confused and worry about what will come next*'. The focus group and several other candidates echoed this sentiment; for example, D13 argued, '*We need the structure so that we can know what is coming'.* I witnessed this several times when a session veered off-topic, and several of the candidates were clearly disturbed by the event as was evidenced through side-line conversations, (generally in the native language,) use of distraction techniques such as mobile phone use, and a reduction in attention.

However, not everyone agreed with the need for a predictable structure. When I asked D11 if she knew how the training was going to be conducted, she simply said no! She went on, '*I trust the trainer because I know him, but if I didn't know him, I would give him time to see what happens and where the training goes. If I am confused by it, I will ask him what we are doing next, but only for the next hour, I don't need to know what is happening through the whole session*'.

The use of lesson structure to facilitate the predictability of a training session had varied results indicating a potential cultural influence. The majority of the issues centred on a perception of the unknown. Some candidates did not know what was happening, and this created anxiety and substantiates the literature in what Dumetz (2012) refers to as a fear of an unfamiliar situation. Aurigemma and Mattson (2018) argue the provision of a structure would provide the rules a high uncertainty avoidance culture requires. However, the research findings challenge these arguments in two areas: the literature suggests the Germanic European candidate should have been uncomfortable without a lesson structure (high uncertainty avoidance). However, when interviewed, she was more than happy to let the lesson proceed without structure, (assuaged slightly by knowing the trainer and trusting he would deliver) furthering the contradiction by suggesting she only needed to know what was happening in the short term not through the whole session. In contrast, the literature argues the South Asia candidates should have been comfortable without a structure (low uncertainty avoidance) but highlighted significant stress at the lack of structure.

While these findings seem to contradict the literature, they remain within culture cluster groupings and so infer that culture does influence the needs for a structure or a plan of expectations. In addition to the cultural implications, the findings support the literature regarding the Knowledge Transfer Model in that there are palpable differences in what is perceived acceptable and unacceptable within the workforce as suggested by O'Reilly and Chapman (1996), and this is indicative of a weak norm distance that can go some way to reducing the knowledge transfer.

These findings suggest that learning styles are individual, but variety is universal. While most people enjoy taking part in games and role-play, cultural factors, such as saving face, will play a significant impact in involvement and this will influence knowledge transfer. Training, and the knowledge being transferred, must have a meaning for those individuals receiving the knowledge, and this is a universal trait. The degree to which individuals are comfortable with uncertainty varies, but there is a limit for everyone and everyone needs some form of structure, albeit to varying degrees.

5.3.4 Practical Professional Advice. While the use of different learning styles contributes to successful knowledge transfer irrespective of cultural influences and is encouraged, the use of gameplay activities is influenced by culture. Consequently, any gameplay activity must be cognisant of this cultural limitation and mitigating actions taken to assure its effectiveness; the ramification of competitive games should be understood. The candidates must have a reason for doing the training, and this must be made clear from the outset and confirmed at the pre-training needs analysis. Predictability is culturally influenced but can be mitigated through the use of structured lessons.

5.4 INDIVIDUAL APTITUDE.

The next theme that emerged centred on the individual qualities that individuals displayed during the observations and interviews. Originally these categories were subsumed within other themes, but it soon became evident that they were subtly different and did not fit naturally within the other codes but stood out alone. Consequently, they became a theme in their own right.

5.4.1 Understanding Cultural Differences. It was evident from the observations and interviews that the candidates were aware of the cultural differences of their co-workers,

and this manifested itself in different ways. For the trainers, some differences remained unspecific but altered their approach to the course as explained by T1, '*Some folk like to talk and get involved whereas others don't like to risk looking foolish so stay quiet*', while T2 added, '*Some groups have vocal members that take over, and some are happy to let them, so I mix the groups up based on things such as hair colour, glasses, anything but where they are from*'. The candidate's feelings were observable through a need to belong to their cultural group. I witnessed this during most social breaks in training where candidates invariably would migrate to culturally similar groups. This need for belonging was highlighted by D5, who stated, '*When I see trainer I see that he is Filipino and we are from the same country. Whenever we see each other (Filipino), it is like we know each other for many years. So we are really happy, that's how Filipino's are*'.

It was evident from the observations that took place and the subsequent interviews that the findings of this research corroborate the views of Schwartz (2014) that culture is a set of values that differentiates one group from another. The trainers modified their training to cater for these differences using multiple learning styles and techniques in order to align with the candidates, and this underpins the Knowledge Transfer Model and the view of Acar and Ende (2016) that a knowledge distance should not be too excessive, as well as the views of Nooteboom (2000), that thoughts should be coordinated across a reduced cognitive distance. While the literature states the need to maintain a small cognitive distance, it does not stress how much individuals are driven by the need to close that gap by mixing with individuals of a similar background. When the trainer forced the candidates to mix, they accepted the situation and forced themselves to work within the confines set. However, immediately upon release from that confine, the candidates resorted to their reduced cognitive comfort. This research extends the literature in that area. Additionally, the research contributes to professional knowledge in that it explains why there is a need to employ different learning styles and strategies.

The focus group raised an issue about talking over individuals. This was evident during the observations where some groups discussions appeared to be just a cacophony of words with individuals seeming to be heard based on volume alone. During the interviews, I asked about interrupting, and how they felt about interrupting *each other,* D16 replied*, 'Unless it is required, it is really annoying'*, while D14 added, '*It is not polite*', with D17 proposing, '*We need to follow the tickets*' (Indicating a machine that prints sequential queuing tickets.)

This objection implies a need to be heard immediately, and to raise points as and when they naturally happen rather than waiting for their turn in the discourse sequence. This is analogous to short-term, polychronic time orientation. However, the focus group all came from the South Asia culture cluster, and their time orientation is future polychronic oriented. Consequently, the research supports the ideas of Fulmer *et al.* (2014) in that events are conducted at once and non-linear but contradicts the thoughts of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) that gratification is suspended. Moreover, despite efforts to ascertain time orientations during the interview, and observations conducted during the training, the only culturally influential time orientation findings came from the focus group comments. Consequently, I believe that this finding does not indicate a cultural influence, but similarly, does not indicate a universal influence and is, therefore, just an observation.

5.4.2 Shared Values. One area of interest that developed from the data concerned the values of the candidates and the trainers. The trainers went to great lengths to '*get on a similar wavelength'* as T2 suggested, while T1 added '*audience is hungry and ready ….. but need to be aligned*'. While the trainers were all in agreement, the candidate's were not all in agreement. The trainer and trainee should be aligned around the training values, such as respect, argued D4. Some within the various groups argued this belief such as D13 who said, '*It is important to be aligned. To not have distractions or loss of focus because you can't understand someone*'. However, others felt differently as articulated by D11 who argued, '*If there are a lot of different values, then I would say like, okay, I don't understand. It's normal that we don't have like same values all the time. So it has to have the right balance, I think'.*

Within the observations, both sides of the debate were apparent. The alignment of the trainer and candidate was evident when the Filipino trainer was training Filipino candidates. The social interaction was instinctive, even using the English language; there was much laughing, joking and physical interaction such as hugging and touching. It was clear both parties knew the rules and were content working within them. Whereas, the British trainer had a far more formal approach, with very punctilious delivery. The Australian trainer who was far more relaxed and informal but still not to the level of the Filipino trainer, and there was no touching or physical interaction but quite a lot of light-hearted interactions. The alignment centred on context was very conspicuous. The in-

company trainers could use a common language; relate to familiar stories and this greatly enhanced the training as was evident by the increased interaction, the ease of training delivery and the general enthusiasm demonstrated by the candidates. Conversely, the external trainers had to use generalist terms, rely on stories to bridge the alignment gap, and often learn the key terms used by the candidates and use them. This made the training more didactic than involved.

The findings concerning the alignment of shared values between trainer and candidate's raise several exciting concepts. Yen *et al.* (2018) argue the success of knowledge transfer demands the source and recipient develop an understanding of where the knowledge exists and develop a general understanding of the knowledge. This research provides an argument that aligns with this literature in that the trainers endeavoured to create this mutually developed alignment to facilitate their training as evidenced in the courses being designed around business and individual development needs, and the way in which the trainers made the training relevant to actual business practices. Interestingly, the candidates did not feel the need for a strong alignment as long as the differences were not too significant. This supports the debate forwarded by Hamel (1991) that the knowledge distance should not be too high as too many steps to learning will be required.

The literature suggests that if the various codes[4], that an organisation uses are not used by the trainer, this can impact the knowledge transfer process, Kogut and Zander, (1991). Once again, the literature supports the argument as the in-company trainer's use of company codes greatly influenced the training interest and, it could be assumed, the effectiveness of the knowledge transfer. This research highlighted the point that these codes pertain to context and the sharing of codes, even similar codes, can re-enforce knowledge transfer. Consequently, this knowledge extends the literature by suggesting that similar codes could be used if they can be related to company codes.

The findings from the observations and the interviews provide an alternative view of culture cluster and training engagement. The South Asian candidates experienced the same difficulties as the Arabic culture societies, and the Germanic European candidate shared the perspectives of the Anglo and Confucian candidates. Therefore, it can be

[4] For example, nicknames, colloquial terms (helicopter crews call aircraft cabs, fighter pilots call them jets)

assumed that this category is in line with what Dan (2020) call a universal level of human behaviour and is not influenced by culture.

5.4.3 Group Working. The final category within this theme focussed on group working. Group activities took up a large proportion of the training, and this provided great observational evidence. On the whole, the candidates seemed to enjoy the group activities, especially the discussions, although there were one or two individuals that were evidently not comfortable in that environment as was evident by their lack of enthusiasm, interaction and participation. During one training session, the trainer changed the group for each new topic, and this created an interesting dynamic as each new group sought out where they fit within the group. Although this was interesting from an anthropological or sociological perspective, there was a significant amount of time spent defining the new dynamics, even on day two of the course when everyone knew each other that much better. Despite this, the group sessions invoked enthusiasm generally although there were exceptions.

Despite knowing that he should join in with group activity, D5 explained he found it uncomfortable, '*I know that I should mingle ……. and I need to collaborate and to work as a group, but I am not comfortable, especially if I do not know the people*'. Similarly, when D10 was asked if she learnt from the group replied, '*To be honest no. I learn more when I am not in a group*', and D11 stated that if she knew the people in the group, then she would interact but if she didn't know them, or they were from a group that had no meaningful work connections, then she saw that as, '*a waste of my time*'.

Conversely, D18 expressed the views of the focus group when he highlighted, '*We are all engaged, we are different groups and teams, and we talk and getting a different perspective and letting each other know*'. Indeed, the focus group became alive while talking about working as a group; they regaled examples of how they had worked in groups before and how they enjoy working and training in groups. Moreover, when D13 was asked the value of groups, he extolled, '*Lots of people have good strength at some points, sometimes you're not visualising, and another can see it and help you. It is good to get the insights of everyone, to get all of the perspectives*'.

The group activities showcased dynamic activity evidenced through enthusiasm and action, and it was clear that there was an underlying collectivist perspective and is in line

with the cultural breakdown of the group where the majority of candidates came from collectivist societies. The literature suggests that individuals from a collectivist society will place the ideas of the group above their individual views, and I witnessed this during the observations by those from collectivist societies such as the Middle East and South Asian societies. Similarly, D10, from an Individual culture cluster, argued that she could obtain more on her own rather than with the group. From these findings, it was clear that there are differences of opinion aligned with culture clusters, and this would indicate that there are cultural influences within this theme impacting knowledge transfer.

An interesting observation centred on the session where the groups were routinely altered. Despite the changing group members, the initial subconscious duty undertaken by the new group was to ensure the cohesiveness of the group, at the expense of the overall task. This aligns with the views of Venaik *et al.* (2013) argument that the group is immediately integrated, and robust in-group support provided based on the values of the group. But this research provides a deeper insight by illustrating how the need to unite as a group is of a greater priority than the task allocated to that group. This has significant implications to professional practice, as it implies any new group should be given time to integrate before being expected to perform. Once formed, the group is then ideally placed to transfer knowledge successfully. This supports the literature and the ideas of Argote and Fahrenkopf (2016) who suggests that knowledge, especially tacit knowledge, occurs better within the network rather than across networks. It also supports the views of Nonaka *et al.* (1994) who argue that overlapping areas of expertise and shared interpretation are crucial to knowledge transfer, and this was articulated by the focus group who strongly advocated the accession by listening to others within the group. This implies that there are cultural influences associated with individual aptitudes and these should be considered and factored into training sessions.

The findings of this theme highlighted the significant influence of culture manifest in the way the candidates had a desire to migrate to their culture cluster colleagues whenever possible, despite being comfortable with folk from different cultures. Though there was no specific need to share values, alignment was important and this could be achieved through shared organisational codes and language. All candidates enjoyed working in groups, but the group formation dynamic was of greater priority than the group achieving the task and this limited the effectiveness of the group initially. This phenomenon was not culturally bound.

5.4.4 Practical Professional Advice. The contribution to professional knowledge centres on the need for professional trainers to understand that candidates are comfortable to mix with other cultures, but have a preference to migrate back to their own cultural group. Diversity can be achieved by mixing groups, but care must be taken not to reduce the inclusivity of the training. Trainers and candidate values should not be confused with alignment. While there can be a difference in values, the trainer should make all efforts to align with the candidates. This can be achieved through trainer culture training of individuals and the organisation. All candidates enjoy group activities, but the knowledge transfer effectiveness may be missed unless the training objectives are clear, measurable, and achieved by all as some candidates may hide within the group or other group members attempt to take over. Changing groups around could address this lack of effectiveness, but trainers should be mindful that group needs will always out prioritise task needs so time should be allocated to allow the group to determine the group dynamics.

5.5 AMBIGUITY

5.5.1 Embracing Uncertainty. The next emergent theme was centred on ambiguity, and this touched on uncertainty, change and risk. All the trainers who participated in this research understood the need to remove ambiguity by making their training clear as articulated by T2, '*the clearer, the better*'. However, there were differences of opinion regarding training flexibility, with T2 suggesting that he would be happy to allow a discussion to flow into new areas, whereas T3 was quite clear that the training had to stick to a strict script so that the candidates knew what was happening and why. For the candidates, the ambiguity was mainly focussed around uncertainty and their levels of comfort with uncertainty. To explore that area, the interview questions probed feelings associated with the trainer not knowing the answer to a question or providing incorrect data in an attempt to perceive how the candidates would feel if the knowledge provided was ambiguous or erroneous.

Many of the candidates felt that the trainer should provide the correct information as articulated by D9, '……*the trainer he has better information, and we don't have his experience, and we are there to learn*', a point shared by the focus group who suggested the trainer should provide the information. However, if he didn't, then they would look for

the information as a group as enunciated by D18, '…….*we would go with the majority*'. The focus group did disagree with the trainer on one occasion regarding a sales technique, and the discussion became quite heated. The group became quite animated and almost formed a circle around the trainer as they enforced their opinion. It ended with the trainer suggesting that people have different opinions, but it was evident from the disagreement that the trainer had lost some credibility and the attitude of the candidates altered towards him, evidenced through a lack of listening, seating position so that chairs did not directly face him, and a lack of questions during subsequent discussions. Other delegates held the belief that it was healthy to engage in discussion and the uncertainty provided a learning experience as D7 suggested, '*For me it is fine. Even though he's experienced (the trainer) things can put you off your guard, and you can't know everything. We would talk and learn from each other, as we are all experienced in our ways*'.

The literature suggests that ambiguous situations and risk are generally avoided in high uncertainty avoidance situations, in what Dumetz (2012) sees as a threat to life. To re-create this ambiguity, the interview questions focussed on creating a scenario where the trainer failed to provide convincing arguments to explore the levels of comfort felt by the candidates when confronted by this ambiguity and uncertainty. This research supports the literature argument with candidates from high uncertainty avoidance societies deferring to a more negative approach to the trainer when he did not provide the necessary knowledge. In contrast, those candidates from low uncertainty avoidance societies tended to be more comfortable with ambiguity. Indeed, during the observations, a heated discussion broke out between a group of candidates (South Asian culture cluster - high uncertainty avoidance) and the trainer where the candidates disagreed with the trainer and rallied as a group to address the uncertainty. This was an interesting observation because the actions of the candidates were in line with the discomfort felt by the uncertainty, thus supporting the uncertainty avoidance views of Tu *et al.* (2020) but contradict the views of Prince et al. (2020) who argue that individuals from high uncertainty avoidance cultures avoid conflict. It also contradicts the views of Rojo *et al*. (2020) who contends that a high power distance society (South Asia) emphasise authority. This could imply that some culture dimensions have a greater significance than others, and when faced with a dilemma between two conflicting culture dimensions, one will dominate the other.

These findings infer that societies from high power distance cultures expect the trainer to provide the information, and that information is correct and should be accepted. However, those from low power distance societies are happy to accept the trainer may have a different perspective and be providing an alternate idea for consideration.

5.5.2 Coping with Change. During one of the observed presentation skills training sessions, there was a need to change the training venue, and this seemed to cause quite a problem for some of the candidates. I spoke to several of them over a coffee break, and some were deeply concerned that they had to now do a presentation in an unfamiliar environment, arguing that it was wrong as the course was booked in advance and the hotel should not just change a room partway through a course. I probed this area during the interview by asking the candidates how they would implement a change at work and how they would feel about it. The majority suggested that they would seek a consensus before making the change as highlighted by D6, '*I explain the process and the workflow, how we will have control on that, I explain properly to them, and they are convinced*'. This point was raised by several of the candidates with D9 suggesting, '*I discuss with the people who's working with me and share with those below me so we can discuss and make a plan, so that if I say something new they come to that direction*'.

Another aspect of ambiguity surrounded the idea of change and comfort with change. This concept was observed during the aforementioned room change. The candidates from South Asia and Arabic cultures (both high uncertainty avoidance societies) expressed discomfort at having to change rooms, as they would not be familiar with the layout of the room or how the equipment would work. They were also annoyed that the hotel had changed the room mid-course, which they inferred to mean a breaking of rules. This supports the ideas of Farivar *et al.* (2015) who argue that individuals from high uncertainty avoidance societies are wary of the future and need rules. I have witnessed this many times in the Middle East, where managers favour making decisions when faced with all of the appropriate rules or directives and will rarely make a decision based on a hunch.

This can also impact the knowledge transfer process as highlighted by Nooteboom *et al.* (2000) who argue that a joint goal can be achieved through a reduced cognitive distance formed by mental forms created through interaction and the environment. Changing the environment can negatively impact the success of knowledge transfer, and this was

evidenced as the group unconsciously split between those that presented pre-move and those that presented post-move.

The interviews also raised several key points about change and the feelings of ambiguity associated with change. The literature argues that those individuals from high power distance societies will defer to higher levels of social hierarchy as proposed by Prooijen and Song (2020). This research shows that those from South Asia and Arabic societies did make decisions, but invariably sought the approval of superiors or sought collaborative approval, which supports the literature. Additionally, the candidate from German European culture used terms such as 'I decide,' 'I make a choice,' and this infers that the candidate is comfortable with their ability to make a decision, but also the perceived support of the supervisor, which is in line with the argument of Matusitz and Musambira, (2013). Change is ever-present, but some cope better than others with it, indicating a cultural influence in answer to the research question. From a professional training perspective, change must be minimised, and where change occurs, the implications must be understood.

The inference from these findings is that high power distance societies are less comfortable with change and the influence impacts across many areas. These individuals seek more guidance or someone to blame from a higher hierarchical position. Low power distance individuals are more content with choice and decisions without guidance but with knowledge of events.

5.5.3 Tolerating Risk. The final category associated with his theme to emerge from the data converged around the idea of risk. The findings varied with some advocating a discomfort towards risk, while others expressed a level of comfort with risk. Interestingly, all of those who suggested a level of comfort with risk all seemed excited by the prospect but attached a caveat, for example, D11 suggested, '*Everyone knows that I like to ask the awkward question, so I guess I am a risk-taker. But I would never take a parachute jump*', D14 added, '*I am not afraid to take risks, but calculated risks, if it's a crazy thing at work then I don't take it*', and D5 said, *'If I have an idea about something I will take a high risk, but if I do not know, then I won't*'.

However, the majority of the candidates showed resistance to the subject of risk. When I approached the subject in the interviews, it was evident by the non-verbal

communication that they were uncomfortable with the subject and this was supported by their answers, for example, D12 suggested, '*I don't like taking risks …….. in my planning I always expect the worst…… I always expect that something wrong will happen if I am not careful about it*'.

As with change acceptance, the risk acceptance was aimed at determining how much ambiguity the candidates were prepared to accept in the quest for knowledge. As with change, risk can be associated with uncertainty, and the literature argues a high uncertainty avoidance society is associated with balancing optimal stability with minimal risk as postured by Matusitz and Musambira (2013). This research partially supports this argument with some candidates from high uncertainty avoidance societies stating that they did not like to take risks.

However, others from the same culture expressed an opposing opinion, stating they were content to take risks, which contradicts the literature and indicates that this is a universal characteristic, not culturally influenced. What varied with all candidates was the degree of uncertainty associated with the risk they were prepared to accept. Minkov *et al.* (2010) argue that risk is a percentage of probability. This research supports that view in that all candidates, irrespective of background, demonstrated a degree of anxiety when exposed to a high probability of a risk occurring, the degree of discomfort was differentiated culturally suggesting this category is culturally influenced. This research expands the literature concerning risk acceptance and provides professional advice to explore all avenues of risk. Once addressed, the environmental context can be created whereby the procedural and technical knowledge elements of the Knowledge Transfer Model can be explored in relative safety. This can be used to facilitate the internalisation of explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge, as suggested by Nonaka *et al.* (2000).

The findings for this theme indicate that culture influences how individuals perceive the information provided by the trainer with some seeing it as the unequivocal source of knowledge, while others saw the knowledge provided as more of a guide for individual interpretation. However, reactions from the former group when the knowledge provided was questionable appeared extreme. Some cultural societies were uncomfortable with change, saw it impacting on their work, and sought someone/something to blame for the change, while others were less comfortable, but only to a point. Attitude to risk varied from one culture cluster to another, although everyone had their limits of risk and the

degree if information available and the probability of the risk occurring altered perspectives.

5.5.4 Practical Professional Advice. The trainer must understand that for some, the knowledge provided is unquestionable and must be correct, whereas, for others, it is the basis for debate. The trainer must identify which candidate requires which type of knowledge presentation.

5.6 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

5.6.1 Learning Environment. The final theme focuses on the organisation and the environment within which the knowledge is created, stored or transferred. This theme provided insights into organisational as well as individual perspectives. The findings associate with this theme centred on the learning environment and the time provided for the candidates to undertake training, whereas, the individual findings were evidenced through the candidates understanding of the training relevance and the training needs of company and individual.

While conducting the research it became evident, particularly during the interviews, that the allocation of training was not always aligned to a company goal, and where it was, the company vision was not articulated clearly. Two of the training activities were based on training to enhance the management skills of those identified as having clear potential for future advancement within the company. One of the companies did not tell the candidates the purpose of the course or why they were selected for it, as D4 stated, '*I do not have any idea……. I was selected and received an email. I asked myself, why m*'? D6 and D7, agreed that they did not know what the course was about, or why they had been selected for it. Interestingly, D11 (who worked for the same organisation as D4, D6 and D7) was unaware of the training, but was far more comfortable with the ambiguity suggesting, '*It's not a problem, I just take it as it comes'.*

This breakdown in the communication between the training departments and the operational sectors was supported by the in-company trainer T1 who suggested, '*We focus heavily on training, but when you look at different departments, it is well for a few months then operations take over, and their priorities come first. Nevertheless, there are some departments who are just into operations*.' This view was supported by T3 offering,

'*We need to train people, but we just plonked a model in place that makes monitory sense. You've got to tailor the training for the individual, the problem is, we are not really doing that*'. Finally, the third trainer, T2, summed up the feelings, '*There is a gap between the people who have been trained and the person organising the training*'.

However, the other course created as part of a talent management process did communicate to their staff, as D13 expressed, '*They are seeing that we are talented or having the potential to grow. So they invest in developing us for the future*.' These thoughts were echoed by D10 (who was on the same course), and it was clear while observing this course that these candidates felt as though they had been chosen explicitly for future higher positions. This was observed during the training when the candidates talked in-group activity discussions, or socially, their focus was always on how their new skills could help them in their next position, not just their current role. Conversely, the group that wasn't informed about the training were focussed totally on their present job, and there was little if any talk of using the training in future positions. The various training departments have a training aspiration, but their message does not get down to all departments or is obstructed by some departments. This breakdown aligns with the ideas of Islam *et al*. (2016) who argue that a learning culture is required to facilitate knowledge transfer.

Several of the candidates in the other groups suggested the training was generally available and applied for as required. Regarding training, D6 added, ' *It is pretty ad hoc, you know what I mean, it's not something that you would start the year and say I want to do A, B and C and schedule your time and finish it*'. The focus group all acknowledged that training was available but was not planned or structured. These findings symbolise a rigid organisation, set in their ways, and not open to new ideas, which is in line with the characterisations proposed by Gil and Mataveli (2016) for a company that lacks a learning culture.

The literature argues that a barrier to knowledge transfer is the organisational distance between source and recipient suggest Yen *et al.* (2018), and this research indicates support for that view. When exploring the concept of the learning environment, the candidates working for the company that informed them of the purpose of the training candidates used the new knowledge in more varied and imaginative ways as evidenced by the use of it for positions that the candidates are not familiar with but can visualise.

This implies assimilation of knowledge at the tacit level as the knowledge is leveraged beyond the explicit domain in support of the views of Nonaki (1994) that tacit knowledge is a cognitive dimension and supports the argument of Lie (2020) that tacit knowledge is the real-world application of knowledge. Conversely, the candidates working for the company that did not inform them of the purpose of the training only viewed the training as new knowledge that could be applied directly to what they were doing at that time. They knew the knowledge, but not the application to use it in a different context. This supports the argument proffered by Cumming and Tengs (2003) that procedural knowledge can be obscured if not articulated appropriately, or if the shared values are not in line.

The candidates that expressed concern about not knowing the course details came from a high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance societies. The literature suggests that these societies defer to higher levels of hierarchy, Prooijen and Song (2020), and are likely to be less independent, Hofstede (2001) and this research supports those observations. Indeed, further confirmation of this support comes from the one candidate from the group not informed of the training purpose that came from low power distance/low uncertainty avoidance, which was content to do that course and 'take it as it comes.' In the other group, all the candidates were content that they knew the details, irrespective of societal background. This would infer that culture does influence how individuals react without the relevant information, but when informed appropriately, the results are universal.

Interestingly, Aurigemma and Matson (2018) suggest that a society with mixed uncertainty avoidance can be a source of aggravation in organised life and rules must be explained clearly to remove ambiguity. However, this research highlighted such an occasion, but the aggravation never materialised. Consequently, this research challenges the literature. The practical implication for practice is to ensure all personnel are informed, as the staff reactions will alter depending upon their cultural background.

5.6.2 Understanding The Relevance And Needs Of Training. While the training provision did not always align with company goals, the candidates generally knew the relevance of the training for them and their organisations with many supporting the view that the training would benefit them and, ultimately, would benefit the organisation as D15

suggested, '*if the training change an employee by say 10% then that will be good for the company. My career will change accordingly and the company will also benefit'.*

The allocation of training across the various organisations, except for the two emerging talent courses, tended to follow the same process, namely a series of courses made available and the candidates volunteer for them. The candidates all recognised the need for training and that it was meaningful for them. This supports the argument of Meyer *et al.* (2019) that knowledge transfer is enhanced if the training is meaningful. However, the literature of Khan *et al.* (2019) also argues the congruity between learning intent and motivation, highlighting the need for individuals to recognise the training as a high priority. This research indicated that this prioritisation does not exist and this will impact the knowledge transfer process. This finding was observed across the whole, which would suggest that this is a universal phenomenon that is not culturally influenced. The practical professional advice suggests that training supervisors must ensure training is meaningful, but it must also be prioritised if knowledge transfer is to be achieved.

5.6.3 Providing Time For Training. All candidates suggested that the training came at a cost and this cost was time. Many suggested they were allocated time to do the training and it was anticipated that there would be a drop in operational impact as expressed by D13 who, when asked if his manager accepted there would be a drop in output during the training added, '*Sure, they fully appreciate it*'. However, not all of the candidates agreed, with the focus group and several candidates suggesting they would be expected to make up the work in their own time as suggested by D16 saying, *'Sometimes we are asked to do more hours after work, but this is only usually when busy'.*

Finally, all candidates suggested that when busy, the companies demanded they work longer hours to make up for the training that had been undertaken. All openly expressed this view with few grievances or complaints. The argument expressed by Smith and Robson (2019) indicates that individuals from a collectivist society put the interest of the group before their interests, the inference being that individualist societies place their needs above those of the group. However, the evidence of this research challenges that notion as all accepted the need to provide more for the organisation when the organisation was busy, irrespective of cultural background.

The findings of this research highlight the need to ensure the knowledge is appropriate to the receiver, and that this is clearly articulated. Without knowing the purpose of the training, the candidates, irrespective of cultural background, have little interest in it, and this inhibits the transfer process. In addition, the candidates need to be made aware of the relevance of the training and providing sufficient time for the candidate to complete the training should strengthen this factor.

5.6.4. **Practical Professional Advice.** Training manager and training staff should ensure the candidates are aware of the need for the training, and they should be made aware of its relevance far beyond simply allocating an individual training. Without this, there can be little enthusiasm for the candidate, even if the course is expressed as a talent development course. To further enhance the credibility of the training or knowledge, time should be allocated for the individual to complete the course in company time. Without this, or if the candidate is expected to make up the lost work time, it is likely the candidate will choose to work over completing the training or receiving the knowledge.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to determine from the research findings what key themes are culturally influenced in the management training context and what key themes are not culturally influenced. To achieve this, the various categories were analysed and the data obtained evaluated to determine if there was a common thread that themed along the data and was aligned with the culture clusters of those involved in the research.

Culturally Influential. Data that aligned with culture clusters in what Schien (2017) terms collective learned behaviour, or cultural.

Universal. Data that was the same across all candidates indicating what Schein (*ibid*) terms human nature, inherited, or universal.

The influential Categories and Themes as shown below in Table 2:

Table 2. Influential Categories and Themes

Category	Theme	Culturally Influential / Universal
Utilising learning styles	Training Process	Influential
Managing training		Influential
Predictability		Influential
Embracing uncertainty	Ambiguity	Influential
Coping with change		Influential
Tolerating risk		Influential
Learning environment	Organisational Culture	Universal
Understand relevance and needs of training		Universal
Providing time for training		Universal
Communicating	Communication	Influential
Engaging		Universal
Ensuring correct use of language for clarity		Universal
Trainer Error Notification		Influential
Understanding cultural differences	Individual Aptitude	Observation
Shared values		Universal
Group working		Influential

The research question sought to find the impact that National Culture has on the knowledge transfer between trainers and learners from different nationalities in the management context? The findings and subsequent analysis showed a mix of cultural influences with some themes being more influenced than others. The Training Process and Ambiguity themes included categories that were all culturally influenced. The Communication and Individual Aptitude themes had a mix of universal and culturally influenced categories within, whereas the Organisation Culture theme was universally biased. This indicates that culture does have an impact on the knowledge transfer

process, but that influence varies depending upon the theme. This observation can significantly advance cross-cultural management training practice by offering professional advice on how to enhance training sessions.

In addressing the research aim of making recommendations to improve the knowledge transfer process across cultures; this research has made several suggestions based on the research and the findings. In addition, one of the research objectives was to explore critical factors that might facilitate or impede the knowledge transfer process, and this research has addressed this objective by identifying and exploring several critical factors.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

6.1 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

6.1.1 Reasons for Conducting Research. The UAE has enjoyed near-instant wealth courtesy of an oil-fuelled economy for over fifty years. However, a bi-product of that wealth creation has been a reliance on foreign expertise and knowledge, creating a population demographic with Emirati nationals making only 12% of the population, (Global Media Insight, 2020). An initiative to address this imbalance was introduced in the 1990s but has had mixed success, Daleure (2017). The region succeeds in attracting international knowledge but remains dependant on international workers, Nore (2019), and fails to transfer the knowledge required to transition into an endogenous workforce. I have worked as an international management trainer and an adviser to the UAE military for over eight years, and I have witnessed training interventions routinely fail. I believe that one of the most significant causes of this is a lack of recognition of the influence that national culture has on knowledge transfer. While the deficit is recognised in the literature, there is a knowledge gap associated with the influence that culture has on knowledge transmission within the management training sector. Consequently, this research will go some way to filling that gap.

6.1.2 Conduct of Research. To satisfy my research curiosity, I did not just want to prove that culture influenced knowledge transfer and measure the significance, I wanted to know why the phenomenon occurred so that I could make contributions to professional practice. I believe that understanding is socially constructed and that knowledge is obtained from perceptions and narratives, and that leads to an interpretivist philosophical position. I consider contextual, sophisticated understanding to be crucial to my research, and I recognised that my positionality within the research was fundamental. These beliefs align with a qualitative research methodology, Saunders *et al.* (2016). Key to the success of this research was its validity. I used a multiple case study, participant observations, and interview methods. These methods assured the research was robust, detailed, and the use of multiple research methods provided additional validity through triangulation. Training observations formed the basis of the research, with follow up interviews and a focus group.

I arranged the observations using personal connections, and this greatly facilitated access. Notwithstanding, I had no control over the training subjects, the candidate's nationalities, or the training and interview venues. Arranging more observations than were necessary mitigated these risks. However, the training subjects proved wholly suitable, the candidates provided the necessary culture diversification, and the training rooms and interview locations were excellent, so the redundancies were not required. The candidates that I selected for interview satisfied my research requirements in that they were suitably culturally diverse, held similar management positions, but were also displayed a strength of character such that they were open, honest, and forthright during the interviews.

The research design centred on a conceptual framework based on the Cummings and Tengs (2003) knowledge transfer model. This framework combined the Knowledge Transfer Model and a Culture Behaviours Indicator to bring together the knowledge and culture elements into one framework. From here, a Knowledge Transfer Model Observation Matrix was created to expose key observation phenomenon, and an Interview Design Matrix helped focus the interview themes to help create the various interview schedules. The data obtained from the research was thematically analysed, and an Analysis Coding Breakdown Matrix helped to identify key themes.
From here, the research findings were gathered for final analysis.

The research findings demonstrated that several key themes showed significant levels of cultural influence, while other findings demonstrated universal traits. Consequently, the research suggests that national culture does influence knowledge transfer.

6.2 RESEARCH OUTCOMES?

6.2.1 Research Question, Aims, and Objectives. One of the greatest challenges faced by this research was the link between theory and practice, in particular, linking knowledge to national culture in a way that data could be obtained that would identify the areas of exploration. This challenge was achieved by creating the conceptual framework and knowledge transfer model.

6.2.2 Research Question. The research asked the question, what impact does National Culture have on the transfer of knowledge between trainers and learners from

different nationalities in the management context? Several of the themes identified through the various analysis stages showed the cultural influence that impacted the knowledge transfer process. In contrast, several themes illustrated universal behaviour traits. Consequently, the research does answer the research question and highlights numerous themes that will contribute to academic knowledge and professional practice.

6.2.3 Research Aims. The research aims looked at investigating current management training practices, critically reflecting on current themes, and making recommendations to professional practice. The research aims were all achieved. The in-depth observations and interviews provided a considerably detailed investigation into current management training practice. The literature review section of this thesis critically highlights the current themes and ideas, and throughout the thesis, there have been several recommendations to academic and professional practice.

6.2.4 Research Objectives. The objectives of the research sought to review the literature, focusing critically on several key areas, and this was completed in chapter two of this thesis. The identification of factors that could impede or facilitate knowledge transfer was achieved using a combination of my practical experience and the use of the various frameworks that were constructed from the conceptual framework; this helped identify key aspects that built the research strategy. The fieldwork to evaluate current practice and to propose professional and academic recommendations was conducted using multiple observations and interviews. Consequently, I achieved all of the objectives.

6.3 DISCUSSIONS ON VALIDITY

6.3.1 Validity in Qualitative Research. Creswell and Miller (2000) suggest that the multiple notions such as authenticity, goodness, trustworthy and credibility often confuse when referring to the validity within qualitative research. Ravitch and Carl (2016) describe validity as the way a researcher can confirm that findings are faithful to participant's observations, or, put another way, the quality and rigour of the research. They go on to acknowledge the views of Creswell and Miller (2000) but add that the debate is not merely a semantic one, but one that raises epistemological and ontological questions. Notwithstanding any semantic confusions, one area that all agree on is that the concept of developing validity is essential in qualitative research. While validity in

qualitative research can never be fully ensured argue Cho and Trent (2006, pp.322-321), validity can be assured using 'systematic ways in which to assess a study's rigour' argue Hamersley and Atkinson (2007). However, Creswell and Miller (2000, pp.125) remind us that 'qualitative research uses lenses to establish views of those participating or observing, and these lenses shape the validity'.

6.3.2 Research Validity. During this research, my positionality, the lens I use, and the qualitative paradigm that I have selected to design and conduct the research, have all been factored into it. However, despite the critique of using a technical instrument or strategy to gauge validity, Maxwell, (2013) I created a Validity Criterion Matrix to use as a check on myself to ensure that I remained faithful to the methodology and to align with the suggestion of Cho and Trent (2006) that researchers should revisit facts, feelings and values to ensure higher levels of accuracy. By checking all facts against the Validity Criterion Matrix, I was able to ensure that I remained faithful to my methodological promises.

6.3.3. Validity Success. The validity of the research was assured using a combination of triangulation across various methods, and constant referral to the Validity Criterion Matrix, for example, the use of mind maps and the maintenance of research notes, satisfied the dependability criteria and the use of prolonged engagement and peer debriefing assuaged the credibility criteria.

6.4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.4.1 Background to Findings Identification. The research findings were identified by thematically analysing the data to create various categories and determining from further analysis if a common thread emerged that was aligned with a cluster culture. If alignment was identified that followed a specific culture cluster, then the assumption was that the category was culturally influenced. The various categories were further analysed

to determine themes and the breakdown of cultural influence across the categories identified if a theme was culturally influenced or universal.

6.4.2 Research Findings. The results of the findings are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Summary of Research Findings

Category	Theme	Culturally Influential / Universal
Utilising learning styles	Training Process	Influential
Managing training		Influential
Predictability		Influential
Embracing uncertainty	Ambiguity	Influential
Coping with change		Influential
Tolerating risk		Influential
Learning environment	Organisational Culture	Universal
Understand relevance and needs of training		Universal
Providing time for training		Universal
Communicating	Communication	Influential
Engaging		Universal
Ensuring correct use of language for clarity		Universal
Trainer Error Notification		Influential
Understanding cultural differences	Individual Aptitude	Observation
Shared values		Universal
Group working		Influential

Of the five identified themes, only two themes indicated cultural influence based on all of the supporting categories being culturally influenced. This indicates that the training processes and the attitude towards ambiguity are key factors that could impact knowledge transfer, and that they are culturally influential, meaning that culture plays a

significant role in how these factors are assumed by the candidates and must be considered in order to maximise training effectiveness. Conversely, organisational culture demonstrated universal traits across all categories indicating that the factors highlighted under this theme are not culturally influenced but are generic to all. The final themes had a split in the cultural influence indicators, suggesting that some categories, such as communicating, trainer error notification and group working were influenced by culture, whereas engaging, ensuring correct use of language for clarity, and shared values appeared to not be culturally influenced. The understanding culture differences category did not identify with either influential or universal, with no discernible patterns identified.

6.5 CONTRIBUTIONS

6.5.1 Theoretic Knowledge Contribution. To aid better understanding of the link between knowledge transfer and national culture within the management training environment, this research has addressed the main problem in the area, namely, combining the separate entities: knowledge transfer, national culture and the management training context into a single model. The contribution this research makes to theoretic knowledge is centred on the significance the Conceptual Framework can play in determining future research. One of the biggest challenges facing this research was explicating knowledge transfer and culture within context. There is a paucity of models or methods that combine the two phenomena to amalgamate them into a single artefact. This contextual framework brings together these unrelated but intimately entwined concepts and provides a single process that facilitates observation.

Also, the Knowledge Transfer Model Observation Matrix identifies areas within the Cummings and Teng (2003) knowledge transfer model contributes by identifying and explicating observation criteria into a single matrix that can be used in future research. The interview design matrix contributes by providing a link between national culture and the training environment. The review of the literature does not provide any similar matrix. Consequently, the Conceptual Framework, Knowledge Transformation Model and Interview Design Matrix all contribute to theoretic knowledge.

6.5.2 Practical Knowledge Contribution. This research makes contributions to practical knowledge in several areas based upon the role within the knowledge transfer process of the reader, and this will be broken down into three areas:

6.5.2.1 Training Managers/HR Professionals/Training Decision Makers. This research contributes to practical knowledge for training managers by providing a model that they can use to ensure those factors that are culturally contingent are identified, and action is taken to mitigate their negative influences. In the modern world were globalisation forces workers from culturally diverse backgrounds to work together, there is a greater need for training managers to ensure the training is designed and delivered appropriately. This model will facilitate that. The research also contributes by highlighting the significance of the perception of training to the organisation and the individual. A compelling finding of the research was the universal importance of creating an organisational culture. While many training decision-makers will acknowledge this fact, it was clear in this research that there was a considerable gap between how the organisation perceived the training, and how the individuals perceived it. This perceptual gap is particularly noteworthy as the organisation marketed two of the observed courses as courses designed to train individuals that the company perceived to be future leaders. Sadly, this message was not articulated to many of the candidates, and the significance of the training to the individuals was lost. The importance of creating a learning environment is also well known by training decision-makers, but several candidates suggested that this accounted for little more than an opportunity to undertake randomly assigned training courses. Finally, once allocated a course, the candidates should be permitted time away from their primary duties to focus on the training and not be expected to make up the time after the training. All of these factors undermine the training process and reduce the significance of it. In addition to this, training decision-makers need to ensure that any training accommodates the cultural influences highlighted in this thesis. This accommodation can be achieved by questioning the trainer at the course design stage to determine how the training will accommodate the culture issues raised by this research.

6.5.2.2 Trainers. The contribution this research makes towards professional trainer practice is centred on findings the trainer should take into consideration when designing and delivering training. It was clear from the research that the trainers understood many of the potential problems that could inhibit knowledge transfer. However, they did not

appreciate the fact that individuals from different cultural backgrounds would feel so strongly influenced by traits that the trainer exhibited or skills that he failed to use. Trainers must be aware of themselves and their habits, especially linguistic habits, such as the effect of pragmatism in their discourse. As this research has illustrated, the influence of culture pervades much of the issues associated with training design and delivery, and trainers should factor culture into their course design, vary delivery styles, and consider the implications to each candidate before embarking on any training exercise. The diversity of opinions and the variety of views expressed across the culture divide makes designing and delivering a course that satisfies every candidate almost impossible. However, there are several elements, such as ensuring the training plan is clearly articulated and followed, that will help create a more conducive learning environment. Trainers need to learn more about the culture, values and beliefs of all of the candidates to ensure that all training is inclusive.

6.5.2.3 Candidates. The contribution to the practice for the candidates is to illustrate the significance of training and to ensure that they realise the training is for them and should be designed and delivered accordingly. If the candidates perceive there to be a problem with the training, they can look to this research to determine where the failure occurred. However, candidates have to be aware that knowledge transfer is a two-way process, and they have to be situated within a learning frame of mind. By referring to the knowledge transfer model, candidates can ensure they have taken all necessary steps to achieve the ideal personal knowledge transfer environment.

6.5.2.4.Contributions beyond the Geographic Region and Management Training Context.

This research was conducted within the UAE and the management training environment. However, I believe that it has utility beyond these geographic and contextual boundaries and can be transferrable across many countries and operational environments. The knowledge transfer model breaks down knowledge into observable elements and these can be overlaid across many industries. Similarly, the utilitarian and global applicability of culture dimensions supports the argument for the model's universal practicality. I believe that the implementation of this research, and the models created within, could easily be incorporated into any organisation's learning and development section to ensure that knowledge is acquired, transferred and implemented, irrespective of business or workforce cultural backgrounds.

6.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND PROPOSED RESEARCH EXTENSIONS

6.6.1 Further Research. While this research addressed several of the issues associated with the influence of culture on knowledge transfer, the research was limited in certain areas, and there remain many interesting areas where this research could be extended. These limitations and extension ideas are highlighted below:

6.6.2 Observations. This research could be extended if more observations were conducted and covered a more diverse spread in the following areas:

6.6.2.1 Companies. The companies used in this research were selected because I knew someone in the company and could leverage access by using my colleagues as gatekeepers. While the diversity of the companies that I used satisfied the required research requirements, extending the research to cover more organisations would provide even greater diversity to substantiate or refute my research findings. All of the companies were private international companies, so it would be interesting to extend the research to cover government agencies and private small businesses.

6.6.2.2 Individuals. I was not provided with a list of names or nationalities before the training started, and this was a significant research risk and limitation. Fortunately, the candidates attending the various courses satisfied my research requirements. However, had I been granted a list of candidate names and nationalities before the training I would have had more control over candidate selection, and this could have enhanced the research findings. The individuals observed all came from similar management levels, which limited the breadth of the research, although it did enable greater depth to be achieved. However, this research could be extended to varying management levels to determine if the findings were purely culture-based or if there was a variance depending on management grade.

6.6.3 Candidate Culture Clusters. There was a limitation regarding the culture clusters as not all clusters were represented in the sample from which I could choose. The UAE has a culture demographic such that the Indian populous is significantly more prevalent than any other culture, (Global Media Insight, 2020). Consequently, there was a natural bias towards this demographic, and this was reflected in my research. My research could

be extended if there was a greater spread of culture clusters so that all clusters were represented.

6.6.4 Geographic Location. Bryman and Bell (2013) suggest one criticism of qualitative research is that the scope of findings is restricted due to the dependence upon the context. This research was conducted in the UAE, and this may be seen as a limitation, although, I see this as a strength as it situates the research within context, thus making it more applicable. However, this research could be extended if it were conducted in other countries in the region.

6.6.5 Time Limitations. The time available to conduct the observations was limited because the course length determined it. To comply with my validity requirements, the minimum observation period was two days of observations. All of the courses observed I satisfied that requirement. The interviews were conducted during work time, so I was reliant on the good will of the company to ensure I was provided with time to conduct the interviews. When I arranged the research, I made it clear to the senior managers that sanctioned my research that I would require two hours to conduct the interviews, and this was provided. Although my research satisfied my timing requirements, it could have been extended had I been able to choose courses that lasted longer as this would provide greater exposure to the candidates and trainer in the naturalistic training setting.

6.7 REFLECTION

6.7.1 Personal Change. This academic journey has made significant changes to me as a manager and as a researcher. I have conducted many projects in the past, but at no time until I completed this research have, I ever questioned my thoughts, reflected on my perspectives, or considered the implications of my positionality within the research that I have previously conducted. Even during my previous academic work, I did not evaluate my values, beliefs or philosophical position to the degree that I did during this venture, and it has enlightened me in how my thoughts and values manifest themselves.

From a practical perspective, I now find that I am significantly more critical of data that is presented to me, either at work or in my research. I fear I have been guilty of accepting information as valid in the past without considering the motives, and biases of the provider of the information. I now find that during my work the degree of criticality that I apply, and

the need that I now have to ensure validity is achieved, in particular regarding my note-taking and record keeping, makes my work significantly more effective.

However, the greatest change in me has been the increased thirst for knowledge that I have now developed, not just at the superficial level, but also at a far deeper level as I seek out the reason for the phenomenon. The academic process has been a long and demanding challenge, however, like all challenges, the greater demand, the greater the reward. I initially found academic writing confusing, and I struggled to understand the meaning and quickly lost interest. Nevertheless, with perseverance and a good dictionary, I quickly learned to embrace the writing style and no find that academic writing is factually better suited to the knowledge that I seek.

6.7.2 Professional Reflections. My research and the academic journey have had a profound effect on how I conduct my training. Historically, when creating a course, I would pursue training methods that I felt the candidates would enjoy and would enable knowledge to be successfully transferred. However, at no time did I consider multiple training strands to cater to multiple learning styles or cultural learning requirements. I now find that inclusivity is at the front of my training thoughts and is a fundamental part of my training. I utilise all of the findings from this research, and they have proven highly effective. The results have been far greater interaction with all of the candidates and an increase in the positive feedback comments. More significantly, I have acquired a far greater personal reward by knowing that I am providing a far better service to my customers.

6.7.3 Final Thoughts. This research has been a demanding but rewarding journey. However, most of all, it has been a fun experience. I embarked on this journey as I wanted to test myself, and I feel that I have certainly been tested. I have questioned my ability many times, lost sleep worrying about my performance, and found myself on long walks attempting to rationalise my thoughts and ideas. I was recently asked if I would go through this process again. Absolutely I would.

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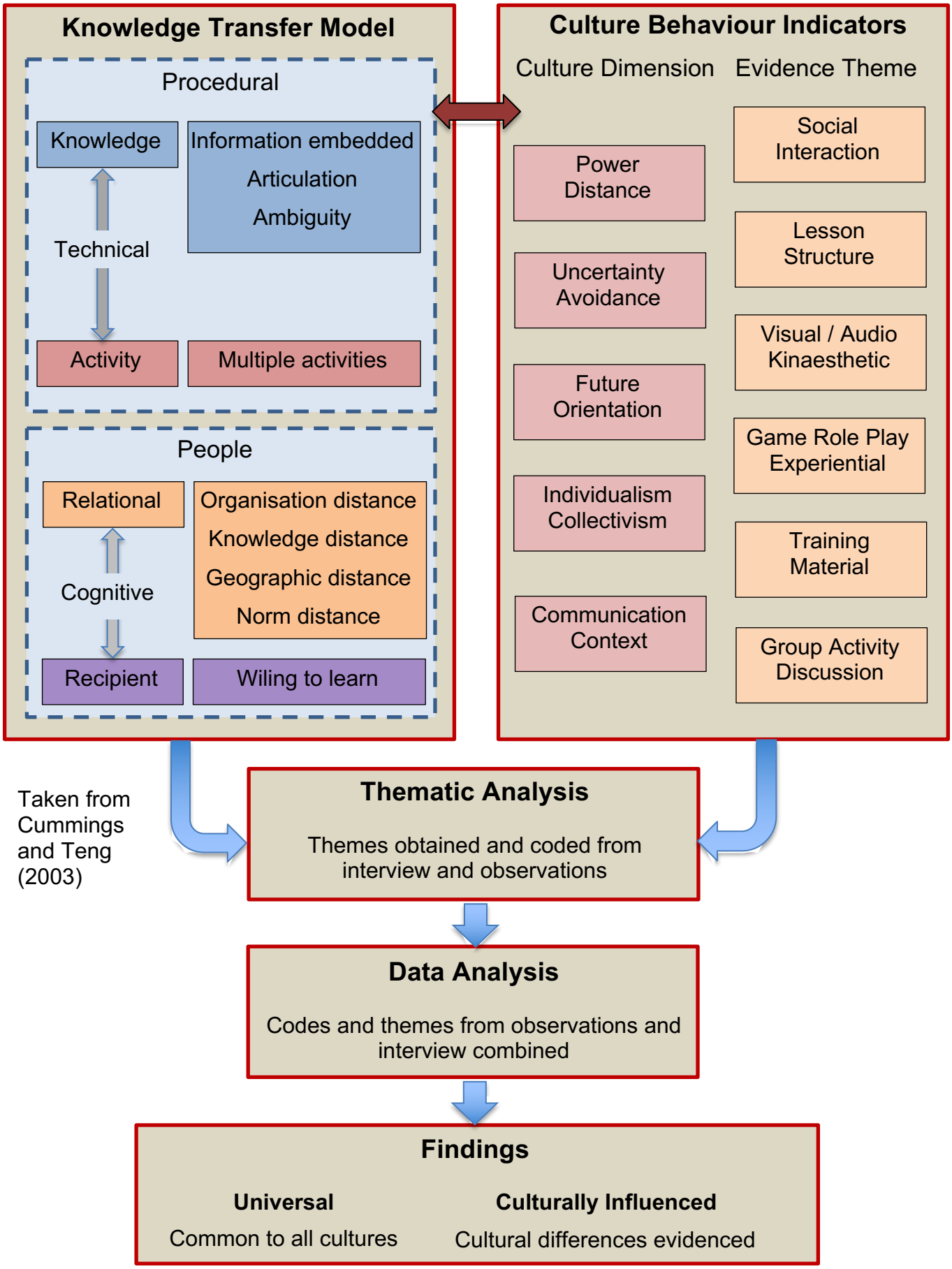
APPENDIX A - VALIDITY CRITERION.

Criteria	Meaning	How Addressed	
Credibility	The 'fit' between respondents views and the researcher's representation of them	1. Prolonged Engagement	Spending a minimum two days observing delegates in the training environment.
		2. Data Triangulation	Observing varied training sessions
		3. Peer debriefing	Peers to review interpretations
Dependability	Logical approach to the research process	1. Ensure process is logical	Peer review
		2. Traceable	Ensure all processes, thoughts and ideas are captured and available
		3. Clearly documented	All documentation, including field notes, made available
		4. Auditable	Evidence of decisions
			Raw data maintenance
			Transcripts available
			Reflexive journal
Confirmability	Interpretations and findings obtained from data	1. Identification of methodological choices	Document clearly why methodological choices are made
		2. Use markers to identify choices	Ensure decisions are easy to find and track within research
		3. Audit trail	Evidence trail provided to show rationale behind decisions made
Reflexivity	Identifying and addressing the researcher's role within the research	1. Identify the researcher's positionality	Identify and clarify the role and position of the researcher
		2. Identify the researcher's beliefs, values and epistemic position to taken into consideration with the research	Highlight researcher's beliefs, values and epistemic position and state the impact this could have on the research

		3. Identify ways in which the researcher's positionality has influenced the research design	State the researcher's positionality and highlight the influence this has on the research design
		4. Maintain self-critical record of research process to aid understanding and strengthen audit process	A self-critical journal will be used to record all decisions, thoughts, values and beliefs associated with the research
		5. Observer bias- biases introduced because the researcher views phenomena from their perspective only	Observations will be taken over several days to provide sufficient time for the researcher to familiarise himself with the various interpretations of each phenomena. Use informant verification during the interviews or during the observations to confirm ideas.
		6. Observer Effect- the influence that the researcher being there has on the environment, reducing its naturalistic nature.	This can be reduced by extended observations and the researcher being involved in the training, a process known as Habituation.
Rigour	Ensuring the research is completed as true to the methodological ideas as possible	1. Develop research that seeks complexity and contextualisation through the structure.	Ensure the research is designed to capture the complexity and context of the research field
		2. Ensure strategic sequencing and mapping of research methods	Continually re-assess research methods to ensure adherence to methodological practices

		3. Maintain fidelity to participants experiences, be responsive to emerging themes while maintaining systemic data capture and analysis	Provide an environment where data can emerge without losing control of the research aim. Ensure precise data analysis using NVivo, codification and thematic analysis as required.
		4. Represent as complex and contextual a picture of people, experiences and events as possible	Ensure that data is rich, descriptions are detailed and accurate
		5. Ensure research is transparent, especially those areas where the study is limited or failed in some way	Ensure that all details are captured and recorded. If a research process fails, then determine why and provide guidance for subsequent follow-on research

APPENDIX B - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DESIGN



APPENDIX C - KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MODEL (KTM) OBSERVATION MATRIX

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MODEL (KTM)				
AREA	**KTM THEME**	**DETAIL**	**OBSERVATION CRITERIA**	
Procedural (Technical)	Knowledge	Information embedded?	Information sharing:	Is training relevant to Trainer? Does Trainer understand needs of Delegate?
			Involvement:	Is the training involved or didactic? Alignment of source and recipient?
		Articulation	Multiple methods:	Routines Tools Ideas Products Terminology
			Is the need for training understood?	Training need understood by delegates? Learning objectives used? Lesson aims/goals used? Did Trainer always achieve objective? If not, what did he do to get the point across?
		Ambiguity	What knowledge is being transferred? Is it understood?	Why is training happening? Linked to business/individual? Training structured? Clear training direction? Tacitness of Knowledge? Did Delegates ask questions about course outline?
	Activity	Multiple activities	Timing:	How much time allocated to activities?

				Where delegates comfortable with time allocation
			Different learning styles:	What styles used? How styles used? Complementary? Diverse or aligned with business? Storytelling? Artefacts?
			Multiple intelligent theory: (Gardner 1983)	Linguistic (Use the right words) Visual/spacial (Visualise world in 3D) Interpersonal (Sensing people's feelings) Intrapersonal (Understanding yourself) Musical (Differing sounds, pitch, tone) Kinaesthetic (Coordinating mind and body) Naturalistic (Understanding living things)
People (Cognitive)	Relational	Organisation distance	Company/external Trainer:	Compare interactions Business knowledge used? Facilitate engagement?
			Ext Trainer understanding:	Does the in-company trainer understand the business and does this make a difference?
			Variety:	Is experiential training used/effective? What activities used? Aligned with business or individuals?
			Relationship:	Do Trainer and Delegate share values (timing, interests)
			Interaction:	Do Trainer and Delegate interact socially away from the training? How do they interact? Language, stories, jokes Is there trust between trainer and delegate?
		Knowledge Distance	Trainer knowledge:	How much does the trainer know about the delegate's job? Does he use this?

People (Cognitive)	Relational			Technical language used?
			Similarity:	Does the Trainer use examples from the delegate's job to facilitate transfer? Is there any overlapping expertise? Correct technical language used by trainer?
			Interaction:	How much engagement is there between Trainer and Delegate? Does the Delegate find the engagement useful?
			Code differences:	What language is used? Is language understood?
		Geographic Distance	Communication:	Non verbal language (kinesics, proxemics, chronemics) Does the Trainer engage in face-to-face communications with delegate? Language used? Joke/ story, anecdotes?
			Socialising:	Do the Delegates socialise and mix easily? What language used? What non-verbal queues displayed? How do delegates interact with superiors/subordinates? How do groups solve problems? Group discussion?
			Trainer physical interaction:	Does the Trainer move around the room? Does he touch Delegates? What non-verbal queues used? Reaction of Delegates?
			Individual work:	How much interaction was there in the training?

People (Cognitive)	Relational			How much did the Delegates have to work alone? What group activities took place? How enthusiastically did the Delegates take to the group activities? Did all Delegates get involved or did some refuse?
		Norm Distance	Shared values:	Do Trainer/Delegate share work values (timing, work accuracy, work completed to standard) Adherence to rules? Acceptable/unacceptable (games [winners/losers], discussions, role plays) How does Trainer handle mistakes?
			Predictability:	How predictable was the course? How accurately did it match the outline/schedule? Was there any confusion over what was happening? Did any Delegates express at not knowing what was happening? Did the activities match the subject matter?
			Structure:	How structured was the course? How structured was the training material? How much time allocated to activities?
	Recipient	Willing to learn	Previous learning:	How much previous learning had the Delegates done? How was this learning used? How did the Trainer use the learning experience? How were previous learning examples used? Were experienced learners used as examples?
			Environment:	Take advantage of the opportunity to learn?

People (Cognitive)				Advantage to learn from Trainer outside of course?
			Motivation:	Were the Delegates motivated? Engage with the training? All get involved? All ask questions? Time keeping after breaks Attention paid Impromptu breaks and leaving course Note taking
			Variety sought:	Questions asked Enthusiasm to join new activities Discussion forums Enjoy reading or avoid?
			Learning relevance: Was the course appropriate to the job?	Was course aligned with career enhancement for Trainers or business benefit? Will the delegates use the new knowledge?
			Errors:	Reaction of individual after a mistake Reaction of group to individual mistake Reaction of group to group mistake Learn from mistakes?

APPENDIX D - INTERVIEW DESIGN MATRIX

INTERVIEW DESIGN MATRIX											
THEME	SER	POWER DISTANCE (PD)		UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE (UA)		FUTURE ORIENTATION (FO)		INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIVE (IC)		COMMUNICATION CONTEXT (CC)	
		Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K
Social Interaction	1	Was the trainer experienced?	Is there a power distance perceived between trainer and delegate	Did you understand the lesson aims?	Did you understand the aims	How useful will the training be in the future?	Is the delegate thinking about how he can use this course in the future?	What values do you share	Values shared or individual	How well did you understand verbal messages?	How well is knowledge communicated
	2	How did the trainer engage with you?		How much ambiguity?		How could you use the concept		How much do you share values with colleagues		How well was it articulated	
	3	How similar are you and the trainer		Was the course predictable	Was the course predictable?	Why are you doing the training? Individual / Company		How well did you understand the intention of other members of the group?		How well was the knowledge explained	
	4	Who decides what training is done		How predictable are you and your colleagues	Do you like predictability ?						

THEME	SER	POWER DISTANCE (PD)		UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE (UA)		FUTURE ORIENTATION (FO)		INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIVE (IC)		COMMUNICATION CONTEXT (CC)	
		Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K
Lesson Structure	5	How did the lesson structure help you?	Is there a need for structure?	How well was the lesson plan structured and clear?	Did the lesson structure feel comfortable od could delegate cope with fluid, non-structured lesson	How did the trainer outline goals of the training?		How well did the structure suit you?		How explicitly was the lesson structure explained to you?	
	6	What was favourite part of the course	Does structure help understand	What impact does having a timetable have for you?		How useful are goals in training?		How well did the structure suit the group?		How much time was allocated to discussions?	
	7	What part imparted the most knowledge				How relevant to your tasks did you perceive the training to be?				How did you feel about this?	
	8					What flexibility comfortable with?					
Visual / Auditory	9	How valuable were the visual images and sound to you?	Do visual aids facilitate learning?	How much clarity did the images and sounds provide?	Do pictures remove the ambiguity / uncertainty	Did various visual images and sounds link to future tasks?	Do images resonate with any future emotions?	How engaged was your group during visual and auditory activities?	Do images bring the group together?	Messages clear from the visual and auditory activities?	Does structure add clarity to the message?
	10					How did they represent your visions and goals?				Visual and auditory activities appropriate?	
	11									What impact did they have on learning for you?	

THEME	SER	POWER DISTANCE (PD)		UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE (UA)		FUTURE ORIENTATION (FO)		INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIVE (IC)		COMMUNICATION CONTEXT (CC)	
		Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K
Game / Role Play / Experiential	12	How well did you engage in the activities?	How much comfort in delegate engaging in group activities?	What process did you use to solve any problems?	How much risk prepared to take	How well did the activities align with your business role?	Do the game/role play activities align with your future business options?	How well did your group interact?	Do you prefer to work in a group or as individuals?	Where did you seek to get information for the various activities?	Is participation and experience a strong communication trait?
	13	How did you feel about them?	Is there a hidden dynamic	How often did you try something new?		How strongly do you think the activities aligned with your future business?		How were the various roles and duties allocated?		How did you communicate within the group?	
	14							Was this a good way to allocate?		How effective was your communication?	
Material	15	How engaging was the material?		How important is reading material to you?		How much does it help you for any future positions or tasks?		How important are guidelines and references to learning?		How would you feel if the manual was your only source of reference?	
	16			How would you feel if you found that there where mistakes within the manual?						Would you be interested in seeking knowledge on the subject from elsewhere?	

THEME	SER	POWER DISTANCE (PD)		UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE (UA)		FUTURE ORIENTATION (FO)		INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIVE (IC)		COMMUNICATION CONTEXT (CC)	
		Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme	Question	Theme
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K
Group Discussion	17	How much did you enjoy this aspect?	Comfort with group discussion	How would you feel if the boss of your team asked you to start a task without a plan?	Does group activity remove ambiguity / uncertainty	How much do you enjoy taking risks?	Is it more important that you address issues for the future and risk embarrass yourself, or save face now?	How well did the group bond?	One group or individuals?	What language was used during the training?	Primary language used? Does the use of English make life difficult or complicated? Does the communicatio n follow a monochromic or polychromic style of linguistic Pattern?
	18	Did you engage with superiors / subordinates	Comfort engaging up and down?	Group discussion when you have nothing to input?		How well do the group discussions solve problems?		Did everyone contribute evenly?		Native language when tasks became complex?	
	19	Was it useful?		Discussions remove ambiguity?						How effective are group discussions?	
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MODEL											
Knowledge Context		A5		C5		E5, E6, E7, E15, E17		G15		J1. J2, J3, J15	
Activity Distance		A9, A12, A13, A15		C9		E9, E10, E12, E13		G9		J5, J6, J7, J9, J10, J11	
Organisation Distance		Is company learning focussed? A4, E3		Whose decision? Yours or Company?		What do Org expect		Does org encourage training G12		How much training have you done	
Knowledge Distance		A1, A2, A3		C2, C2				G12		J13, J17, J18	
Geography Distance		A17, A18, A19, A20		Does training meet larger Org goals		How well do you know the others? E18		G17, G18, G19		J19, J20	
Norm Distance		A5		C3, C4, C6, C15, C17, C18, C19		E1, E8		G1, G2, G3, G5, G6		J12	
Recipient Context		Did you enjoy the training		Subject importance? C12, C13		How will you use the knowledge		Will you change co-workers		J16	

APPENDIX E - ANALYSIS CODING BREAKDOWN

Initial Code	Developed Code	Category	Theme
Communicating	Communicating	Communicating	Communication
Learning Environment	Shared verbal/Non verbal language understanding	Engaging	
Understanding Cultural Differences	Knowledge Transmission	Ensuring correct use of language for clarity	
Engaging	Body Language	Trainer Error Notification	
Ambiguity	Unconscious use of Idioms		
Understanding Language	Trainer/Candidate similarity		
Training Quality	Engaging		
Group Activity	Ensure Training Relevance for Clarity		
Power Distance	Understanding the need for knowledge sharing		
Aims/objectives Known	Use of English Language for explanations		
Appreciating Support	Group activity including discussions		
Trainer Experience	Trainer Error Notification		
Measuring Success	Speaking out against authority		

Initial Code	Developed Code	Category	Theme
Training to meet company needs	Use of visual information		
Training Importance	Experiential Learning		
Lesson Structure	Interest shown in reading and manuals		
Training Relevance	Use and understanding of Game Play		
Learning Styles	Audio Learning		
English Language	Story Telling		
Visuals	Significance of teams and team spirit to the individual	Utilising learning styles	Training Process
Motivation	How/was success measured?	Managing training	
Face Saving	Training Management	Predictability	
Knowledge Transmission	Was supervisor support required/provided?		
Hierarchical Structure	Lesson Structure for knowledge understanding		
Understanding Risk	Aims and objectives for knowledge clarity		
Values	Memorable Activity		
Understanding Experiential Learning	Training Importance to the individual		

Initial Code		Developed Code	Category	Theme
Flexibility		Understanding Cultural Differences		
Leadership		Individual or collective points of view		
Individual Collective		Training Quality		
Reading and Manuals		Motivation		
Changing Mindsets		Values		
Body Language		Trainer-Delegate Shared Values	Understanding cultural differences	Individual Aptitude
Being Accountability		Confidence	Shared values	
Wanting to Learn		Empowerment seeking	Group working	
Understanding Game Play		Face Saving		
Teambuilding		Desire for improvement		
Trainer Error Notification		Comfort with risk		
Story Telling		Understanding/Accepting position in group		
Knowledge Sharing		Leadership qualities/needs		
Feeling Confidant		Integrity		
Trainer-Delegate Sharing Values		Don't Know Answer- Feeling		

Initial Code	Developed Code	Category	Theme
Managing Training	Decision Making		
Empowering and Empowerment	Lateral/unconventional thinking		
Audio Learning	Comfort with flexibility		
Making Money	Comfort with ambiguity and unfamiliarity	Embracing uncertainty	Ambiguity
Relationship Building	Importance of planning	Coping with change	
Managing Change	Importance of time management	Tolerating risk	
Using Idioms	Accountability		
Why Train	Relationships Importance		
Personal Appearance	Change Management		
Relationships Importance	Conflict resolution and comfort		
Business Changing	Importance of personal appearance		
Decision Making	Trainer experience		
Don't Know Answer- Feeling	Religion		

Initial Code	Developed Code	Category	Theme
Planning	Learning Environment	Learning environment	Organisational Culture
Managing Time	Hierarchical Structure	Understanding the relevance and needs of training	
Time available to Train	Training to meet company needs	Providing time for training	
Using Innovation	Making Money		
Integrity	Why Train		
Trainer Age	Time available to Train		
Trainer Can't Answer Question	Trainer shows weaknesses		
Cognitive Bias	Cognitive bias/ habits		
Understanding Conflict	Efforts/ enthusiasm to changing mind sets		
Memorable Activity	Relationship Building		
Religion	Business Changing		
Trainer Appearance			

APPENDIX F BACKGROUND TO COMPANIES USED IN RESEARCH.

Company Details

Ser	Company Business	Employee Demographics	Course Details	Training Environment	Remarks
A	Global insurance company with French heritage	Diverse workforce, mainly Indian and Philippine but with some French and English employees.	The course was a module in a senior management preparation course. The trainer was part of the L and D team working for HR within the company. The course was a bespoke Presentation Skills course.	Training took place within company headquarters building in bespoke training facility. Glass walls caused lots of interruptions and distractions	This course was designed specifically for these delegates, and they were nominated for the course. The trainer knew the delegates and designed the course around their capabilities.
B	Global pharmaceutical company with Danish heritage.	Diverse workforce but mainly Arab and Indian.	The course was a module in a senior management preparation course. The trainer was external to the company. The course was a bespoke Key Account Management course.	Training took place in local hotel. Excellent room and great facilities for the trainer.	This was a standard course modified for this company's training needs. The delegates were nominated for the training. The trainer had not net the delegates before the course started.

C	Regional heavy plant machinery manufacturing / operating company.	Diverse workforce but mainly Arab and Indian.	This course was a standalone Sales Management course. The trainer works for the company but normally conducts operations type training such as machine operating, driving.	Training took place within company training facility. A small room made for very cramped conditions. Lots of interruptions and distractions.	This was a standard sales course. The delegates were a mix between volunteers and nominated personnel. The trainer did not know the delegates as some had flown in from other regions.
D	Global luxury make up and perfume company with significant French heritage.	Diverse workforce but mainly Arab and Philippine.	The course was developed to enhance the capabilities of employees and was stand-alone and was not part of an employee's personal development plan. The trainer was external to the company. The course was a standard Presentation Skills course.	Training took place in local hotel. Adequate room but glass walls meant lots of distractions.	This was a standard course, not modified for the company. The delegates were all volunteers.

APPENDIX G INTERVIEWEE DETAILS.

Interviewee Number	Company Code	Culture Cluster	Additional Details
T1	A	South Asia	Male Philippine trainer working for company
T2		Anglo	Male Australian trainer working as independent training consultant
T3	C	Anglo	Male British trainer working for company, also freelancing independent
D4	A	South Asia	Male middle manager from India
D5	D	South Asia	Male middle manager from Philippine
D6	A	South Asia	Female middle manager from India
D7	A	Confucian Asia	Female manager from Taiwan
D8	C	South Asia	Male manager from India
D9	C	South Asia	Male manager from India
D10	B	Anglo	Female manager from America
D11	A	Germanic Europe	Female manager from Germany
D12	D	Arab	Male manager from UAE
D13	B	Arab	Male manager from Egypt
D14	C	South Asia	Male manager from India
D15	C	South Asia	Male manager from India
D16	C	South Asia	Male manager from India
D17	C	South Asia	Male manager from India
D18	C	South Asia	Male manager from India

APPENDIX H – CANDIDATE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.

Research Area	Theme Sought	Questions (Basic questions- seek out reasons why and examples)
Organisation Context	Learning organisation? Are learners self-driven Motivation	• How important is training to you? • How important is training to your organisation? • Who decides what training you do? • How much support do you get from your supervisors to do training? • What do the organisation expect from the training? • Is it part of a larger organisation goal? • How much are you encouraged to use your training and change the way business is conducted accordingly?
Social Interaction	Hierarchical perspective of trainer Engagement / Participation Levels Embedded nature of information Value similarities between trainer and delegates Articulation.	• Was the trainer experienced? • Important to you? • How did the trainer engage with you? • How similar are you and the trainer? Important? • Did you understand the lesson aims? • What values do you share? • How much do you share values with colleagues? • How well did you understand verbal messages? • How well was it articulated?

		• How well was the knowledge explained?
Lesson Structure	Ambiguity Predictability Uncertainty comfort Structured-unstructured = take control or lead Goals for future	• How much ambiguity? • Was the course predictable? • How predictable are you and your colleagues? • How did the lesson structure help you? • How well was the lesson plan structured and clear? • What impact does having a timetable have for you? • How did the trainer outline goals of the training? • How useful are goals in training? • What flexibility would you be comfortable with? Why • How much time was allocated to discussions and disagreements?
Visual Auditory	Learning styles Multi intelligence theory Cultural differences Language use	• How valuable were the visual images and sound to you? • How much clarity did the images and sounds provide? • How well did the various visual images and sounds link to future tasks? • How did they represent your visions and goals? • How engaged was your group during visual and auditory activities?

		• How clear where the messages that came from the visual and auditory activities? • Where the visual and auditory activities appropriate? • What impact did they have on learning for you?
Game / Role Play / Experiential Training	Engagement Experience Interrelationships Communication Learning styles Multi intelligence theory Cultural differences	• How much did you enjoy the experiential learning experience? • How well did you mix wit the other delegates? • How useful were the role-play activities? • What traits did the trainer have that distracted you?
Material	Engagement Learning styles Communications Importance of guidelines Thoughts about trainer if errors found- reaction Future reading-preparation Motivation	• How engaging was the material? • How important is reading material to you? • How would you feel if you found that there where mistakes within the manual? • How important are guidelines and references to learning? • How does an experience, explained within a manual or reference, help you with learning? • How would you feel if the manual was your only source of reference?
Group Activity	Communication Language use Group dynamics and interactions	• How much did you enjoy this aspect? • Did you engage with superiors/subordinates? • Was it useful?

	Power assertion within groups Uncertainty within unfamiliar groups Culture differences	• Do you speak your mind or what you think others want to hear? • How did you feel in group activities? • How comfortable are you in a group discussion when you feel you have nothing to input? • How well do group discussions remove ambiguity? • How much do you enjoy taking risks? • How well do group discussions solve problems? • How well did the group bond? • Did everyone contribute evenly? • How confident are you that your point will be acknowledged? • How effective are group discussions? • What language do you use in group discussion? • What language do you use socially? • What language would you use to solve a problem if you were with your friends?

APPENDIX J – TRAINER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.

Research Area	Theme Sought	Questions (Basic questions- seek out reasons why and examples)
Organisation Context	Learning organisation? Are learners self-driven Motivation	• How important is training to the organisation/Individual? • Who decides what training you do? • How much support do the delegates get from their supervisors to do training? • Is it part of a larger organisation goal? • How dos the organisation measure training success?
Social Interaction	Hierarchical perspective of trainer Engagement / Participation Levels Embedded nature of information Value similarities between trainer and delegates Articulation.	• Is the trainers experience important? • How important is it that you engage with the delegates? • How much similarity is there between you and the delegates in terms of values and beliefs? • How can you tell if a delegate has understood the lesson aims or objectives?
Lesson Structure	Ambiguity Predictability Uncertainty comfort	• How important is it that her lesson has a clear structure? • How important is it that the delegates understand the lesson aims or objectives?

	Structured-unstructured = take control or lead Goals for future	• How important is it that the lessons are clear and unambiguous? • When providing training do you give an outline of the daily activities? • How important is the managing of your lesson time to the delegates? • Do you explain the goals of the training to the delegates? • How useful are goals in training? • Does training have to be exactly relevant to the job? • How much flexibility is there in how you structure a lesson?
Visual Auditory	Learning styles Multi intelligence theory Cultural differences Language use	• How important are visual images to your training? • How do you use visual images in your training? • What are the benefits of visual images to training? • Do you use visual images the same in this country as you did in your country of origin? • How do you use sounds in your training? Benefits? • Do you sound the same in this country as you did in your country of origin? • Do the visuals and sounds that you provide reflect your visions and goals? • How clear are the messages transmitted through visual and auditory activities?

		• What auditory and visual activities do you use during your training?
Game / Role Play / Experiential Training	Engagement Experience Interrelationships Communication Learning styles Multi intelligence theory Cultural differences	• How Important is it that the delegates get to experience certain skills? • How often do you employ experiential learning? • How important is it that the experience is closely related to the work environment? • How effective would an experiential training activity be, if it were purely abstract? • Do you use game activity in your training? • How do games enhance learning? Why?
Material	Engagement Learning styles Communications Importance of guidelines Thoughts about trainer if errors found- reaction Future reading-preparation Motivation	• How important is it to provide the delegates with a training manual? • How engaging is a training manual? • How important is reading material to the delegates in your training? • How would you feel if you found that there where mistakes within the manual? • How important are guidelines and references to learning? • What is the purpose of your manual is it a reference document or a document to use just during the training? • Do you encourage the delegates to seek information from other sources other than what you provide?
Group Activity	Communication Language use	• How important are group discussion activities to training?

	Group dynamics and interactions Power assertion within groups Uncertainty within unfamiliar groups Culture differences Tailored training delivery	• How do you deal with power inequalities in a group discussion? • What are the problems associated with group discussions? • How well do groups solve problems? • What language do you use for training? • Would you consider using another language or an interpreter? • Do you believe that every word that you say is fully understood? • Do you alter the pitch tone or speed of your delivery language in this part of the world compared to the your country of origin? • Do you consider how you look to be important during the training? • If a delegate asks you a question and you do not know the answer what do you do? • If a delegate disagrees with something you've said what do you do? • If a delegate is clearly not understanding your lesson, what do you do? • If a delegate was struggling to understand you how could you make your meaning more easily understood? • How important is your non-verbal communication during your delivery? • What strategies do you use to control your non-verbal communication and non-verbal cues?

APPENDIX K - STATEMENT OF CONSENT TEMPLATE

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, which I may keep for records.

STATEMENT	YES	NO
I agree to being interviewed by the researcher.		
I agree for the interview to be audio recorded.		
I agree to make myself available for a further interview.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can choose not to participate in part or the entire project.		
I understand that I can withdraw at any stage of the interview process and up to 14 days of the interview without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.		
I confirm that I am happy for the data that I provide to be used and stored as explained within the Participant Information Sheet and I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study.		
I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.		
I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.		

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisory Team: Dr Hala Mansour PhD, MSc, BA (Hon), PGCHE, PGCRS, MCMI, FHEA (hala.mansour@northamptonuniversity.ac.uk)