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# Understanding What Drives Informal Learning at Work: An Application of the Resource-Based View

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The resource-based view identifies a number of factors that may influence employees' informal learning. In a cross-sectional survey of 113 German employees in the energy sector, we examined a number of potential predictors of informal learning and a more positive informal learning attitude. The results showed that proactive help-seeking and professional self-efficacy were positive predictors of informal learning. Employees who were older, who enjoyed learning, sought help and were self-efficacious learners had a more positive attitude towards informal learning. Employees who had a more positive attitude about informal learning rated organisational learning provisions as less important, potentially due to being proactive help-seekers. Managers rated organisational learning resources as less important than non-managerial employees. However, managers also reported higher professional self-efficacy. These circumstances may also influence their decision-making regarding the need to provide learning resources to others in the workplace.

*Keywords:* informal learning, self-efficacy, help-seeking, learning resources, resource-based view

## Introduction

Strategies aimed at building the potential of one's staff are usually supported by formal training. Organisations recognise that human resources are also a resource of competitive advantage, hence the need for continuous investment in training, employee engagement, and talent management. However, both the content and process of learning in organisations are subject to individual and organisational learning (Antonacopoulou, 2006). Organisations wishing to maintain a competitive advantage need employees that are willing to contribute to organisations by continuously developing their skills and capabilities (Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Senge, 1990). Organisations increasingly rely on the flexibility, creativity and skills of their employees in order to stay competitive and develop innovative ideas. If there are no learning structures in place, employees often engage less in learning activities (Antonacopoulou, 2006). Not surprisingly, companies invest

heavily in formal and structured employee development. This approach often involves seminars and courses, many of which are off-the-job activities (Clarke, 2004; Marsick, 2006). The activities might not necessarily take place in the work setting (e.g., the training can take place in specialised training or assessment centres, colleges and schools).

Recent research acknowledges the relevance of informal learning and the importance of both encouraging and acknowledging it at work (Beck, 2012). Informal learning has been defined as on-the-job-learning (Clarke, 2004) that may take place in the workplace and outside work. Indeed, the world of work presents employees with numerous opportunities to learn and develop their capabilities and skills (Chen, Kim, Moon, & Meriam, 2008). This type of learning is predominantly initiated by the learner, motivated by the need to develop oneself, and occurs in more informal rather than formal training settings (Noe, 2013). Informal learning may emerge as individuals acquire new skills and knowledge while working with others, shadowing them, and working on different and challenging assignments. In this paper, the focus is on informal learning on the job. The article is organised in several sections. First, we outline how the resource-based view (Grant, 1991) may help to explain informal learning. Second, we present our hypotheses. This is followed by the methods and the discussion of our results. The final section includes a discussion of potential practical repercussions and lessons relevant to organisational learning and managers responsible for supporting learning at work.

### **An Application of the Resource-Based View to Informal Learning**

Both formal and informal learning are required to expertly navigate the challenges that employees face during their working life (Tynjälä, 2008). Both contribute to maintaining a competitive advantage, not just for the organisation, but also for the employees themselves. Past research has shown that both employees' resources and organisational resources contribute and mutually reinforce in informal learning situations (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). The resource-based view by Grant (1991) may be important here as it connects organisational strategy, resources and skills. According to this view, strategy formulation involves five elements: (a) analysing an organisation's resource base; (b) appraising the organisation's capabilities; (c) analysing the profit-earning potential of the resources and capabilities located in the organisation; (d) selecting an appropriate strategy and, where required, also (e) extending and upgrading the resources and capabilities of the organisation (Grant, 1991).

The resource-based view represents an organisational 'lens' through which it is possible to understand the links between resources, strategies and actions. However, the extent to which organisational resources

exist, and the degree to which they will support learning, often depends on situational circumstances and other factors. This is important as informal learning is often a part of employee behaviour that heavily depends on opportunity – rather than on structure and a training budget. Informal learning captures employee behaviours that are not necessarily reflected in organisational provisions, and, in the absence of resources and strategies, employees are unlikely to have such opportunities at work.

In other words, we propose that Grant's (1991) view can also be applied to understanding the elements that contribute to informal learning of individuals within an organisation. We therefore use the resource-based view as a general framework to understand informal learning, rather than a predictive model, as has been discussed in regard to the resource-based view (Barney, 2001).

Past work has shown that resources may also include employee-shaped variables such as specific capabilities (Galbreath, 2005). Even more so, we suggest that many of the organisational elements shape and are influenced by individual circumstances – all of which may facilitate or hinder employees' informal learning. In addition, these resources may contribute to the employees' capabilities and competitive advantage, as well as to the strategies that contribute to and feed back into the pool of resources in turn.

*Resources.* Organisations make numerous decisions that affect their resource allocation, their capabilities, and their training strategies, in order to build and pursue a competitive advantage. Resources may take different forms. For example, a competitive advantage may be gained by investing into employee learning, promoting employee engagement with learning activities and, specifically, by providing them with the resources to engage in continuous learning via knowledge-sharing (Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2007; Saks, 2006; Tynjälä, 2008). Resources may determine the extent to which an organisation will provide employees with the necessary provisions and learning conditions that support learning formally and informally. Moreover, employees need to be willing to utilise those options (Billett, 2004), in order for resources to have the desired outcome of organisational learning. This may be fostered by a positive training climate at work (Tracey & Tews, 2005) as this can further support informal learning.

A positive learning culture is likely to feature norms and values that encourage learning, supports the transfer of what is learned (Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanagh, 1995). Jobs that provide employees with development opportunities in organisations have also been shown to establish a job development climate positively related to employees' affective commitment (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008). A number of studies have demonstrated the merits of employees being exposed to mentally demanding and

stimulating learning opportunities in the workplace (Marquie et al., 2010; Schooler, Mulatu, & Oates, 1999). This research has shown that such opportunities may promote cognitive functioning, which may enhance cognitive performance as we age (Potter, Plassman, Helms, Foster, & Edwards, 2006). This means learning resources are key to fostering the overall capability of employees.

*Capabilities.* Employees' self-efficacy and motivation to learn may also play an important role in shaping employee capabilities and, via their combined potential, organisational capabilities to deal with situations that require rapid learning. With respect to learning, self-efficacy can be defined as a person's belief as to whether or not he or she will be capable of successfully acquiring new knowledge and skills (Noe, 2013). Employees' self-efficacy beliefs capture the capabilities that employees make available to organisations. They are an important determinant of the willingness to learn, especially when the learner faces potential obstacles (Noe, 2013).

Various facets of self-efficacy exist. Learning self-efficacy can be defined as the perceived ability of individuals to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills. It is negatively related to job content plateauing, particularly among older managerial and professional employees (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). Memory self-efficacy captures the perceived ability of individuals to remember and recall information and details. Both facets are influenced by age, education and prior knowledge (Hastings & West, 2011), as well as continuous learning opportunities to adapt to life circumstances (Judge & Ilies, 2002). Generally, older workers are less likely to participate in formal as well as informal training (see review by Kyndt & Baert, 2013), in part due to seniority and the lack of opportunities being made available to them within their companies (Schulz & Stamov Roßnagel, 2010).

Professional self-efficacy is based on both learning and memory self-efficacy, but this concept further considers employee interactions with others as part of their professional role or position. The concept of professional self-efficacy recognises that we also evaluate our abilities in line with the roles we take on. Individual learning reflects interests, past experiences, as well as the social identity of the learner, all of which are also influenced by the professional culture (Antonacopoulou, 2006). One's professional self-efficacy is facilitated by one's learning experience and understanding of the position, the challenges that arise in one's job, and the willingness to tackle whatever new challenges the individual will face in the future.

Since informal learning is self-motivated and learner-imitated, informal learning is also likely to be driven by the confidence an employee has in his or her ability to succeed (which may be based on their perceived memory, learning and professional self-efficacy; Abele, Stief, & Andrä, 2000; Zelinski & Gilewski, 2004). Professional self-efficacy enables employees to deal with



changes in a proactive, rather than reactive manner, which is why experience (often correlated with age) will help develop one's professional self-efficacy.

Informal, as well as formal, activities and opportunities for development play an important role in supporting practice-based learning amongst professionals (Gold, Thorpe, Woodall & Sadler-Smith, 2007), and maintaining the skills and capabilities of all employees overall. Participation in work-related learning is also predicted by employee self-efficacy (Kyndt & Baert, 2013). Informal learning attitude may similarly predict informal learning outcomes. Past work suggests that attitude and participation in both voluntary and informal work-related learning are correlated (Hurtz & Williams, 2009; Maurer, Wrenn, Pierce, Tross, & Collins, 2003).

This suggests that the various sub-facets of self-efficacy may play an important role in workplace learning, as they may foster expertise as well as a willingness to self-improve. Learning success (and the experience of difficulties) is very likely a matter of how much room an employee feels there is for such development (e.g., in terms of opportunities, time and materials). In addition, since informal learning is self-motivated and initiated by the learner, informal learning is also likely to be driven by the confidence an employee has in his or her ability to succeed (which may be based on their perceived memory, learning and professional self-efficacy; Abele et al., 2000; Zelinski & Geliwski, 2004). More capable (self-efficacious) employees are more likely to be able to contribute to new ideas, innovation and thus contribute to the organisation's overall competitive advantage.

*Competitive advantage.* A strong belief in the merit of continuous improvement in combination with organisational encouragement may also support learning in organisations (Antonacopoulou, 2006). Both play a role in achieving and maintaining a competitive advantage (e.g., in terms of creativity or innovation, which may support patent development and financial performance). Employees' expectations about building their knowledge and skills while at work and their enjoyment of learning at work may further contribute to learning on the job. Maurer et al. (2003) found that self-efficacy for learning and development was linked to the improvability belief of career-relevant skills. Greater informal learning and a positive learning attitude may represent a competitive advantage by encouraging unstructured and self-initiated learning and knowledge sharing. How competitive advantage translates into strategic actions in the organisation may depend in particular on what strategies take precedence. For example, if there are knowledge creation and support strategies in place, it is also more likely that these will result in actual action plans to support learning activities and structures that improve knowledge building, sharing and management.

*Strategies.* Presenting employees with learning opportunities on the job may present an important organisational strategy by managers and employ-

ers. Only when managers give individuals the opportunity and room to learn can they expect their employees to engage in informal learning. Indeed, Van der Heijden, Gorgievski, and de Lange (2015) observed that the learning value of the job played a positive role in personal flexibility, anticipation and optimisation – some of the key dimensions of employability – using supervisory ratings of employees. They concluded that positions that provide learning opportunities (learning value) are essential to sustainable employability (Van der Heijden et al., 2015). However, they also noted that age interacted with the learning value of the job. The relationship was stronger when self-rated occupational expertise was higher (Van der Heijden et al., 2015).

### **Focus of the Study and Hypotheses**

The purpose of the study is to examine how employee and organisational factors may, in line with the components of the resource-based view, influence informal learning attitude and informal learning in an organisational setting in a German company. The first set of hypotheses focus on employee-related predictors of learning, while the last hypothesis focuses on organisational predictors of learning.

- H1a *Professional, learning and memory self-efficacy increase learning on the job.*
- H1b *Self-efficacy in these three domains predicts a more positive attitude towards informal learning at work.*
- H2a *Satisfaction with learning, the belief in self-improvement, and proactive help-seeking increase learning on the job.*
- H2b *Satisfaction with learning, the belief in self-improvement and proactive help-seeking predict a more positive attitude towards informal learning at work.*
- H3 *A positive training climate at work, the perceived availability of learning-related provisions, and the organisational striving towards improvement increase employees' self-reported learning on the job.*

### **Method**

#### **Procedure**

Data for this study were obtained in cooperation with a medium-sized German company in the energy sector. Employees were invited to participate in the on-line survey via an e-mail sent out by the Human Resource department. Participation was voluntary. For confidentiality reasons, the name of the company and exact statistics about the overall employee size or characteristics have been omitted. The survey required participants to complete several self-report measures. They rated themselves in terms of their

informal learning, their attitude towards informal learning, learning opportunities at work, the importance of learning provisions at work. They were also asked to report individual and organisational improvement efforts, and the general climate at work. The self-efficacy measures were presented last to avoid carry-over effects. The order of items within each scale was randomised. Finally, participants provided their demographics and information about their role in the organisation.

### Participants

The final dataset included the complete responses from 113 volunteers. The response rate was just over 10% – a result of asking employees to complete the survey during the work day and the topic (informal learning rather than company training provisions). This response rate is similar to other, purely voluntary organisational surveys that we have previously conducted. Most of our participants were male (67.3%; female 32.7%) and the average age was 40.77 years (SD = 9.7, range 19 to 61 years). A third (32.7%) were aged between 19 to 35 years old; 46.9% were between 36 up to 50 years old and the remaining 20.4% were between 51 and 61 years old. The age and sex distribution of the survey sample matched the company's overall characteristics. Forty three percent of the participants reported university entry qualification, 42% had finished a secondary modern school ('Realschule') and 14.2% had visited the German 'Hauptschule' (obtaining a GCSE equivalent). Participants' tenure was 15 years on average (SD = 9.95) and 19.9% stated they were in a managerial position.

### Measures

Employee characteristics, learning experiences and organisational characteristics were assessed with self-report measures. The organisation was interested in learning more about their workforce's willingness to engage in learning, resulting in several tailor-made scales that were translated into German.

Memory self-efficacy was measured using two, slightly amended items copied from the memory self-efficacy scale (Zelinski & Gilewski, 2004). Participants rated how often they faced a variety of memory problems. The items were: 'I forget where I put things' and 'I begin to do things and forget what I was doing.' The responses ranged from 1 = very often to 4 = very rarely. The correlation between the items was significant but weak ( $r = .327$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The two items were combined into a mean-centred subscale ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). Higher values represent greater memory self-efficacy.

Professional self-efficacy was assessed using five items from the occupational self-efficacy scale (Abele et al., 2000). A sample item 'I don't have difficulties in reaching my professional goals.' The response scale

ranged from 1 = totally disagree to 4 = totally agree. Higher values represent greater perceived professional self-efficacy ( $\alpha = .66$ ,  $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ).

Climate at work (training) was assessed using eight items from the General Training Climate scale (Tracey & Tews, 2005), four items from the managerial support scale and four from the job support scale. An example item was: 'Independent and innovative thinking are encouraged by [my] supervisors.' The response option ranged from 1 = does not apply at all to 4 = totally applies. Higher values suggest greater training support at work ( $\alpha = .81$ ,  $M = 2.91$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ).

Several scales were produced in collaboration and in response to the organisation's needs and requirements. These are listed below.

Learning self-efficacy was measured using ten items. An example item is: 'I can focus for a longer time, even when it's difficult at times.' The response scale ranged from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. Higher values represent greater self-efficacy when learning ( $\alpha = .66$ ,  $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ).

Learning satisfaction was measured using six items. An example item is: 'I reached my learning goals within the scheduled time.' The response scale ranged from 1 = does not apply at all to 4 = totally applies. Higher values represent greater learning satisfaction ( $\alpha = .79$ ,  $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ).

Learning experience (perception of informal learning as easy vs. difficult) was measured using seven items. An example item was: 'I sometimes miss professional support' (reverse-scored). The response scale ranged from 1 = does not apply at all to 4 = totally applies. We used these items to create a mean-centred subscale ( $\alpha = .82$ ,  $M = 1.97$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). Lower values represent greater learning difficulties while higher values reflect perceptions of informal learning as easy.

Help seeking was measured using six items. Each item listed a different type of help seeking behaviour. An example item was: 'I have asked colleagues for support with ...' (e.g., introductions, explanations, etc.). The response scale ranged from 1 = never to 4 = frequently. Higher values represent more help seeking ( $\alpha = .63$ ,  $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ).

The importance of learning provisions was measured using five items. An example item was: 'I need to have access to various learning materials (e.g., databases, intranet courses, subject libraries).' The responses ranged from 1 = very unimportant to 4 = very important. The mean-centred composite had low reliability ( $\alpha = .64$ ,  $M = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ). Higher values reflect the participants' beliefs that specific provisions must be in place for them to learn (e.g., in form of time, knowledge, access to media).

Self-improvement expectations were measured using five items. The scale captured future-oriented behaviours, as in what participants felt they ought to do to improve. An example item was: 'I should ask for more su-

pervisory feedback so I can better plan my professional development.’ Each item had response options ranging from 1 = does not apply at all to 4 = totally applies. We used all items to create a mean-centred subscale ( $\alpha = .76$ ,  $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). Higher values represent greater intention to engage in more self-improvement.

Organisational improvement expectations were assessed using six items. An example item was: ‘My supervisors should help me develop a career plan to support my continuous learning.’ The response option ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Higher values represent higher support expectations about the support provided by the organisation ( $\alpha = .76$ ,  $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ).

The degree of informal learning on the job (informal learning behaviour) was measured using seven items. An example item was: ‘I complete different and frequently changing tasks at work.’ The response options were 1 = does not apply at all to 4 = totally applies. Higher scores suggest greater learning on the job due to more variety in tasks and demands ( $\alpha = .76$ ,  $M = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ).

Informal learning attitude was measured using six items, one of which was reverse-scored. An example item was ‘I enjoy informal learning.’ The response scale ranged from 1 = totally disagree to 4 = totally agree. Higher values reflect a more positive attitude towards learning ( $\alpha = .74$ ,  $M = 1.89$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ).

Demographics were also included, as was information as to whether or not the participant held a managerial (supervisory) position at the time of the survey. This included gender and age ( $M = 40.77$ ,  $SD = 9.70$ ). In addition, all participants were asked to state if they had managerial responsibility ( $n = 22$ ) or not ( $n = 91$ ).

## Results

### *Data Screening and Preparation for Hypothesis Testing*

The correlation matrix outlines the relationship between the different scales (Table 1). Overall, four out of thirteen scales featured lower than desirable reliability (below .70). Nunnally (1978) specified a cut-off point of .7 as acceptable. In order to assess potential overlap between the new scales developed for the organisation, we ran several confirmatory factor analyses using LISREL 9.20. The first analysis included all seven predictors. The results supported a seven-factor structure (one for each scale) ( $\chi^2(924) = 1384.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $RMSEA = .066$ , 90% CI [.059, .073],  $SRMR = .096$ ) although some of the model fit indicators were lower than desirable ( $CFI = .69$ ,  $NFI = .67$ ). All but three out of 45 indicators loaded significantly onto their assigned factors ( $t$ -values  $> 1.96$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Further modifications would have improved the model statistics.

Two more confirmatory analyses were conducted to examine if the two

**Table 1** Scale Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	1												
2	.54**	1											
3	.05	.06	1										
4	-.25**	-.42**	.09	1									
5	.39**	.60**	.21	-.27*	1								
6	.24*	.38**	.23*	-.34**	.42**	1							
7	.48**	.44**	.07	-.22*	.36**	.29**	1						
8	.12	.17	-.11	-.17	.01	.13	.34**	1					
9	-.23*	-.43**	.07	.67**	-.34**	-.33**	-.29**	-.11	1				
10	.35**	.40**	.04	-.26**	.39**	.23*	.43**	.09	-.43**	1			
11	-.12	-.24*	-.05	.12	-.16	-.19*	-.17	.04	.17	-.04	1		
12	.26**	.32**	.21*	-.14	.35**	.12	.39**	.18	-.18	.24**	-.16	1	
13	.31**	.36**	.28**	-.21*	.44**	.34**	.19*	.14	-.17	.19*	-.26**	.21*	1

**Notes** (1) IL (informal learning) satisfaction, (2) IL as easy, (3) help-seeking, (4) self-improvement belief, (5) self-efficacy (learning), (6) self-efficacy (memory), (7) self-efficacy (professional), (8) age, (9) organisational self-improvement, (10) climate at work, (11) learning provisions, (12) IL on job (dependent variable 1), (13) IL attitude (dependent variable 2). \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

outcome measures (informal learning on the job and informal learning attitude) loaded onto two separate constructs as we propose, rather than to one construct alone. We first ran the analysis for a two-factor solution, the statistics suggested reasonably good fit ( $\chi^2(64) = 121.54, p < .001$ ; RMSEA = .089, 90% CI [.065, .113], SRMR = .095, CFI = .86, and NFI = .76) even before we started to consider potential modifications. The two factors were positively correlated, as we would have expected ( $t = 2.94, p < .05$ ). All but one of the 13 indicators loaded significantly onto the specified factors ( $t$ -values  $> 1.96, p < .05$ ). The model fit statistics for a one-factor structure incorporating both informal behaviour and attitude items was significantly worse ( $\chi^2(65) = 297.79, p < .001$ ; RMSEA = .178, 90% CI [.158, .199], SRMR = .189, CFI = .44, and NFI = .40;  $\Delta\chi^2 = 176.25, p < .05$ ). As a result, we retained the two subscales, one for informal learning behaviour and the other for informal learning attitude. The correlations between all measures are presented in Table 1.

**Hypothesis Testing**

In order to test our hypotheses, we selected stepwise regression, using backward elimination rather than the forward selection method. Backward elimination can be used to reduce the number of predictors and reduce potential over-fitting and multi-collinearity issues (Gunst & Mason, 1977). This is particularly relevant when there are numerous predictors that correlate with one another (as was the case in this sample). Mantel (1970) states that stepdown procedures such as these discard only those variables

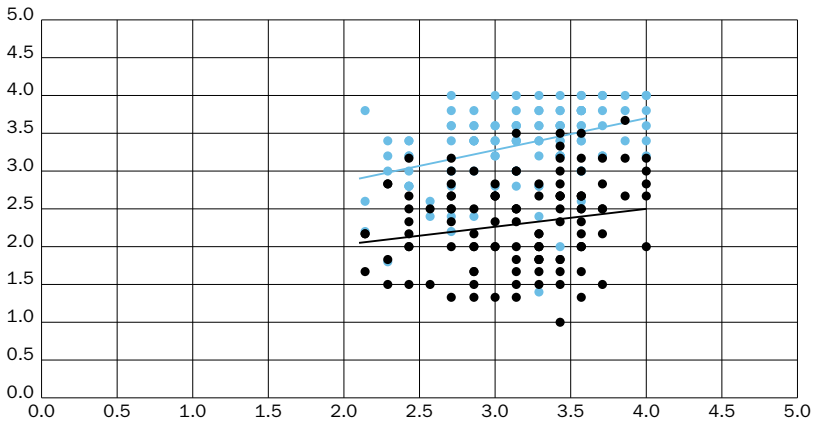
that can be dropped without seriously impairing the overall goodness of fit.

Using this approach, the initial model is first fitted with all the variables of interest. In each iteration, the least significant variable is dropped. The model is refitted successively until only the statistically significant variables are retained. This approach therefore enables researchers to identify prevalent predictors. This is important as our selected variables may also have influenced one another (which is in line with the resource-based view by Grant, 1991), making it difficult to separate the effects of the individual variables. In addition, backward elimination would enable us to identify those variables that were the most influential and context-specific predictors in the organisation. A preliminary assessment of normality, linearity, outliers and homogeneity of variance-covariance suggested no issues, except for two outliers that were deleted ( $N = 111$ ).

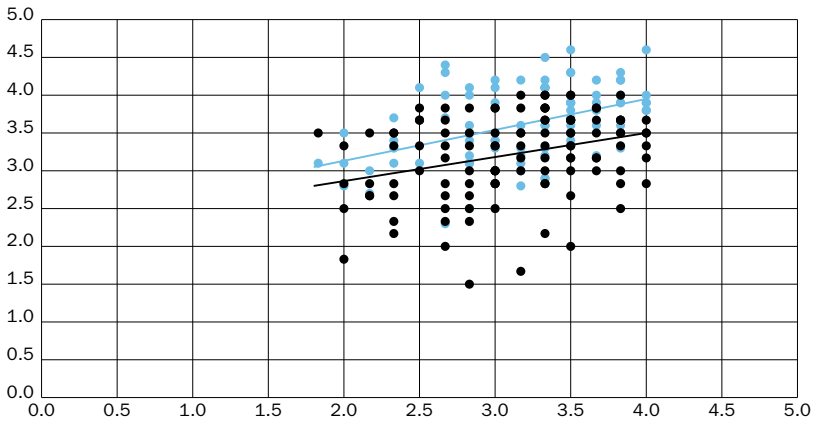
Learning on the job was subject to hypotheses 1a/2a and 3. Using a backward elimination regression approach, the role of all predictors (the three concepts of self-efficacy in H1a; learning satisfaction, learning experience as easy, belief in self-improvement and proactive help-seeking in H2a) and the organisation-specific variables (training climate, organisational provisions and striving for improvement in H3) were evaluated together in several iterations until only significant predictors of the dependent variable remained. The result of this process resulted in two predictors, which together explained 27.1% of variance in learning on the job ( $R^2 = .27$ ,  $R^2_{adj.} = .25$ ,  $F(2, 82) = 15.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ): Professional self-efficacy ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p = .027$ ) and proactive help-seeking from others ( $\beta = .45$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Figure 1 outlines the trend for these two predictors in relation to self-reported learning at work.

The results provide partial support for some of the proposed relationships in H1a/2a: Professional self-efficacy and proactive help-seeking increase learning on the job (see Figure 1). At the same time, H3 was not supported: There was no evidence that organisational characteristics such as climate, learning provisions, or striving for organisational and self-improvement influenced learning on the job.

The predictors of informal learning attitude at work were subject to hypotheses 1b and 2b. The predictors included self-efficacy (H1b), learning satisfaction, belief in self-improvements, and proactive help-seeking. However, we also considered age and the organisation-specific variables, in case these variables also played a role in shaping informal learning (although this was not expected). Due to various missing cases, the analysis was conducted with 86 cases. The results of the first analysis including all predictors suggested good fit ( $R^2 = .45$ ,  $R^2_{adj.} = .37$ ,  $F(11, 73) = 5.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Again, following backward elimination, only five predictors remained. These predictors explained 39.1% in informal learning difficulty reported by



**Figure 1** Predictors of Informal Learning on the Job (light – professional self-efficacy, dark – help-seeking)

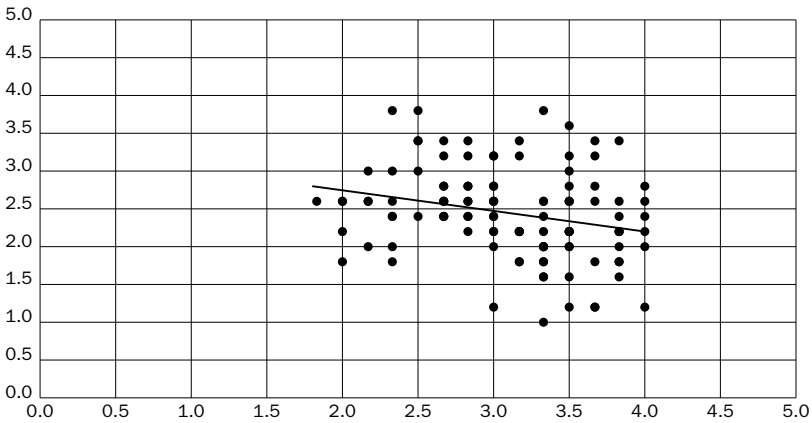


**Figure 2** Predictors of Informal Learning at Work (light – learning self-efficacy, dark – learning satisfaction)

participants ( $R^2 = .39$ ,  $R^2_{adj.} = .35$ ,  $F(6, 76) = 8.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As observed in the previous regression, help-seeking ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p = .064$ ) was a marginally significant predictor to the extent of a positive attitude towards informal learning. Learning self-efficacy ( $\beta = .36$ ,  $p = .001$ ), learning satisfaction ( $\beta = .242$ ,  $p = .033$ ), and age ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $p = .004$ ) were also significant predictors of a positive informal learning attitude. The coefficients suggest that those employees who were more likely to seek help, who reported higher learning self-efficacy and were more likely to gain satisfaction from learning also appeared to have a more positive attitude about informal learning at work (see Figure 2). These results provide partial support for H1b and H2b.

However, two results presented the opposite of what H1 had predicted.





**Figure 3** Importance Given to Organisational Learning Provisions as a Predictor of Informal Learning Attitude

The fifth predictor was professional self-efficacy, this was a negative predictor of attitude ( $\beta = -.24$ ,  $p = .038$ ). In addition, the importance placed on organisational learning provisions also played a role in predicting participants' informal learning attitude ( $\beta = -.27$ ,  $p = .004$ ; see Figure 3). However, when we reran the regression analysis (using the enter option) using just those two predictors, only the importance on organisational learning provisions remained a significant negative predictor of attitude ( $\beta = -.22$ ,  $p = .011$ ).

Please note that learning on the job and learning attitude did not differ across non-managerial employees and managers ( $p > .05$ ). However, participants with managerial responsibility rated their professional self-efficacy significantly higher ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 0.38$ ,  $n = 22$ ) than participants who did not have such responsibility ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ,  $n = 91$ ;  $F(1, 111) = 8.31$ ,  $p = .005$ ). Second, being in a managerial position played a role in terms of the importance placed on learning provisions ( $F(1, 110) = 3.95$ ,  $p = .049$ ; also controlling for attitude), as managers rated learning provisions as less important for themselves ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ,  $n = 22$ ) than non-managerial employees ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ,  $n = 91$ ). As noted above, when we reran the analysis and controlled for the importance placed on learning provisions ( $\beta = -.24$ ,  $p = .011$ ), professional self-efficacy was once again no longer a significant predictor of informal learning attitude ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $p = .103$ ).

## Discussion

The resource-based view of competitive advantage proposes that resources, capabilities, and competitive advantage all feed into strategy, which in turn feeds back into resources (Grant, 1991). The framework is useful to un-

derstand how the various factors relate to one another. The present paper considers how examples of individual and organisational resources, capabilities, and strategies may feed into informal learning behaviour and shape employee attitudes towards informal learning. Using the results of an organisational case study, we examined which employee and organisation-specific predictors influenced informal learning at work and informal learning attitude amongst employees of a German company.

The present research examined what predicts learning on the job and a positive learning attitude. Considering a range of possible predictors of learning on the job, results showed that only professional self-efficacy and proactive help-seeking predicted informal learning in the organisation, providing partial support for H1a and 2a. However, there was no evidence that organisational characteristics such as climate, learning provisions per se, or organisational striving towards self-improvement influenced informal learning on the job in the company we examined. This means the organisation-specific hypothesis 3 was not supported. One possible explanation is that our analysis focused on the most important predictors. This may have diminished the influence of the potentially overarching and more group-focused variables that had no immediate influence on the everyday learning experience of the employees.

Informal learning attitude was significantly predicted by learning satisfaction, learning self-efficacy, and age. Employee help-seeking was a marginally significant predictor ( $p < .10$ ). Employees who were older, sought help proactively, were self-efficacious learners, and those who enjoyed learning activities also had a more positive learning attitude. These results provided partial support for H1b and 2b. The more positive informal learning attitude amongst older workers may be explained as follows: some organisations expect older workers to take on additional roles, specifically sharing their knowledge with younger colleagues (Beck, 2012). This expectation may not be reciprocated in turn, even when older employees move into new roles and become novices (Beck, 2012). However, older workers are often presented with fewer learning opportunities than their younger colleagues. If an organisation does not include older employees to the same degree, employees may hesitate to share their learning needs with their managers (see also work by Mitton & Hull, 2006). The fact that older employees in our sample had a more positive learning attitude may hint at an alternative route to keep learning. Both younger and older employees derive their sense of competence from their work and learning experiences (Paloniemi, 2006). Engaging in informal learning may help older learners to overcome, at least to some degree, the disadvantageous position they are in when it comes to formal learning opportunities. This is in line with Felstead's (2011) finding that older learners may be left to sort out issues on their own. Those in our

sample, who engaged in more informal learning and proactive help-seeking may have engaged in compensatory strategies to access resources and maintain their capabilities.

However, the importance given by employees to organisational learning provisions was a negative predictor of informal learning attitude. Further analysis showed that participants in managerial positions rated learning provisions as less important than non-managerial employees. Two related explanations may be offered. Harman (2011) reported that senior managers associated the notion of being a 'learner' with being a novice. In addition to fears about being seen as less knowledgeable by engaging in learning, senior managers may also have a potentially greater interest in maintaining their status, rather than engaging in learning that might then challenge their status (Antonocopoulou, 2006). The results may also be explained from another perspective. The importance given to learning provisions was negatively correlated with the employee perceptions of learning. Employees who rated learning provisions as more important also appeared to have more learning difficulty. The value of learning provisions may therefore only be higher for employees who struggle. If learning provisions are viewed as less important by managerial employees themselves (who have higher professional self-efficacy), this raises the following question: to what extent will the importance given to learning provisions by managers also influence the provisions they are willing to provide for their employees? There may be no connection and the personal importance attributed by managers to learning provisions may not necessarily influence resource allocations to employees. Our data did not allow for assessing this possibility further. However, it may be worthwhile to consider the influence of managerial attitudes and learning success on resource allocation.

It is important to recognise here that we need to be careful about the generalisability and robustness of some of our results as some scales in our study had low reliability coefficients (below .7) and relied on self-report from a relatively small sample ( $N = 113$ ). We also need to acknowledge that backward elimination is an approach that has its flaws as potentially significant variables may be dropped in the process due to suppression effects (Howell, 2007), even though they may be significant if they had been added to the last reduced model. However, most of the disadvantages associated with backward elimination also apply to forward selection (Darlington, 1990) and backward elimination may outperform forward selection (Mantel, 1970).

### Reflections and Practical Implications

By employing the resource-based view we attempted to understand what drives informal learning in an organisation. However, we readily acknowledge the limitations associated with causal ambiguity, the role of both internal

and external factors that impact organisations, and the generalisability of the findings from one organisation to the next. Identifying opportunities to improve the utilisation of existing resources (Grant, 1991) and recognising the strengths and weaknesses may be important drivers behind informal learning at work. If there are no opportunities and provisions that support learning, organisations will stifle informal learning. In addition, maintaining learning self-efficacy requires employees to be exposed to jobs that foster learning at work (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). Greater employee self-efficacy may represent, if continuously maintained, an important organisational capability and feed into various human resource strategies aimed at learning and development. If self-efficacy is low, employees are unlikely to succeed when facing learning challenges on the job. Informal learning may not be subject to the same top-down processes as many traditional knowledge transfers. They may encourage a knowledge transfer not only from experts to novices, but also encourage novices to share their knowledge. Grant made the point that 'a key problem in appraising capabilities is maintaining objectivity' (Grant, 1991, p. 121). What he recognised is that managers may not appraise competencies or resources as such. Managers may focus on providing resources only to what they consider to be valid and legitimate training (Antonacopoulou, 2006). This approach may inadvertently encourage employees' depending on organisational resources (Antonacopoulou, 2006). Unfortunately, identifying resources and potential is often what organisations struggle with (Grant, 1991). This also explains why using the resource-based view often results in highly contextualised analyses and organisational findings that cannot be readily generalised. This particularly applies to human resources in highly structured organisations with a more traditional perspective on employee development resulting in hiring newly qualified staff or offering formal training, not recognising the potential opportunities within the organisation. This includes resources present in terms of employee expertise and encouraging knowledge exchange across hierarchies and departments to promote learning.

The resource-based framework further suggests that the strategies are based on the resources and capabilities relative to the external opportunities available (Grant, 1991). That is, given the influence of contextual factors on individual learning, the extent of individual learning is subject to the degree to which the organisational context supports learning at work (Antonacopoulou, 2006). The organisational context may be determined by service concerns, but also by strategic decisions about which projects need more resources. Fahy, Easterby-Smith, & Lervik (2013), for example, observed that new projects in high-technology engineering companies are given more resources and are staffed with younger project engineers, many of whom hope that this experience will support their career

ambitions. However, older installations are supported by service engineers who appear to be more at the periphery of the organisation due to working in various geographically separated locations. In addition, due to their expertise with the systems that need to be maintained, the service engineers essentially ended up having less access to resources and support compared to their younger counterparts (Fahy et al., 2013). This means that the organisational practices determine where experts are placed, e.g., to specific resource-impoverished or resource-enriched projects. This may then preclude certain groups at the periphery from knowledge sharing, thus giving these workers fewer or no opportunities to build and share knowledge through interaction with others. This results in unequally distributed power relations that determine participation in learning activities and perceptions of learning activities as desirable and legitimate (Fahy et al., 2013; Jordan, 2010).

Informal learning is determined by the opportunities that are presented internally, although the opportunities may be driven by external forces such as market pressure on the company. These forces may also 'compress' the room for opportunities, potentially due to greater workload, less time to support learning, and fewer learning provisions. However, alternatives exist. Peer mentoring, networking and coaching may represent important informal learning opportunities (Cooper & Kurland, 2002) and might help organisations to address lack of formal learning opportunities, potential resistance to change and employee concerns. 'Creating capabilities is not simply a matter of assembling a team of resources: capabilities involve complex patterns of coordination between people and between people and other resources. [...] A capability is, in essence, a routine, or a number of interacting routines' (Grant, 1991, p. 122). An important point to note here is that employee capability may depend not only on how many learning opportunities are presented, but also the inherent challenge that learning represents for each employee. In other words, we need to recognise that organisational and employee resources may need to be mutually reinforcing for employees to tackle and learn from challenges and opportunities presented to them at work. Future research in this area may explore this possibility.

## Conclusions

Both informal and formal learning activities are important for professional and organisational learning (Gold et al., 2007). The results of our case study helped identify several factors that appeared to promote informal learning and a positive attitude towards informal learning in a medium-sized organisation. Employees who sought help proactively and felt more self-efficacious at work reported more opportunities to engage in learning

on the job (in particular, they learn from the challenges they encounter in their jobs). Supervisors may play an important role in that they may encourage help-seeking on the job and determine how supportive the organisational climate is at work. In addition, our study showed that the importance attributed to learning provisions may differ between employees and managerial personnel, potentially as a function of higher professional self-efficacy and status awareness amongst managers. This may create an unfortunate resource gap for employees as they may depend on their managers for learning opportunities and provisions.

This study suggests that managerial support (e.g., in terms of resources) and opportunities presented to employees may depend on managerial perceptions and attributions. This is in line with evidence that managerial encouragement and learning support predict work-related learning (Kyndt & Baert, 2013). In conclusion, informal learning and a positive learning attitude amongst employees may depend on organisational resources and managerial support, as well as on the employees' own capability, learning-related experience and attitudes. Organisations keen to maintain the knowledgeable and engaged workforce required to sustain and potentially promote competitive advantage may therefore wish to re-examine which variables promote formal and informal learning at work in their organisation. We hope that the current case study results provide a few starting points for such assessment.

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# Identifying Socio-Cultural Factors That Impact the Use of Open Educational Resources in Local Public Administrations

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The goal of this paper is to define relevant barriers to the exchange of Open Educational Resources in local public administrations. Building upon a cultural model, eleven experts were interviewed and asked to evaluate several factors, such as openness in discourse, learning at the workplace, and superior support, among others. The result is a set of socio-cultural factors that shape the use of Open Educational Resources in public administrations. Significant factors are, in this respect, the independent choice of learning resources, the spirit of the platform, the range of available formats and access to technologies. Practitioners use these factors to elaborate on the readiness of public administrations towards the use of open e-Learning systems. To academic debates on culture in e-Learning, the results provide an alternative model that is contextualized to meet the demands of public sector contexts. Overall, the paper contributes to the lack of research about open e-Learning systems in the public sector, as well as regarding culture in the management of learning and knowledge exchange.

*Keywords:* open educational resources, public administration, mixed-method, expert validation, socio-cultural context, cultural in open e-learning

## Open E-Learning in the Public Sector

The goal of this paper is to elaborate on the cultural factors that shape the exchange of Open Educational Resources (OER) in local public administra-

tions. The exchange of information and knowledge usually raises concerns about privacy and power relations. Open e-Learning builds upon those activities and beyond, and requires public employees to adapt contents for personal learning means. While the factors that shape the use of OER apart from privacy and power are well known in several contexts, research in the public sector has not advanced. Studies have been conducted on e-learning barriers for single courses (Eidson, 2009) across European countries (Stoffregen et al., 2016) and continuous use intention (Pereira, Ramos, Gouvêa, & da-Costa, 2015). Yet, no joint theoretical and empirical approach is available that explains which cultural factors are shaping OER activities in the socio-cultural context of public employees.

This paper addresses this research gap and extends adaptive structuration models (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994) with cultural factors that shape the exchange of OER in open e-Learning systems. Qualitative and quantitative data are used to elaborate on the significance of these factors. The results challenge the use of general innovation or technology acceptance models to explain and explore the phenomenon of open e-Learning in public administrations.

The findings emphasize that open e-Learning is still a 'paradisiacal topic' but that it is about to come to the fore (interview participant 1). To secure a sustainable design, use and implementation of E-learning in the future, experiences have to be embedded in theory and practice. The results of this study will contribute to this aim. The findings will allow practitioners to elicit the current state, as well as to organize interaction in open e-Learning systems. Cultural factors such as openness in discourse, support of superiors, and learning at the workplace further instil theoretical discussions, and extend previous conceptual work in public sector research.

The rest of the paper is organized in such a way as to answer the research question: what are the structural gaps shaping the exchange of OER in the public sector, and why? Firstly, background on open e-Learning systems is presented. Subsequently, the methodology is outlined. Thirdly, the findings of the expert validations are presented. The conclusion summarizes the main points.

## **Introduction to Socio-Cultural Factors in Open E-Learning Systems**

### ***E-Learning Systems***

E-Learning refers to the use of technology to conduct learning activities (Rosenberg, 2001). E-Learning technologies are platforms, authoring, or assessment tools, among others. Activities may include face-to-face sessions or may be performed solely online. Often, learning content and goals are pre-structured; students merely define the pace in which they complete online activities. *Open e-Learning* differs in at least two respects. Firstly,

learning materials carry open licences and can be re-used for various learning means. Open licences, such as Creative Commons, distribute rights between learners and original authors. As a corollary, students become creators and contributors to a growing body of knowledge. Secondly, openness refers to the use of open source technology, as can be seen in the platforms OpenScout, EAGLE and Dokeus. Open source technology decreases investment costs while increasing access to knowledge and learning practices.

Open e-Learning systems not only refer to technologies, but also the whole assemblage of learners, open e-Learning technology and learning materials such as OER. They enable users to exchange experiences for personal and professional learning means. In the public sector, Open e-Learning systems promise to build effective, efficient and flexible learning networks. They offer collaborative tools for knowledge sharing among colleagues. Yet, these benefits have been realized neither in the public nor in the educational sector (Eidson, 2009; Richter & McPherson, 2012). Learning is not the first *priority* at the workplace (Eidson, 2009). Values such as *discretion* distract learners from learning (Stefanick & LeSage, 2005). Cultural *customs* irritate learners and disrupt cognitive processes (Katz & Te'eni, 2007). *Language* barriers and 'not invented here syndromes' constrain the exchange of OER (Pirkkalainen & Pawlowski, 2014). Hence, there is a large range of known, potential barriers to the use of OER. Yet, it is a paramount subject to research: *Which* factors are relevant in a given socio-cultural context? Factors need to be elaborated for a given context in order to provide guidance and technological support to contextualization (Richter & McPherson, 2012; Richter & Adelsberger, 2012). In the public sector, the set of relevant cultural barriers to the use of OER still needs to be defined as well. *Culture* is an ambiguous term and refers to norms, values, artefacts, and dimensional constructs (Jamil, Askvik, & Hossain, 2013; Keraudren, 1996; Moynihan & Landuyt, 2009; Mahler, 1997).

The interest in culture is high but recent studies focus on explaining the success of government reforms (Jamil et al., 2013; Bouckaert, 2007). Apart from Weberian and new public management (NPM) values, no dedicated culture model has evolved (Rutgers, 2008). Interestingly, scholars dismiss models from the private sector (Bouckaert, 2007; Beuselinck, Verhoest, & Bouckaert, 2007). Sector-specific characteristics such as political values are neglected (Bouckaert, 2007; Moynihan & Landuyt, 2009). Hence, when approaching OER exchange in public administrations, the next question has to be answered anew: which factors are relevant, and why?

The logical starting point to answer this question is to summarize experience, findings and known factors from previous studies in the field. One known approach is the Multiple-Culture Model (MCM) (Edmundson, 2007a;

2007b). It guides adapting digital learning resources with regard to multiple values, educational activities and world-views (Henderson, 1996; 2007). Another renowned concept is developed by Hofstede. Culture is, according to Hofstede (2001, p. 4), a mental program that 'partly predetermines human behaviour.' For learning, acquiring knowledge or changing routines, a person has to know his/her value (dimensions) and has to unlearn the patterns (pp. 3f.). In the public sector, studies on e-Learning have not thus far built upon these or similar models. Pereira et al. (2015) present the decomposed-expectancy-disconfirmation-theory to explain continuous use intention. Chen (2014) elaborates on e-Learning effectiveness and presents the Diffusion-of-Innovation framework.

Only Eidson (2009) elaborates on the challenges from a psycho-sociological framework. Altogether, the role of flexibility, learner control, socialising opportunities, comfort and acceptance at the workplace seem to be commonly relevant factors. Despite the similarity of factors, the no synthesized model allows the comparison or ranking of relevant factors. This study will fill this research gap and elaborate on cultural factors that shape OER-use from a socio-technical perspective. On the one hand, new insights on relevant factors, including an adaptive structuration model for public administrations, will be generated. On the other hand, cultural research in the public sector has to meet 'quality criteria' (Beuselincx et al., 2007; Bouckaert, 2007). For example, political values of the profession need to be considered to explain knowledge exchange in the sector (Stefanick & LeSage, 2005). Orienting on these criteria, results of this study promise to advance the current state of research. To provide a generous background, the following chapter summarizes the systematic literature review (Stoffregen & Pawlowski, forthcoming), which preceded the expert evaluations. Subsequently, the method and design of the expert evaluations that focus on this study is presented.

### **Open E-Learning Systems**

Open e-Learning systems are assemblages of learners, artefacts like OER and e-Learning technology interacting in a given time and space. OER are digital open knowledge resources carrying a licence that enables learners to re-use, adapt, and share information and knowledge without fees. E-Learning technologies are platforms, applications and functionalities that enable multiple learning activities, including the re-use, adaptation, and sharing of information and knowledge. Technologies are an open source and can be deployed and customized by instantiations. Learners are authors (producers) and readers (consumers) of OER at the same time. They can exchange resources synchronously, as well as asynchronously, in forums and chats. This study focusses on asynchronous activities. Asynchronous

exchanges of open knowledge resources refer to the taking and adapting of OER for *own* learning means *and* to the creating and publishing of OER for *other's* learning means (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994; Bostrom & Gupta, 2009; Hollingshead, Monge, & Fulk, 2005; Giddens, 2001; Orlikowski & Robey, 1991; Lytinen & Newman, 2008; Rosenberg, 2001).

From a socio-technical perspective, cultural influences are paramount in open e-Learning systems. Culture is embedded in basic assumptions, espoused convictions and artefacts (Schein, 1990; 2010; Moynihan & Landuyt, 2009). For means of analysis, cultural factors can be more closely addressed regarding the 'internal group system,' 'organizational,' 'emergent' and 'technology structures,' as well as 'outcomes' (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994). An *internal group system* outlines the 'nature of members and assumptions about their relationships' (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994, p. 130).

For exchanging OER, for example, cultural forces shape the value of knowledge exchange to improve everyday work. *Organizational structures* are content and constraints in a given position and environment (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994). *Technology structures* stand for the 'structural potential which groups can draw on to generate particular social structures in interaction' (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994, p. 127). They reflect assumptions about learning activities, for instance, the 'spirit' of assessment tests. Culture shapes *outcomes* such as adapted OER as well as *decisions* of learners whether or not OER-exchange at the workplace is appropriate. Altogether, culture is a dimensional force: factors both enable *and* constrain interaction in open e-Learning systems (Lytinen & Newman, 2008; Witmer, 1997). Several cultural factors and assumptions for experts to evaluate are addressed more specifically in the following paragraphs.

### **Culture in Open E-Learning Systems**

To provide a background in cultural factors of open e-Learning systems, we focus on *internal group factors* in the first step. One cultural factor in the internal group system is *openness in discourse*. This stands for the perceived appropriateness of innovating routines, and of discussing problems and errors among peers. Knowledge and information are often conceived as power in the public sector and, thus, are not shared (Amayah, 2013; Yao, Kam, & Chan, 2007). Making an error is seen as a failure as opposed to a chance for improvement (Stefanick & LeSage, 2005). Structures exist that support the solving of problems with discretion among superiors instead of peers (Barette, Lemyre, Corneil, & Beauregard, 2012, p. 143). Using OERs successfully for learning, however, requires that discussed experiences, including undesirable developments, alternative problem solving strategies and potential errors, openly improve the quality of everyday work (Pirkkalainen, Jokinen, & Pawlowski, 2014).

Cultivating open discussions about problems and errors will thus be more favourable to OER-exchange than discretion. Concerning the appropriateness of innovating routines, another factor is the free space to apply knowledge. Often public employees work according to predefined rules. In such a regulated environment, change is considered inappropriate and similar to personal innovation of everyday work (Hedvicakova, 2013; Eidson, 2009, pp. 106–111; Rahman, Naz, & Nand, 2013; Ho, Tsai, & Day, 2010; Arellano-Gault, 2013; Imran, Gregor, & Turner, 2013; Caron & Giauque, 2006; Gustavsson, 2009; Hedvicakova, 2013). Using OER, however, requires learners to reflect on their routines and assumptions. They need to innovate daily routines and question whether and how their work, OER and practices might be improved (Pawlowski et al., 2013). Summarising the points, OER exchange faces few barriers if the assumptions are commonly shared and conceived as appropriate:

1. Problems have to be discussed openly within the department.
2. Errors have to be discussed openly within the department.
3. Free space has to be available for innovating routines (apply new knowledge).

*Group-identification* is another factor in the internal group system. Identifying with a group facilitates mutual understanding; similar backgrounds enable learners to share ideas and knowledge (Gustavsson 2009; Imran et al., 2013; Marschollek & Beck, 2012; Rahman et al., 2013; Eidson, 2009; Moynihan & Landuyt, 2009; Barette et al., 2012). Correspondingly, if cognitive boundaries constrain identification, OER exchange might be harmed. One common boundary is the role of geography. Imran et al. (2013) indicate that similarity of language is subject to geography and shapes the choice of collaboration partners (also in Colazzo, Molinari, & Villa, 2009). Another boundary is the role of the learner's work domains. Working in similar fields offers a shared set of terminologies and topics that facilitates communication (Imran et al., 2013, pp. 600f.). Similar to domains, the sector background appears to be relevant. Differences in the public and private sector, for example, often lead to misunderstandings (Marschollek & Beck, 2012). Consequentially, decisions on how to apply knowledge, and change routines diverge and constrain collaboration and knowledge exchange (Marschollek & Beck, 2012; Imran et al., 2013). Summarising the points, OER exchange faces few barriers if the assumptions are commonly shared and conceived as appropriate:

4. Collaboration partners do not have to come from the same country.
5. Collaboration partners do not have to speak the native mother tongue.
6. Collaboration partners do not have to work in the same work domain.



A third cultural factor in internal group systems is the distribution of roles during *learning at the workplace*. While open e-Learning requires individual creativity, current courses are developed by dedicated personnel. Assumptions about whether all public employees are allowed to create and exchange learning resources are vague. Related to this, the perceived need diverges whether to evaluate the performance of learners OER-use (Edmundson 2007a, p. 270; Tapanes, 2011; Hedvicakova, 2013; Sannia, Ercoli, & Leo, 2009). Both the quality and rate of contribution can be of concern. Summarising the points, OER exchange faces a few barriers if the assumption is commonly shared and conceived as appropriate:

7. Learners have to be independent in the choice of learning materials at the workplace.

The fourth cultural factor in internal group systems is *superior's support*. Superiors play a major role to sustain learning activities, invoke change, training programs and knowledge management initiatives (Schraeder, tears, & Jordan, 2005; Rahman et al., 2013; Beuselinck et al., 2007; Greiling & Halachmi, 2013; Yao et al., 2007; Gustavsson, 2009; Yang & Ruan, 2007). Hence, the question is not whether or not support needs to be provided, but what kind of support is required. On the one side, leaders should encourage employees and live up to the principles of their demands (Schraeder et al., 2005, pp. 500f.). On the other side, supervisors should communicate basic agreement and offer symbolic support (Yang & Ruan, 2007, p. 76). To foster flourishing OER exchange, supervisors should coordinate instead of determining activities (Gustavsson, 2009, p. 253f; Bimrose et al., 2014). Summarising the points, OER exchange faces few barriers if the assumptions are commonly shared and conceived as appropriate:

8. Superiors have to provide active support as opposed to symbolic support.

To provide background of the cultural factors of open e-Learning systems, we focus on *organizational structures in open e-Learning systems* in the second step. As organizational structures, content and constraints in the work environment are considered. Reviewing studies, a dominant cultural artefact is *assumptions about regulation*. Regulation, policies, and strategic documents are codified norms and rules (Barette et al., 2012; Schein, 2010). They provide a normative framework how to understand and judge working activities supported by open e-Learning systems. A regulatory frame allows involvement in learning activities in the public sector. It appears, however, that regulations can be situated at different levels.

Firstly, organizational strategies might be launched on a higher administrative level. Such plans often give birth to subsequent, e-Learning directed

programs (Chih-Yang, Tsai-Chu, Ping-Teng, & Chih-Wei, 2011; Yang & Ruan, 2007) or determine licences to apply for OER (Hilton, Wiley, Stein, & Johnson, 2010).

Secondly, the launch of policies can respond to a particular barrier, such as a lack of tutors and competences (Imran et al., 2013, p. 602). Thirdly, a normative framework can emerge from a code of conduct. Codes of conduct define the way how to learn, which learning goals and practices are appropriate for public employees (Yang & Ruan, 2007; Barette et al., 2012; Sannia et al., 2009). Summarising the points, OER exchange faces a few barriers if the assumptions are commonly shared and conceived as appropriate:

9. Organizational strategies have to be defined to frame OER exchange.
10. Policies have to be defined to frame OER exchange.
11. A code of conduct has to be defined to frame OER exchange.

The second factor in organizational structures is *environmental artefacts*. These are tangible shapes communicating the relevance of an activity or assumption (Schraeder et al., 2005). One major artefact in this respect is a calm space that is assumed to be appropriate to spend time learning. At front desks in public administrations, time is scarce and it is often not acceptable to spend time learning (Eidson, 2009, pp. 58f.). Apart from room and space, another factor is the technical infrastructure. In this respect, learning resources also need to be available to support assumptions that knowledge is to create and share through Open Educational Resources (Barette et al., 2012, p. 143). Hence, considering the following assumptions as appropriate facilitates OER-activities:

12. A quiet room has to be available for OER exchange.
13. Technical infrastructure has to be available for OER exchange.
14. Time has to be available for learning at the workplace. no time.

To provide background in cultural factors of open e-Learning systems, we focus on *structure of technology in open e-Learning systems* in the third step. Another culturally engrained artefact is the technology used for OER-activities. Cultural assumptions structure certain uses of technology. One cultural factor shaping interaction in open e-Learning systems is the 'spirit of open platforms.' The *spirit reflects the structural potential*, which reflects convictions about the means of using technology for knowledge exchange.

In dimensional terms, enabling cultural assumptions reflects the fact that open platforms are enablers for social, interactive learning (Yang & Ruan, 2007; Chen, 2014). E-Learning is a space for autonomous, self-dependent advancement of knowledge (Hedvicakova, 2013; Ho et al., 2010). But the spirit may not only express self-realization, but also economic convictions (Remtulla, 2007; Langford & Seaborne, 2003; Stefanick

& LeSage, 2005). E-Learning becomes a monitoring tool for work performance of public employees (Yang & Ruan, 2007).

15. Spirit of OER activities has to be socially oriented as opposed to performance monitoring

One final cultural factor shaping interaction in e-Learning systems is the *format for exchange* of OER. Formats for exchange reflect basic assumptions about knowledge, and whether it can be documented. Knowledge can be understood as an intangible resource that is acquired in informal communication, or as a resource that can be transferred and acquired irrespective of the context (Schraeder et al., 2005; Gustavsson, 2009; Sannia et al., 2009; Edmundson, 2007a). Cultural assumptions about appropriateness of media types, as well as content of e-Learning courses, are to be elaborated upon (Tapanes, 2011; Eidson, 2009; Langford & Seaborne, 2003; Schraeder et al., 2005; Yao et al., 2007).

16. All media types have to be appraised for OER exchange.
17. Content must reflect diversity to available forms as opposed to restricted.

Assumptions from the literature review are presented. In the following, the study design to evaluate the presented claims is defined.

## Method

The expert evaluation is part of a doctoral study oriented on action design research (Sein, Henfridsson, Purao, Rossi, & Lindgren, 2011; Stofregen, 2015). It requires the involvement of researchers on site of the phenomenon. The low transparency of data generation is a threat, as it is to the generalisation of results. Steps to avoid this barrier is the explication of linkages to previous studies, as well as discussions with experts and practitioners in the field. This study summarizes links to previous studies in the background section. Results of discussions with experts are subject to the remaining article.

The expert evaluation is semi-structured and based on a mixed-method approach that contributes to inter-subjective understanding (McKenzie, Wood, Kotecki, Clark, & Brey, 1999; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Methodological principles focus on action design research (Sein et al., 2011). Both practitioners and academia were asked to use and evaluate the model. The epistemology and ontology of the approach are interpretative and constructivist (Van de Ven, 2007; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).

A cultural concept can be evaluated from different perspectives (Van de Ven, 2007). Apart from objectivity, the reliability and validity of a construct (Rammstedt, 2004), as well as the practical relevance and intelligibility for

users, is to be assessed (Lawshe, 1975; McKenzie et al., 1999; Esposito & Rothgeb, 1997, Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997; Frank, 2006).

The aim of this study is to evaluate the relevance of factors systematically. Comparing quantitative and qualitative approaches, it was decided to follow a mixed-method approach that combines advantages of both designs. A prominent model in this respect is the approach of McKenzie et al. (1999). It is commonly used in the evaluation of research in the public sector (Barette et al., 2012). The steps of this approach will be presented in the following.

### **Preparation of Analysis and Evaluation Steps**

The expert evaluation according to McKenzie et al. (1999) follows three steps: define selection criteria of experts, pose interview questions, and determine logic of analysis. In this study, *selection criteria* of experts is meant to determine their level of domain knowledge, experience with the topics and availability during the evaluation phase. Expert selection was balanced regarding nationality (Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and Montenegro) and gender (Cresswell & Plato Clark, 2011; McKenzie et al., 1999). The interview questions were semi-structured: Firstly, experts were asked to elaborate on the relevancy of open e-Learning and culture in open e-Learning at the workplace. Experts were then asked to explain their view on certain factors, for instance: how relevant is this factor to explain why OER are exchanged among public employees? Experts choose between 'essential,' 'useful but not essential' and 'not necessary,' and then they explain their rating. The analysis then elaborated on the reason and content-validity ratio based on ratings of a factor:

Based on the calculation, the levels of significance were determined ( $N[e]$  = number of experts saying a factor is 'essential';  $N$  = number of experts) (McKenzie et al., 1999). Given the number of experts ( $N = 11$ ), CVR .59 is the significance threshold. Given the convergent research design (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2011), however, both qualitative and quantitative evaluations are presented to appraise cultural factors.

Apart from expert feedback, it is important to assess the emerging model in terms of plausibility and credibility. Plausibility can be obtained if a balance of received supporting assumptions and surprises can be found (Van de Ven, 2007, pp. 110f.). Credibility can be gained by 'comparing [a theory] with rival plausible alternative theories at the time of the investigation' (Van de Ven, 2007, p. 126). Assumptions need to be falsifiable and in this respect, generalizable from a particular case. Quality criteria to advance the state of research are: firstly, the cultural model should address meso-levels (organisational level) of interaction (Bouckaert, 2007; Jamil et al., 2013). Secondly, the role of political values and artefacts should be

integrated (Keraudren, 1996; Jamil et al., 2013). Thirdly, for the means of gaining practical relevance, the model should be easy for non-experts to apply (Tapanes, 2011; Pawlowski & Richter, 2010). So far, the steps for validating and evaluating the cultural model have been outlined. The findings of expert interviews are outlined in the following.

## Results

Overall, five female and six male experts from public sector administrations in Luxembourg (2), Montenegro (2), Ireland (1) and Germany (6) were interviewed. The duration of the interviews ranged from between thirty and sixty minutes. Currently, e-Learning is a known catchword and gains relevance for training of public employees at the workplace. Open e-Learning complements traditional (face-to-face) training but has not been taken up due to several challenges.

### Internal Group System

Experts judge that *openness in discourse* is one of the essential cultural factors. Free space to apply knowledge, to discuss problems and fix errors has to be conceived as appropriate within a department. Going into detail, experts largely agree that the *space to apply knowledge* and innovate work is essential to explain why public employees exchange OER. 'Space to apply knowledge is a suitable nice wording for this construct, there must be space' (participant 2). The content validity ratio (CVR .5) supports this idea and is sufficiently high (Barette et al., 2012). Concerning the *discussions of problems*, the content validity ratio is low (CVR .1) because experts see it related to discussing errors. The latter is a critical factor since it is often claimed 'we are public officers, we are not doing faults. Hence, we are having no error culture' (participant 3). The quantitative evaluation of this factor reflects this positive and normative evaluation (CVR .5).

For the factor *group identification*, experts take on a common position. Convictions about *work domains* make a difference in the choice of collaboration partners. Experts see that mutual preferences and exchange of ideas can be facilitated, thus the content validity ratio of the factor is high (CVR .63) and significant. Yet, experts do not agree whether assumptions about shared *work values* are essential. The nature of work values is ambiguous, yet, may be the core to define the distance between groups: 'Distance emerges from the common values, nothing else' (participant 4). Given the diverging perspectives, the validity ratio is low (CVR -.09). As regards *sector backgrounds*, experts have diverging perspectives as well. For some, identifying the sector background enables learners to judge work values and is thus essential. For others, there are restrictions. 'Broadening makes sense unless you do not have to go back to fundamentals [of services for the

public good]’ (participant 5). The quantitative is low (CVR  $-.64$ ). For *geographical distance*, experts are critical: ‘Relevance of geographical distance depends on the size of the country’ (participant 2). However, collaboration is ‘not yet exploited’ wherefore finally raised attention to this point for future elaboration (CVR  $-.45$ ).

The factor *supervisor support* is seen as one of the most important factors to explain why public employees exchange OER. Experts were clear: ‘If no support is provided, there is no exchange of OER during work-time’ (participant 6). Both active and symbolic support impact exchange activities. Experts largely agree that *active support* is essential. The content validity ratio is very high (CVR  $.63$ ) and significant. Symbolic support is less essential than active support. The condition is the hierarchy: ‘leaders need to have support from the highest level’ (participant 1). ‘Depending on the level of the supporter, an active, motivating or symbolic role needs to be taken over’ (participant 2). Yet, it is not as important as active support and, thus, gains a low rating (CVR  $.09$ ).

### Organizational Structures

*Regulation* is a factor that experts see as rather unimportant. However, detailed analysis suggests that it is not important *which* regulation is provided, but *that* a regulatory frame is provided. ‘If you are regulated, then you know that you are allowed’ (participant 3). A *general guideline* telling when and what knowledge to exchange and with whom is considered useful. It is essential to see that OER activities are welcome in a department. Still, the content validity ratio is low (CVR  $.09$ ). Concerning *regulation by higher institutions*, experts have diverging perspectives. One condition is the level of administration performing OER activities.

‘The lower the administration, the higher the impact of regulation by higher administrations’ (participant 2). At the same time, experts doubt that regulations of higher administrations are visible at lower levels. Hence, the CVR is low (CVR  $.09$ ). As regards the *code of conduct*, experts have diverging views. If collaboration activities are central in open platforms, codes of conduct gain relevance. ‘Rules could harmonize processes and streamline activities in communities’ (participant 2). However, if codes of conduct are too unspecific, then the final rating is very low (CVR  $-.27$ ). Despite the negative evaluation of regulation, all experts outlined the *essential role of regulation* as such: ‘the factor is rather an “on-off type of factor;” regulation must be provided somewhere’ (participant 7).

Experts see *environmental artefacts* as one of the most important factors to explain why public employees exchange OER. The subcategory *quiet room* appears to be less important as it depends on the area of work, irrespective of the work domain of individuals. A calm physical room appears as a proxy

for assumptions of having time to rest and concentrate on learning. Thus, the factor is low (CVR  $-.27$ ).

The experts believe the factor *internet infrastructure* represents one of the main cultural artefacts, and the CVR is high (CVR 1) and significant. The factor *available knowledge resources* is perceived as useful. But once implemented, the relevance decreases (participant 1). Correspondingly, the content validity ratio is low (CVR  $.27$ ). In contrast to this, experts judge that assumptions about available *time to learn* are critical (CVR  $.45$ ). It represents how relevant learning at the workplace is within a department. It is also a measure upon which learning strategies can be evaluated and adapted.

### Technology

Generally, the evaluation of the factor *spirit* is ambiguous. Experts strongly agree that exchange of OER has to avoid having a *monitoring character*. 'If it is understood as performance tool, nobody will use it' (participant 3). At the same time, experts agree that exchange of OER needs to have a *social character* but it must 'be clear that social interaction is made for learning means as opposed to social activities in Facebook' (participant 2). Despite that, experts see social interaction and monitoring as two sides of a continuum; they judge *social spirit* as not being important (CVR  $.27$ ), while monitoring is very crucial (CVR  $.64$ ) and significant.

Regarding the *format for exchange*, experts largely agree that the format of content is essential to explain why public employees engage in exchange of OER. There are different types of learners: 'some can learn better from theories than from practice [so] [...] all formats need to be provided to accommodate diversity, even if the same learning outcome is achieved' (participant 3). Chosen formats also reflect epistemological values, and how knowledge can be exchanged: 'Not all knowledge can be exchanged online' (participant 10). Hence, the content validity ratio is high and significant (CVR  $.64$ ). Yet, discussions show that assumptions regarding this factor are diverse, therefore a split of the factor in digital formats and epistemological forms has to be validated in the future. Last but not least, experts agree the media type is a useful factor and a diverse range of media must be available for an exchange: 'All contents should be appraised' (participant 2). Experts infer implications of this factor for learning strategies, for example, which media type is missing? Yet, the content validity ratio suggests declining the category (CVR  $.09$ ).

### Discussion

The following discussion elaborates on the value of the model and the results. It also touches on considerations such as the quality criteria, includ-

**Table 1** Overview of Results

Techn. structures	Spirit of platform	Social means	↔	Monitoring means	(.64)*	Perceived monitoring harms the exchange
	Format of media	Multi media formats	↔	Single media formats	(.64)*	Format of media is essential; both the content and <i>structure</i> .
Applied practice		↔	Abstract theories	(.64)*		
Organiz. Environment	Regulation	Any	↔	No	(.27)	Regulation must be provided, irrespective of the level.
	Environmental artifacts	Any time	↔	No time	(.45)	Time expresses perceived acceptance and value learning activities.
		Any infras-structure	↔	No infras-structure	(1)*	Lack of infrastructure prevents an exchange of OER.
Internal Group Structure	Openness in discourse	Open discussion	↔	Discrete discussion	(.45)	The lack of discussing errors constrains exchange activities.
		Free space	↔	Rule oriented	(.45)	The assumption to be free and apply knowledge for innovation is crucial
Internal Group Structure	Group identification	Far distance	↔	Close distance	(-.45)	To become salient once collaboration is experienced
		Foreign language	↔	Native language	(-.45)	
		Other domain	↔	Same domain	(.63)*	
Learning at the work place	Independent choice	↔	Dependent choice	(.64)*	Is significant, signals current assumptions about learning.	
Superior support	Active support	↔	Symbolic support	(.63)*	Without superior support, no involvement in OER exchange.	

ing credibility and plausibility. Experts evaluated presented factors and used the whole range of rating criteria.

Summarising the evaluation, six cultural factors were judged to be significant in explaining why public employees exchange OER (see Table 1). The strength of the evaluation approach, however, is not the mere quantitative approach, but the further elaboration of *why* factors are relevant and valid. In this regard, the factors openness in discourse and assumptions about time available for learning need to be included as highly essential.

One highly surprising result is the role of geography as a boundary for group identification. Experts outlined that geography is *not* a relevant boundary but, at the same time, they raised caution about their rating. Given that collaboration across sectors, countries, and departments is no common, geography is considered a potential factor. Here, the findings shed light on a gap in current learning practices and provide a hint on an opportunity



for research in the future. The fact that the results provide expected and surprising findings is a quality criterion of emerging cultural models (Van de Ven, 2007). To elaborate further on the credibility and plausibility of the results, the findings can be compared to rival models (Van de Ven, 2007). Does the set of factors and the model suit the context of public employees better than common models in previous studies (Henderson, 2007; Hofstede, 2001; Chen, 2014)?

On the one hand, similarities among factors can be perceived. Edmundson (2007a) sees assumptions about the learner-teacher role (structuring and choosing OER) as a 'critical' factor. The factor 'learning at the workplace' resembles and builds upon this factor, and was also evaluated as significant. On the other hand, the *content* of cultural factors is more sensible to public sector practices and experiences. Models in higher education address different factors and, moreover, mismatch the required level of analysis (Beuselinck et al., 2007; Jamil et al., 2013; Henderson, 2007).

Further, support is provided by experts, who were asked whether any factors are missing. The experts replied that the model is comprehensive and addresses all salient points. The experts started drawing inferences from the factors; hence, the implications for steering, creating courses, and learning contents can be drawn. Altogether, the plausibility of the idea that factors perform well in practice can be supported. Further, the quality criteria to address are the level of analysis, integration of political values, and ease-of-application. Concerning the *level of analysis*, the experts judged that most of the factors apply to departments and some are specific to types of learners. While analyzing culture on a micro-level (individual preferences) should be avoided, the importance of subcultures such as learner-types is seen as valid and insightful (Arellano-Gault, 2013; Rahman et al., 2013; Schraeder et al., 2005). Concerning the role of *political values* like bureaucracy (Keraudren, 1996, Jamil et al., 2013), evaluated factors show sensibility.

Experts emphasize, for example, that the factor 'learning at the workplace' is well suited to elaborate on whether old or new political values apply (e.g., flexibility; managerial self-responsibility role of innovation). Concerning *ease-of-use*, experts discuss whether factors are intelligible and applicable in practice (Tapanes, 2011; Pawlowski & Richter, 2010). As indicated, experts have already started defining implications for their everyday work, which indicates that factors are intelligible and applicable in practice. Yet, given the number of involved experts, more feedback has to be gathered to provide thorough answers. The sampling of experts (diverse countries, positions, gender) contributes to avoid bias. Also, orienting on an established content validation method (McKenzie et al., 1999) helps to avoid over-generalizing the feedback. With caution to these points, the

ease-of-use aspect can be generally supported but needs to be further assessed.

Altogether, the evaluation, the resulting set of factors, and the research approach appear to meet the quality criteria for the latest research on e-Learning from a cultural and socio-technical perspective. It appears to be more sensible for public sector contexts than previously applied models. Future research should empirically validate the model as it is currently planned and executed.

## Conclusion

The goal of this study is to elaborate on the cultural factors that shape the exchange of OER in open e-Learning systems in public administrations. Following a synthesis of previous studies and theories, propositions were defined and presented to experts for evaluation. The result is a set of significant factors that are essential in explaining whether or not public employees exchange OER. Experts in the field appraised the cultural factors and were able to present implications for improving their steering and organization of learning activities. In this regard, the ease-of-use and specificity for public sector contexts can be supported.

Overall, resulting factors can thus be used to elaborate on theoretical and empirical grounds on the phenomenon OER exchange in public administrations. Future research should also elaborate more particularly on surprising results, such as the role of geographical boundaries. Apart from research on particular results, the resulting set of factors highlight the need to conduct comparative studies across countries and cultural models. Initial steps are made to build upon these findings and present a cross-administrative study.

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# Skills and Learning Styles of Innovative Companies' Employees

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When faced with various challenges, modern organizations must be able to function effectively. These challenges include globalization, technological advancements, necessity to operate in the state of permanent flux, and finally, generation of intellectual capital, which delivers the competitive edge. As a consequence, the management of a modern organization and its diverse staff, which enables the company to operate effectively without generating losses or conflicts, becomes critical. Nowadays, organizations have to constantly look for innovative ways of conducting business. The conclusion drawn from observing successes of such organizations proves that taking a closer look at the issue of Human Resources (HR) diversity's role is worthwhile. Especially the analysis of managerial skills and learning styles in the context of companies' innovation seems of particular relevance. The managerial skills and their development are the basis for successful management processes in a modern company. The aim of this study was to identify and assess skills and learning styles of innovative companies' employees. The empirical material was collected in 2016 on the basis of a research conducted among employees of innovative companies established in Poland. The results of the present research allowed to analyze the impact of the respondents' independent variables on their skills and learning styles. As a result of the study, recommendations for managers and Human Resources Management (HRM) specialists were formulated on how to successfully manage employees' various skills and learning styles.

*Keywords:* employees' skills, learning styles, innovative company

## Introduction

When faced with various challenges, modern organizations must be able to function effectively. The challenges include globalization, technological advancements, necessity to operate in the state of permanent flux, and finally, generation of intellectual capital, which delivers the competitive edge. As a consequence, the management of a modern organization and its diverse staff, which enables the company to operate effectively without generating

losses or conflicts, becomes critical. Another vital factor is demographic changes, which demand a new approach towards the matter of employees' age and the related generation gap to be adopted. The development of an organizational culture enabling the competencies of employees of diverse age to be applied has become significant.

The present paper attempts to evaluate respondents' skills and their cognitive styles. The fact that both the skills exhibited and learning styles play a vital role in the development of effective HRM tools was embraced. The analysis of the managerial skills and learning styles in the context of companies' innovation seems particularly significant. The managerial skills and their development are the basis for successful management processes in a modern company.

### **Skills and Learning Styles in the Literature**

Modern enterprises operate in the state of a permanent flux. This pertains to all aspects of their operation due to the fact that conditions of manufacturing, technology, employees' competences, and, finally, clients' preferences change. Among chief factors determining the success of a modern enterprise, its innovativeness assumes the primary position. Innovation has been extensively discussed in the literature of the subject due to the fact that it constitutes a fundamental dimension of entrepreneurship (Shane, 2003). Innovation plays a significant role in the development of individual companies and whole economies. Entrepreneurship requires the introduction of innovations understood as the implementation of creative ideas or novelties into economic practice. J. A. Schumpeter, the precursor of the term, believed that innovation is a critical element of entrepreneurial activity (Schumpeter, 2004). The introduction of innovation is considered one of the most significant functions of an entrepreneur. The ability to develop or swiftly adapt innovative solutions in enterprises may offer a continuous competitive edge.

The literature of the subject highlights the fact that innovation varies in character, scope, power, and impact. It may also possess various origins – some innovations require years of systematic work, others result from a sudden realization, a coincidence (Glinka & Gudkova, 2011). Innovation may also pertain to various areas. According to Bessant and Tidd (2007), it may be reduced to the following four: (1) product innovation, (2) process innovation, (3) position innovation, (4) paradigm innovation, associated with what the organization does.

The concept of diversity management belongs among the non-traditional branches of management. It reflects the current status of economy and society. HR managers should create a company that allows diverse employees to express themselves individually, while maximizing their work com-

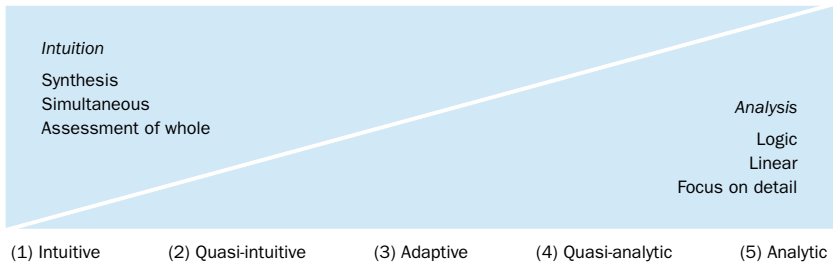
petencies. Nowadays, managing diversified human resources is becoming an important component of building the successful strategy of a modern organization. In such organizations, the diversity of employees' potential constitutes an important value (Armstrong et al., 2010). This is especially significant for innovative, global companies, which should look towards the future. Diversity leaders play a key role in the process of creating a successful organization (Childs, 2005).

In the literature of the subject there are various definitions of the concept of diversity. In addition, diversity management is understood in very different ways. The understanding of the term depends on the country, the type of organization, its culture, as well as economic and social factors. Both narrow and wide approaches to diversity can be found in the literature of the subject (Rakowska, 2014). The narrow approach means that one or two dimensions are taken into consideration (e.g., gender and age). The wide approach, in turn, has several dimensions, e.g., age, gender, marital status, social status, sexual orientation, disability level, religion, personality, moral values, culture (Kossek, Lobel, & Brown, 2005). Research carried out by offices of the European Commission contain the following dimensions of diversity: age, gender, ethnic group, nationality, disability, sexual orientation (European Commission, 2011).

The literature of the subject presents many different diverse human resources management models. They differ from one another in terms of the level of complexity, assumptions, goals and perspectives. One of the recent research directions is the search for relations between diverse human resources management and company innovation.

At present, new markets, consumers' new requirements and preferences, exert significant influence upon organizations, especially in times of instability. Organizations must be diverse and generate value for themselves, and their employees and consumers. Innovation constitutes one of the chief tools for achieving that. It is employees who, by their knowledge, skills, learning methods and knowledge-sharing, stimulate innovation the most (Bassett-Jones, 2005).

Therefore, diversity is characteristic for creativity and innovation of modern companies, and may present a basis for achieving a permanent competitive edge. On the other hand, diversity results in misunderstandings and conflicts at a workplace, which may present severe consequences for the company (low work quality, absences, reduction of competitiveness). As a consequence, modern companies are faced with a paradox: when embracing diversity, they risk the emergence of conflicts. However, should they avoid diversity, they risk the loss of competitiveness (Héroux & Fortin, 2016). It is of particular importance for innovative companies that, by applying their employees' diversity, may generate further breakthrough solu-



**Figure 1** A Continuum of Cognitive Style (adapted from Allinson & Hayes, 2012)

tions. Such companies promote innovative attitudes among their employees, understood as any activities directed at the creation, implementation and successful application of novelties in the organization (Yuan & Woodman, 2010).

Managerial skills associated with diversity management gain particular significance in such conditions. Those skills largely determine opportunities for development, which seems fundamental both for the organization and employees functioning in the changing labor market.

Apart from managers' and employees' skills, learning styles of individuals are also critical for the development of competence potential. The styles determine the way of thinking, identification of facts and assimilation of information.

The Cognitive Style Index (CSI) developed by Allison and Hayes (2012) was decided to be used in the present paper. 'The cognitive style is an individual's preferred way of gathering, processing and evaluating data' (Allinson & Hayes, 2012). CSI describes the way a person thinks, perceives and remembers information. CSI is also known as an important concept in the areas of education and management. Knowledge of an individual's cognitive style can be useful in HRM processes, e.g., selection, placement, motivation and development.

Allinson & Hayes (2012) identified five notional learning styles. At the extremes, intuition and analysis (intuitive and analytic styles) can be found. However, a cognitive style often involves elements of both intuition and analysis. In the middle of the continuum, there is the adaptive style, which implies a balanced blend of the two cognitive modes (Allinson & Hayes, 2012). The quasi-intuitive style and quasi-analytical styles neighbor the adaptive style (Figure 1).

### Research Methodology

Empirical analyses were conducted on the basis of a questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire concerned respondents' skills. The areas

**Table 1** Respondents' Structure

Age	Percentage	Position	Percentage	Sex	Percentage
20–29	23.6	Executive	24.8	Man	48.4
30–39	36.5	Specialist	57.9	Woman	51.6
40–49	21.9	Manager	17.3		
50–59	14.3				
60–69	3.7				

of skills were selected for the survey on the basis of the literature review in the field of employees' competencies (Shavelson, 2010; Baran & Klos, 2014; Hartig, Klieme, & Leutner, 2008). Two contexts were essential – work carried out by the person and possibilities of developing employee potential in the future.

Respondents were asked to assess 14 areas of knowledge and skills, such as: (1) Own workload management, (2) Stress management, (3) Learning, (4) Career management, (5) Interpersonal communication, (6) Resolution of conflicts, (7) Cooperation with representatives of other cultures, (8) Leadership, leveraging, (9) Cooperation with people of all ages, (10) Cooperation with the opposite sex, (11) Swift adaptation to new conditions, (12) Mobilization to long-term work effort, (13) Ability to carry out duties of others and one's own, (14) Creative thinking.

The skills were evaluated on the basis of the selection of advantages indicated in the respondents' self-assessment (5 out of 14 skills could be selected).

In the second part of the questionnaire, respondents replied to questions regarding their cognitive style. The Cognitive Style Index (CSI) developed by Allison and Hayes (Allinson&Hayes, 2012) was employed. There are five cognitive styles identified in the model: (1) Intuitive style, (2) Quasi-intuitive style, (3) Adaptive style, (4) Quasi-analytic style, (5) Analytic style.

Empirical data was collected in 2015, in Poland. The empirical material was collected during a study carried out on a group of 1276 respondents – employees of innovative companies. The acquired results enable conclusions regarding HR management in the context of managerial skills and knowledge of learning styles applied in employee development to be drawn.

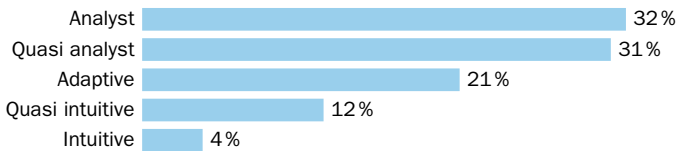
The empirical data was presented in contingency tables and analyzed statistically. The chi-square test was applied due to the character of the variables. Differences amounting to  $p < 0.05$  were determined as being statistically significant.

Females constituted a slight majority of respondents (51.6%). People below 39 years of age dominated (60%). As regards positions held, specialists prevailed (57.9%), and approximately every fourth respondent held an executive position (24.8%) (Table 1).

**Table 2** Skills vs. Respondents' Sex (%)

Skills	Male	Female
Creative thinking	55	45
Ability to carry out duties of others and one's own	45	55
Resolution of conflicts	54	46
Interpersonal communication	38	62
Career management	55	45
Stress management	52	48
Own workload management	45	55

**Notes** Test  $\chi^2$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $\chi^2_{critical} = 3.84$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .



**Figure 2** Learning Styles Presented by Respondents (N=1276)

### Skills and Learning Styles – Research Results

Skills self-assessed by respondents constituted the first evaluated area. The attempt at acknowledging whether the skills are determined by respondents' sex revealed statistically significant differences in 7 out of 14 skills. Male respondents assessed their skills higher than female ones. This is true for the following skills: creative thinking (54.8% vs. 45.2%), conflict solving (54.3% vs. 45.7%), career management (55.2% vs. 44.8%), stress management (52.1% vs. 47.9%). On the other hand, the following skills were evaluated by female respondents higher than by male ones: own workload management (55.4% vs. 44.6%), ability to carry out duties of others (55.2% vs. 44.8%), interpersonal communication (62% vs. 38%).

The second area to be analyzed in the present study was respondents' learning styles. Results' evaluation indicated that the analyst (32.4% of respondents) and quasi-analyst (30.8% of respondents) styles dominated (in accordance with the Allinson & Hayes key). The intuitive style was selected the least frequently (3.5%) (Figure 2).

The evaluation of whether sex determines the learning style indicated statistically significant differences in two cases. Sex determines the quasi-intuitive learning style, which is present in women more frequently (14% vs. 10%). In addition, sex determines the analyst style exhibited by men more often (36.8% vs. 28.3%) (Table 3).

The assessment of whether respondents' age determines the dominance of a learning style indicated statistically significant differences in

**Table 3** Learning Styles vs. Respondents' Sex (%)

Learning styles	Male	Female
Analyst*	37	28
Quasi analyst	31	31
Adaptive	20	23
Quasi intuitive*	10	14
Intuitive	3	4

**Notes** \* Statistically significant differences; test  $\chi^2$ , df = 1,  $\chi^2_{critical} = 3.84$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 4** Learning Styles vs. Respondents' Age (%)

Learning styles	60–69	50–59	40–49	30–39	20–29
Analyst*	4	19	22	37	18
Quasi analyst	3	17	23	36	20
Adaptive*	4	7	24	36	29
Quasi intuitive*	4	7	19	40	30
Intuitive*	0	9	11	27	53

**Notes** \* Statistically significant differences; test  $\chi^2$ , df = 4,  $\chi^2_{critical} = 9.49$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 5** Learning Styles vs. the Main Specialization of Respondents' Job Position (%)

Main specialization	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Technical works*	34	34	22	8	2
Administr., organizational, legal, personnel	31	32	21	12	4
Finance, accounting, reporting*	43	26	15	13	3
Project work, research, innovation	27	31	21	17	3
Information technology	48	33	15	2	3
Marketing, sales, logistics*	20	25	31	16	7

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (1) analyst, (2) quasi analyst, (3) adaptive, (4) quasi intuitive, (5) intuitive. \* Statistically significant differences; test  $\chi^2$ , df = 4,  $\chi^2_{critical} = 9.49$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

case of four learning styles, i.e., analyst, adaptive, quasi-intuitive and intuitive. Only in case of the quasi-analyst style no statistically significant differences were observed (Table 4).

Among those representing the intuitive style, the majority (53.5%) was represented by the youngest age group (20–29 years of age) and none of respondents represented the oldest age group (60–69 years of age). Among those representing the quasi-intuitive style, people of 30–39 years of age represented the majority (40.4%). The second largest group consisted of 20–29 year-olds. Similar distribution was observed in case of the adaptive learning style (36.2%: 30–39; 28.8%: 20–29). People of 30–39 years of age constituted the majority as far as the analyst style is concerned (36.6%). The second largest group was represented by 40–49 year-olds (21.7%).

**Table 6** Learning Styles vs. Respondents' Skills (% among respondents representing a particular learning style)

Respondents' skills	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Own workload management*	46.7	49.0	64.6	69.7	69.2
Stress management	37.8	37.7	39.4	37.2	35.1
Learning*	22.2	38.4	47.1	49.9	47.9
Career management*	22.2	15.2	21.2	8.9	13.1
Interpersonal communication*	48.9	47.7	43.1	31.8	27.6
Resolution of conflicts	17.8	16.6	21.9	22.1	20.3
Cooperation with rep. of other cultures	4.4	4.0	4.7	2.0	2.7
Leadership, leveraging*	20.0	14.6	8.4	6.4	6.1
Cooperation with people of all ages*	28.9	39.7	39.8	47.3	46.0
Cooperation with the opposite sex	11.1	11.9	12.4	15.8	17.7
Swift adaptation to new conditions	42.2	39.7	35.4	37.4	30.5
Mobilization to long-term work effort	15.6	21.9	21.5	26.7	25.9
Ability to carry out duties of others and one's own*	13.3	15.2	13.1	19.1	21.8
Creative thinking*	37.8	42.4	33.2	27.5	30.3

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (1) intuitive,  $N = 45$ , (2) quasi-intuitive,  $N = 151$ , (3) adaptive,  $N = 274$ , (4) quasi-analyst,  $N = 393$ , (5) analyst,  $N = 413$ . \* Statistically significant differences; test  $\chi^2$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $\chi^2_{critical} = 9.49$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

The assessment of whether respondents' learning style determines the dominance of the main specialization of the respondents' job position, indicated statistically significant differences in three out of six cases (Table 5). Among those representing the technical works, every third respondent represented the analyst or quasi-analyst learning style. In the same group, every fifth respondent represented adaptive style. Tasks in the areas of finance, accounting, reporting were generally realized by those representing the analyst learning style (43%). If the area of tasks boiled down to marketing, sales or logistics, people of adaptive learning styles represented the majority (30.7%).

The analysis indicated no statistically significant differences among learning styles in relation to the position held. The styles do not determine the position held (executive, specialist, manager).

In addition, the analysis of correlation between learning styles and respondents' skills was also undertaken. Statistically significant differences were observed in the case of 8 out of 14 skills (Table 6).

In this case, statistically significant differences were observed in those skills, whose values in case of the particular learning style diverged considerably from the values of other styles. Consequently, the skill of career management seems an interesting example, as it was selected as an advantage by 22.2% of the intuitive style's respondents and only by 8.9% of



those from the quasi-analyst group. On the other hand, the ability to carry out duties of others was selected much more frequently by representatives of the analyst (21.8%) and quasi-analyst (19.1%) styles than by those from adaptive (13.1%) and intuitive (13.3%) groups.

The largest number of respondents represented the analyst (32.4% – 413 respondents) and quasi-analyst (30.8% – 393 respondents) styles. Representatives of these groups indicated the following as their advantages the most frequently: own workload management (69.2% of the analyst style group and 69.7% of the quasi-analyst group, respectively), learning (47.9% and 49.9%, respectively) and cooperation with people of all ages (46% and 47.3%, respectively). Leadership and leveraging were declared the least frequently (6.1% and 6.4%, respectively).

The intuitive style was represented by the fewest respondents (3.5% – 45 respondents in total). The group selected the following as their advantages the most frequently: interpersonal communication (48.9%), swift adaptation to new conditions (42.2%) and creative thinking (37.8%).

### Summary

The analysis of research results indicated that the self-assessment of skills is determined by respondents' sex. The following skills were evaluated as considerably more significant by men than women: creative thinking, conflict solving, career management, stress management. On the other hand, women assessed own workload management, ability to carry out duties of others and interpersonal communication as more significant than men did. Such results seem interesting due to the fact that men considered 'hard' competencies, those which can be grasped and quantified, as their advantages. The literature of the subject highlights these skills as typically 'male.' As a consequence, the issue of the self-assessment's source may arise. Is the source associated with an objective evaluation conducted by respondents or is it simply a result of a stereotypical perception of male/female social roles? Female respondents considered interpersonal communication (also a stereotypically 'female' feature), workload management and multi-tasking as their advantage. All these findings offer a solid basis for further in-depth qualitative studies, which can deliver answers to the question of the extent to which the self-assessment is a result of stereotyping or an extent of the actual acquisition of skills by respondents.

The analyst (32.4% of respondents) and quasi-analyst (30.8%) became dominant learning styles among respondents. The intuitive style was the least frequently indicated (3.5%). This may have resulted from the specific character of respondents, dominated by people holding positions of specialists in their organizations. Such positions demand meticulousness and logical thinking.

The analysis of correlations between the learning style and respondents' skills revealed statistically significant differences in 8 out of 14 skills. Such fact denotes that the values of these skills in case of one of the styles considerably diverged from the values in other styles. For example, career management characterized representatives of the intuitive style. On the other hand, the ability to carry out duties of others constituted an advantage of the analyst and quasi-analyst. Further studies in this domain ought to be considered as well.

The literature of the subject emphasizes the necessity of innovation and creativity as a basis for successful realization of entrepreneurial objectives. However, it is not feasible without the development of suitable conditions for seeking opportunities, generating new activities and implementing innovations. For that to be possible, managers and HRM specialists ought to enable employees to develop their personal competences, especially as far as creativity and creative competences, self-management directed at achieving objectives, and social competences are concerned. Openness towards employees' diversity may be one of the means for identifying such competences among the employed.

Especially, managers and HR specialists ought to be receptive and sensible to employees' and applicants' diversity. They ought to be aware of the fact that, e.g., sex determines the self-assessment of employees' values, which, in turn, may influence the way they carry out their duties and their willingness to develop competencies in a particular area. Diversity should be treated not as a risk but as an opportunity for the organization. However, for such way of thinking to take roots in an organization, diversity must become one of the fundamental values in the company.

Research results indicated that respondents' age exerts significant influence upon their dominant learning style. In the case of the intuitive style, the youngest group constituted the majority of respondents. Consequently, managers ought to pay particular attention to new generations entering the labor market and coexisting in companies side by side with representatives of older generations. Such conditions demand new HRM tools, ones which will need to be developed by and for companies, especially the innovative ones, to be applied.

The fact that employees and their skills constitute a potential for development and innovation ought to be kept in mind. This requires proper management and involvement of employees of diverse potential – age, competencies, education, etc. Cooperation and the development of a model for communication in such a diverse group need to be generated. In such conditions, much depends on managers' competencies and experience. In order to utilize the potential of people of diverse age, mentoring programs or inter-generational bridges ought to be developed in companies.

Also managers must constantly develop (according to the idea of life-long learning) and improve their diversity management skills, effective use of potential of diverse employee groups, and generation of synergies, in order to make full use of the potential offered by diversity.

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# The Contemporary Adaptive Model for the Expatriates' Profile

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Considering the global realities and the technological evolution, within a knowledge-based economy, many organizations aim at the human capital development, setting up not just organizational standards but promoting environmentally HR's adjustment criteria in order to provide sustainability for recruitment and selection processes. Therefore, developing an adapted employee profile for expatriates should be one of the major imperatives for International Human Resources Management (IHRM) function. The work paper pleads for considering IHRM as an important organizational dimension, responsible for adjusting the international employee's behaviour in accordance with the organizational and external domestic environment, in order to promote the overall value of foreign employees for national economy, culture and society.

*Keywords:* international human resources, organizational culture, work environment

## Introduction

Globalization, technological evolution, and the ambition to become a knowledge-based economy has encouraged many countries and organizations to pursue new ways to maintain a competitive advantage, which in turn has given focus on the need to develop its *Human Capital* (HC). The HC, in a broad perspective, should be considered as a pool of resources comprising of all the knowledge, skills, experience, talents, and abilities possessed and valued on individual and joint scale, by the available human resources within a national territory or attached to a national economy. These resources represent the potential capabilities of a society as part of the national resources that should be valued in order to achieve the national goals.

Having a highly skilled labour force should fulfil a pivotal role in the na-

tional development, stimulating the domestic competitiveness and deepening the international involvement. Individuals, as aggregated in the *Human Resources* concept (HR), contribute to the global labour market by bringing distinctive sets of knowledge, skills, and abilities recognized as human capital within a large perspective. People have now become one of the most valuable assets recognized within the business framework as human capital. The dominant thinking is that individuals with advanced levels of competence can contribute to the development of any kind of business and, further, to the national progress by improving the productivity and bringing the innovation. At the organisational level, HC proves a vital importance for any business success, as improved through continuous education and valued by dynamic experience collection of its employees. It is, therefore, clear at this point that the human capital and *International Human Resource Management* (IHRM) are crossing on a common edge as for a national economy, considering together the international knowledge and the innovation transfer. The IHRM's link with HC determine one of the most critical functions of any organization, because it deals with people related issues, particularly when the organization is operating within a highly competitive global and uncertain environment. IHRM brings into prominence the developing and operational policies and strategies desirable in order to get the planned output by hiring the right person at the right place, with the best set of abilities as suited into a design role, in order to get the maximum out of an employee potential.

In lack of internal resources, for some countries, seeking to improve the human capital value to achieve global competitiveness and active participation in international trade meant to recruit high skilled foreign manpower in order to supplement the shortages in their local labour pool. Thereafter, more and more people travel abroad to work as expatriates in foreign countries. They might either be corporate expatriates, sent by their employer in their home country to work in a subsidiary, or they might be self-initiated expatriates, who, on their own initiative, have searched and found work abroad (Froese, 2012). These expatriates might encounter norms, values, customs and behaviours that are totally different from what they are used to do or to think like in home countries, the impact being not all the time fully compatible with their understanding and their adapting capacities. Involving skilled expatriate workforce in local businesses brings wide benefits to the national economy as described in international literature: it could encourage knowledge and technological transfer, creates a favourable environment for creativity and innovation, and can lead to better decision-making (Hofstede, 2001). The same theories underpin that a misaligned and less adapted management of expatriates' recruitment, selection and further work processes, could lead to miscommunication, conflicts, failure

of job satisfaction, damaged relationships, delayed productivity, producing finally an early return to home country and a diminished value exchange between parties involved (Hofstede, 2001). It could therefore be concluded that expatriate recruitment and selection processes should become vital concerns in the field of International Human Resource Management, as the first step to determine the employee suitability not only in the work place but in the environment as well.

The person's misfit in the environment could be considered as one of the major causes of the expatriate employee underperformance, as prior to any other non-conformity in personal profile. Many organizations are tempted to concentrate in the recruitment and selection processes prevalingly on those technical skills possessed by the prospective employees, as watching for punctual job requirements attached to a specific position, but ignoring most of other dimensions that defines a wider profile for an employee, especially when is deployed from abroad as an expatriates is. This diluted frame of selection criteria, excessively focused only on immediate organizational needs, often causes a dysfunctional relation between the expatriate (defined as *individual*), the organization (defined as *internal environment*), other employees within the organization (defined as *organizational relations and internal culture*), and the external environment (defined as *external driven forces*).

The complex relation of 'individual employee profile ↔ internal environment ↔ organizational relations and culture ↔ external environment' is the key for harmonizing the *individual perception* with the *organizational performance*. Afterwards, in practice, sometimes the organizational adaptive process is abruptly shorted to a simple relation 'individual skills → organizational rules and standards,' which becomes irrelevant for a long-term relation, neglecting the personal contribution in an institutional environment. This perspective is very useful only to determine the conditionality between individual conformity and personal issues. But an efficient integration of an expatriate employee in the whole frame of work environment is depending not only on the individual conformity, but also on the individual value, which can be counted as a contribution to the organizational culture and performance, consolidated namely in *human capital value*.

As examples, the personal differences and perceptions against the national culture or related to the organizational rules in case of an expatriate will determine a distorted performance of an expat. In most cases, the host country authorities should outline the required or desirable attributes for a specific prospective working expatriate profile, in order to help the companies to find out not just the matching employees in accordance with its internal rules, but also to value the foreign expertise and the knowledge transfer on national level, on economic, cultural and social dimensions.

Setting up not just organizational standards, but promoting environmentally matching criteria at national level will provide sustainability for recruitment and selection processes, bringing not just profit to local business, but also a deep attachment to local values, countable in terms of personal fidelity, commitment and contribution of expatriates transformed in progress forces and not just as migrating variables in the employment market framework. Thereafter, considering the qualitative ratios between the expatriates' roles, the organisations' HR strategies and the national priorities on long term, it can be stated that developing a profile of an expatriate employee should be one of the major imperatives for IHRM functions. As an important organizational dimension, IHRM becomes responsible nowadays not just for placing the right person in the right place at the right time, but also for adjusting the international employee behaviour in accordance with organizational and external domestic environments, in order to promote the overall value of foreign employees for national economy, culture and society.

From this perspective, within a blurred context, 'without essential knowledge in this field, companies would rather not employ expatriates even though they know the benefits gained through the utilization of expatriates' (Abdullah & Jin, 2015, p. 326). Detailed analyses on the attributes of the desirable working expatriate profile has been anecdotal; therefore, it would be very difficult for domestic organizations to select and place them efficiently in those areas where their potential could be effectively and mutually valued. In most of the cases, the selection processes have been fulfilled without a proper framework adjusted to match the expatriate employee with the whole environmental complexity, defined both by the organisation (culture, relations and roles) and by the society or other driving forces. Considering these issues, the purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework that can assist in the recruiting and selection processes of expatriates in order to value on a superior level the international human resources potential.

This paper will also try to provide a conceptual overview of the dimensions and the theoretical shape of an expatriate profile, thereby underpinning its significance, both for the organization and for the host society, as a whole. It is desirable as using these concepts and the corresponsive findings drawn from this paper would be helpful not only as an onset for a research basis, but also for organizations to complete the internal instruments for selecting the proper expatriate candidates, for social benefit and long-run purposes.

### **Research Methodology**

This study will follow an interpretive approach on a modelling basis: 'a way of researching a given topic in depth and with sophistication without a sta-



tistically secure universalization of findings' (Hackley, 2003, pp. 8–9). The authors have used in this paperwork the qualitative approaches, valuing the literature review findings in this respect; the modelling techniques have been mostly based on qualitative perspective, as considered at the moment more comprehensive and further being useful to open specific standpoints to be further empirically tested.

Therefore, the study starts as a theoretical onset for a further empirical study, based on interviews and questionnaires administration, in order to quantify the real proportions of the theoretical model and to assert the initial standpoints as refereed.

The qualitative approach has been used to design a comprehensive human profile matrix, to reveal the differences in theory and practice, between human resource management and human capital value. The qualitative approach has been based on reflecting graphically, in a systemic view, the human resources variables in recruitment, selection and employment processes, but under a static perspective, underpinning the major components of the personal and organizational profile of an employee. This matrix has been useful to determine in analytical manner the relations between human resources and the human capital, where the professional potential is valued by the organization, comprising all theories of expatriates together and adding the missing parts of the frame (Figure 1). Following the qualitative methodology of modelling, the authors have further designed the dynamic profile of the adding value process in human capital exploitation, on the same systemic perspective, considering the organization as a whole and the employee as a potential gear wheel for improving the performance or just as a static supportive pole, defined only by conformity and rule compliance (Figure 2).

The qualitative technique has been used also to collect and to interpret different heterogeneous data sources in literature, about expatriates' selection practices or expatriate adjustment processes, cross cultural strategies and International Human Resources management techniques and results. As a syntactical support, the study will undergo a scientific approach using an extensive literature reviewing and developing a conceptual framework, that can forth lead to the identification of those variables and relationships anticipated to be involved within Human Resources matrix (Maylor & Blackman, 2005, p. 143). As the way will be opened and a ground basis will be settled, in future studies the quantitative methods will be used in order to quantify the Human Resources valued impact within an organization by collecting data from different entities and interviewed professionals. Each profile variable should be further quantified based on multicriteria analysis, in relation with the matching criteria of an organization and in relation with the strategic goals stated by the host nation IHR policies.

### The Expatriates' Profile Fundamentals

As stated above, the globalization driving forces, together with the nations' ambition to be defined as knowledge-based economies in the contemporary age of information, innovation, communication and mobility, have encouraged many countries to pursue new ways to improve its competitive advantages by developing its human capital, within domestic organizations and economic systems. The development of the global economy into a high diversity has stimulated the cumulative expatriation level as being forecast to increase further into the third millennium (Richardson & McKenna, 2002).

Calling for a complete definition, an expatriate can be defined in general terms as anyone who is living and working at a moment in a foreign country (Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013). Expatriates are usually classified into two major groups of expatriates: *company expatriates* and *self-initiated expatriates* (Froese, 2012). The traditional view of IHR movements has been focused initially on the work deployment, initiated by those transfers made as reply to the organizational structure extension abroad. But nowadays, an increasing number of prospective expatriates make their own arrangements to find appointments abroad, as facilitated by the free labour movement incentive, within migration processes nourished by globalization and integration phenomenon development.

The selection of expatriates has historically been based on the technical competencies of identified candidates valuing the professional knowledge of the manager and of his board (Tung, 1981a). Unfortunately, other interpersonal factors have often been neglected (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1987; Tung, 1981a). Instead of continuing to be focused on the one-dimensional perspective of technical competence in human resources, as the primary consideration of assessing the expatriate managers, it has been suggested that multinational companies should focus on more comprehensive selection criteria than simple professional profile (Tung, 1981b). *Technical competences* on the job (knowledge, skills and abilities), as well as the *personality features, relational abilities, environmental factors, and family situation* can also significantly contribute to the managerial effectiveness in human resources' selection processes on international scale. But recent studies have empirically confirmed yet that expatriates' selection is a multi-faceted subject: personality variables, as well as interpersonal skills, are both very important as considered in a profile assessment (Caligiuri, Phillips, Lazarova, Tarique, & Burgj, 2001). The selection process should assign different importance weights to those factors that contribute or conduct toward success or failure in job requirements fulfilment.

Some other authors have identified major variables also relevant for an expatriate's profile that can lead to a successful adjustment overseas as:

*cultural sensitivity, empathy for others* or the willingness to accept *intercultural challenges* (Yavas & Bodur, 1999). This frame is completed by the ability of the *expatriate's family* to adjust successfully into the new environment, as a larger dominant perspective of expatriate success (Hung-Wen, 2007). Additionally to the family matter, careful consideration should be given to the cultural and social particularities enforced of settled in the country of assignment or deployment. The larger the differences between the host and home countries the employee and his family will face, the more emphasis must be placed on finding and developing individual adjustment strategies or tools, considering not just the professional requirements but a wider picture of external environment, prior to any organizational adjustment.

Several scholars have attempted to design the expatriates' profile, describing the major required variables and skills for an expatriation successful process, considering the cross-cultural interactions (Benson, 1978; Muller & Turner, 2009). These attempts were useful to compile the essential skills identified for assuring a successful expatriate job performance (Leibra-O'Sullivan, 1999). Other authors proposed a multifaceted approach for the selection process of expatriate employees, consistent enough to link behavioural tendencies to the expected overseas performance (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985).

The most recently conducted study has revealed that within an expats' profile the *professional expertise, adaptability to new culture, flexibility, positive attitude* and *ongoing motivation*, as well as the *tolerance* and *open-mindedness*, are the most important expatriate selection criteria (Abdullah & Jin, 2015). In this context, expatriates need to have the ability to effectively interact with diverse colleagues and have an understanding of cultural differences (Jackson & Toit, 2014). There were even identified twenty-five sub-criteria for the selection of expatriate candidates, as an interesting attempt to create a soft computing-based preference selection index method for selecting expatriate professionals' human resource management (Vahdani, Mousavi, & Ebrahimnejad, 2014). These 25 criteria most predominant and significant in the selection of expatriate candidates sub-criteria fall within the categories of personal factors, competencies, job characteristics, family factors, environmental factors, and organization relocation support activities.

Therefore, the development of a proper expatriate profile seems to be a turning point for any organization, when using international human resources in their operation or when acting abroad, crossing the national territory. This frame should not only enable to provide a right job-candidate fitting, but should also enhance the success of managerial practices, which, in turn, lays the functional foundation for a strong organization in a sustainable manner. Identifying the various dimensions of an expatriate profile will

result in an appropriate regulation of incoming and outgoing mobility of the talented human resource. In this respect, developing a profile for an expat, framing together with the professional requirements also the social and cross-cultural variables, will serve as a strong onset to the selection processes, design and implementation, as for further HR training and development planning, increasing the managerial performance and effectiveness.

Employers will seek to select those people who will meet the job requirements, but who will also adapt to the environment changes, opting to be loyal to the organization for a longer term, making the difference between a simple attachment to the organizational rules or regulations and a further deeper commitment and understanding of organizational values. On the other hand, the potential employees would like to work for an organization providing their knowledge, skills and abilities but will expect the organisation itself to care about individuals, meeting their particular needs and expectations, on both professional and personal levels. The real result of a bivalent perspective should not be just about rules compliance, but about personal contribution value as well, in order to improve the processes and the output within an organization. Accomplishing these goals asks for a forth development of a taxonomy that combines the profile features of a potential working expatriate, together with both organizational environment requirements and personal expectations.

### The Contemporary Design of Expatriates' Profile

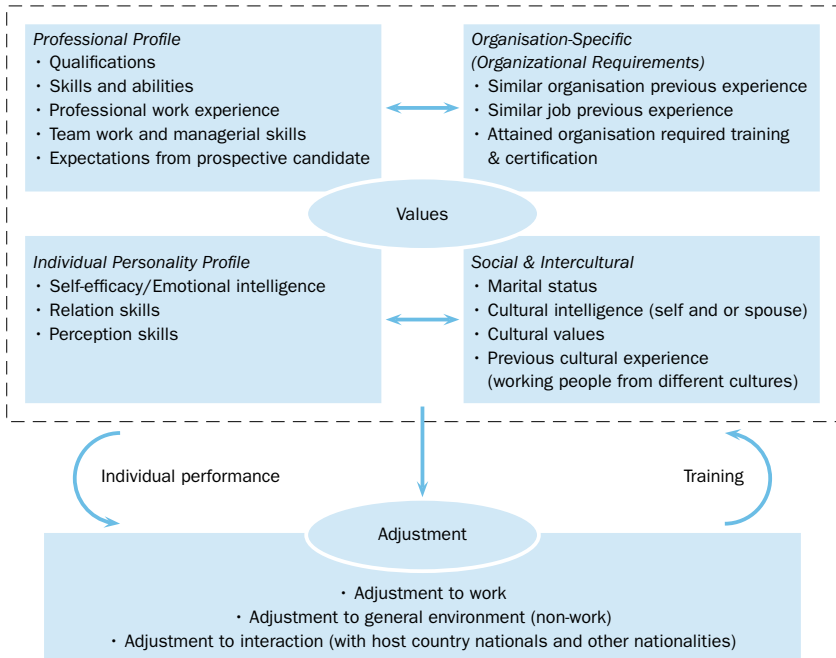
In order to define and to shape the contemporary model for expats' profile, the most visible theories have been considered together, by analyzing the literature on the collective dimensions outlined by Tung (1981a), Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou (1991), Shaffer and Harrison (1999), and Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) (Figure 1). In this respect, the expatriates' profile has been designed as having four distinctive but overlapping dimensions, namely: *professional profile*, *organization-specific requirements*, *individual personality profile*, and *social & intercultural*. These 4 dimensions compound together, as basic determinants, the static perspective of an expatriates' HR profile (Figure 1). But this perspective is focused on a 'single way' functional model, as from the organization toward employees, based on conformity and compliance with internal rules and organizational culture. In this case, the profile is assessed just based on those features assumed through internal environment variables, the employee being in the position to adjust his behaviour in predicted parameters. This is a sort of static organizational profile, mainly oriented toward economic performance as market reactive strategy, in terms of economic output consistency and growth. The organizational behaviour will be just explained by a static perspective, as sum of all employees' behaviour (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

### **Professional Profile**

This dimension of professional profile seeks for expatriate's qualifications, skills, abilities, work experience, managerial skills, cumulating the professional performance expectations from a prospective candidate, all of which should be aligned with the organization's needs. In theory, individual job performance is a function of knowledge, skills, abilities, and motivation directed at role prescribed behaviour, such as formal job responsibilities. Black et al. (1991) and Shaffer and Harrison (1999) also further introduced two moderating variables: previous assignments and language fluency, and provided confirmation of the importance of language fluency as a selection criterion. Since organizational culture might be different one organisation to another, this means that employees should possess the right knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) that match the requirements of the organisation, being able to fit accordingly in the predicted standards. If the employee's KSAs are matching the expectations, then he is more likely to have a smooth transition into the new organization environment, performing efficiently the new job tasks, at 'full' capacity. At this level, the expatriate employee will not be treated as an exception, major differences coming mainly from social and cross-cultural dimensions.

### **Organisational Specific Dimension**

This variable is connected to the professional dimension, completing the professional profile frame (Figure 2). As previously indicated, organizational culture and previous experience of employees might differ from organization to organization. This means that employees should possess the right certifications that match the requirements of the organization. In some cases, the organization might require the employee to have attained a specific qualification that might only specific to the particular organization and probably not required by any other similar organization in the industry. We are not referring to the common professional requirement that is linked to a specific profession (e.g., teacher requiring teaching qualification or a nurse who has attained a professional nursing certification). This dimension refers to the organization requirement imposed by the regulatory authorities in the host country. These requirements are country specific and only applicable to that country or state, being sometimes transferable to another country or not. It is important for an expatriate employee to meet first the initial organizational requirements as demanded by the national and or regional authorities. In some cases, the expatriate employee might not be required to meet this requirement prior to employment, but however should be willingly or further forced to attain the certification or requirement fulfilment within a specific period of employment. A good example is the IELTS certification (International English Language Testing System) for non-native En-



**Figure 1** Static Perspective of Expatriates' HR Profile Determinants

English teachers for teaching English-based subjects or courses in a native English country or even in non-native English countries in some other cases (Haslberger, Brewster, & Hippler, 2014).

These two dimensions, professional and organizational, are the major pillars for defining and assessing the *expatriate's professional profile*, of human capital, any lack of these being a compulsory condition to be priority fulfilled or further acquired by specific training programs. But for completing the profile frame, the employee should be depicted through its *individual identity* dimensions as well, as defined by the personality or by social and inter-cultural interactions.

### Individual Personality Profile

The identified individual personal traits or relational abilities are one of those consistent variables that contribute to success or failure on the job appointment and, therefore, should be used to guide the selection process. This variable is not limited to a simple knowledge of another culture features, but include also the ability to live and work with people whose axiological systems, beliefs, customs, manners and ways of conducting businesses may greatly differ from one's own (Tung, 1981a). In this respect,

some authors found that extraversion, emotional stability, and openness to change had a significant, positive impact on expatriate adjustment, while agreeableness positively influences expatriate job performance (Downes, Varner, & Hemmasi, 2010). Other scholars have indicated that all personality traits, apart from conscientiousness, can bring a significant influence on expatriate effectiveness and success, asserting that 'expatriates who are emotionally stable, who are outgoing and agreeable, and who are high in openness to experience seem to function better than others' (Shaffer & Harrison, 1999, p. 122). Hence, individuals who possess the appropriate personality features for a given role in a given environment will perform better in their job, compared with those who do not possess the appropriate personality characteristics for that same role (Caligiuri et al., 2001).

In a broad view it can be concluded that the personality variables can be considered valid predictors of expatriate job performance. In order to establish the relationship between personality and job performance, a brief literature review has been carried out, depicting individual different variables related to expatriate job performance such as: personality trait, self-efficacy, motivation, communicational ability, stress tolerance, relational ability, and prior international experience (Holopainen & Björkman, 2005; Shaffer & Harridon, 1999). Personality itself has been defined as an enduring emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal and motivational style that explains individual's behaviour in different situations (McCrae & Costa, 1989).

Looking further it should be found that some attributes, such as self-efficacy, relation skills, perception skills, emotional intelligence, can be also considered vital to the effective performance of an expatriate; other variables as the self-dimension, the relationship dimension, and the perception dimension being very skills, essential for expatriate success (Black & Gregsen, 1991). These expatriate skill requirements were based, as the initial research stated, on the 'self-efficacy' centres of skills that an expatriate needs to have in order to be self-effective in relation with the stress management and psychological well-being (Mendenhall & Oddou's, 1985). Several scholars have established that individuals who are more flexible in learning new behaviours will get on higher self-efficacy levels, proving themselves more likely to adjust faster and more efficient in a new environment since they are prepared and wishful to try and learn new behaviours (Harrison et al., 1996; Black, Gregsen, & Mendenhall, 1992; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Foster, Weber, Sumpter, & Temple, 2000; Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001).

The relational skills are very relevant component of this dimension involving a wide range of expertise that can facilitate 'easy' interaction, this attribute referring to the 'interaction adjustment facet' about how the individual relates to the nationals of the host country (Mendenhall & Oddou,

1985). In this regard, 'possessing relational skills can decrease the uncertainty related to an unfamiliar environment' (Cerimagic, 2012, p. 55). An expatriate should find it easier to understand a foreign culture and to interpret properly the environment variables when he possesses greater perception skills, being able to adopt an appropriate behaviour in the new environment (Cerimagic, 2012).

### **Social and Intercultural Dimension**

This final dimension completes the expat's individual identity depiction, being responsible to detail the employee's ability to identify and to cope with environmental structures and constraints, such as institutional and governmental structures, unions, competitors and customers, as crucial work hypothesis toward effectiveness and efficiency. This dimension is very relevant to the individual adapting skill since the political, legal and socio-economic structures, which constitute the macro-environment in the host country, may consistently vary from those ones with which the expatriate is familiar. A recent study has revealed that socio-cultural similarities would facilitate general environmental fitting of a person and a smoother living adjustment of expatriates, once they are able to understand the systems' variables and how to operate with them (Koveshnikov, Wechtler, & Dejoux, 2014). The family situation should also be considered as another important aspect of the social and intercultural dimension, outlining the ability of the expatriate's family or dependants to adjust to a different foreign environment. Their adjustment is essential to the employee equilibrium in daily life, as in professional daily activities, affecting very consistent the performance and the personal attitudes on a medium and long range. The consistency on an expatriate adjustment is related to the individual components as a whole, the employees' retention for long term in the companies being sensitive to family perceptions (Feitosa, Kreutzer, Kramperth, Kramer, & Salas, 2014).

### **The Contemporary Design of Expatriates' Dynamic Profile**

An expatriates' profile matrix can be represented like in the drawing above in order to describe on a common basis the most important determinants that should be considered in a *static perspective* against human capital selection and adjustment processes. In this matrix the major profile components should be subordinated to the adjustment process as variables in the adapting process of an expatriate to the *work environment*, *non-work environment* and to the *interactive environment*. But we have to think about both reminded ways of the adjusting process: a) as from the employer standards and expectations to the employee compliance, but also b) as from the employee expectations toward the employers' standards and requirements. In

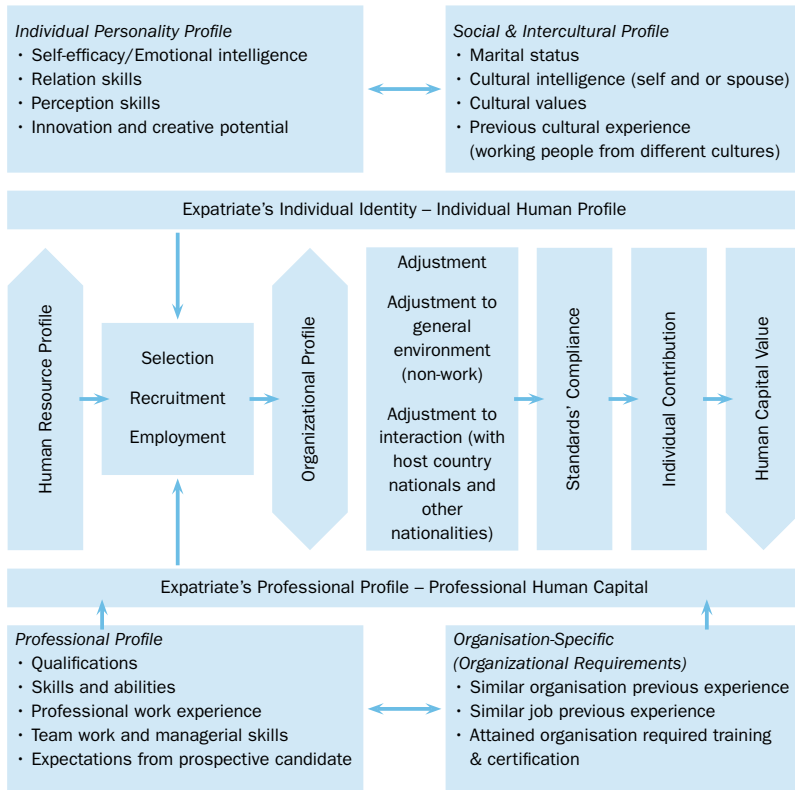


Figure 1 the first perspective is prevailing, neglecting the sustainable human resource evolution and the human capital values. The process should be a bivalent one, in order to transform a simple *active employee* considered part of *Human Resources* concept, complying with the organizational rules, into a *proactive employee*, part of the *Human Capital* concept, contributing to the added value processes in the organization.

That's why, in Figure 2, in the case of the expats' description, the authors felt the need to improve the initial matrix (which defines just the personal profile simply adjusted to the environment), inserting a clearer design of both sides of the profile, segregated in *expatriate's individual human profile* (appealing the individual personality and social and intercultural profiles) and the *expatriate's individual professional profile* (professional profile and organization specific requirements). In the designed model three steps will be identified:

1. *Human Resource Profile definition* – where the expatriate is defining dynamically an ongoing profile, cumulating expertise, knowledge or cultivating psychological, cultural and social characteristics. With this profile the expatriate will onset the individual potential offer to the potential employers. The expats will mostly consider here the professional and individual assets that can help them to suit the organizational expectations, thinking more to comply then to contribute or to develop themselves as added values with the organizations.
2. *Organizational Profile definition* – where the organization is stating its requirements standards and rules, interacting with the individual profiles, overtaking the selection, recruitment and employment processes. The organizations try to identify the most important component for selection process as debated above. Further, the organization will identify the most reliable tools to manage the adjustment processes of their new expatriate employees in the most effective manner.
3. *Human Capital Value definition* – this last stage comes as a result of the two previous profile interactions. After the employment procedures fulfilment, human resources will adjust and adapt themselves to those environment variables as defined by the organization or by the external environment in all its components (e.g., professional, cultural, social dimensions). Once the compliance with all these variables is fulfilled, the expatriate will start contributing to the organizational progress valuing his potential, not just in execution but also in creating value, as a specific form of a capital.

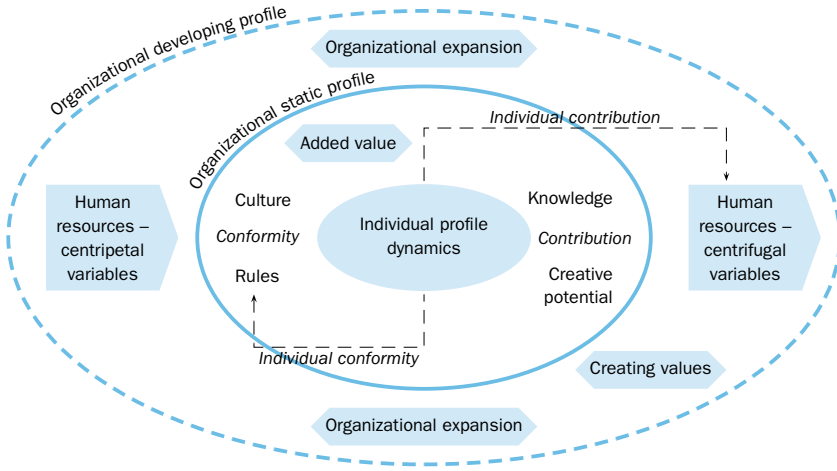
The concept of developing an expatriate profile is based on a components' depiction starting from the concept of 'person ↔ environment' ad-



**Figure 2** The Human Capital Profile for Expatriates

justment ( $P - E$ ), defined as an interactive ratio based on the degree of compatibility or match between individuals and some aspect of their work environment. This concept of employee compatibility is outlined in a vivid perspective considering that behaviour ( $B$ ) is a function of the person ( $P$ ) and his/her environment ( $E$ ), where  $B = f(P, E)$ . (Oh et al., 2014, p. 2). This equation underpins that personal characteristics and environmental variables are the two major forces that interact to shape the individual behaviour (Oh et al., 2014). Accordingly, individuals will seek to achieve and to preserve the full compliance with their environmental variables, looking for positive workplace relationships and further for a career successful path.

In order to reveal the personal behaviour in ratio with the environment variables and dynamics, the authors have described the human capital impact within an *Organizational Development Model* (DMO), in order to understand the international human resources particularities, but in all its complexity. The DMO should reflect in human capital assessment and valuation, both interaction relations: (a) from the organization toward the employee, as



**Figure 3** The Dynamic Human Capital Profile for Expatriates within an Organizational Development Model

centripetal variables, and (b) from the employee toward the organisation, as centrifugal variables (Figure 3).

First of all, it should be clear that not all organizations need development models but just proper functional models; since they are oriented toward preserving the internal values, based on economic performance and production quality compliance, they will rather prefer to look for efficiency rather than for growth. Therefore, thinking about human resources, for these type of business related to the *conservative type of organizations*, i.e., oriented toward profit and economic rationales, is mostly needed just for an *optimum allocation of resources*. In this case, the human resources are adjusted in one way, as from the organization toward the employee, the conformity and the compliance with the internal rules, regulations and culture, being the most important imperatives. In this case, we can draft an *Organizational Static Profile*, represented in the drawing above as the inner circle, determined by the centripetal ruling and cultural variables, the organization being focused in its performance on human resources efficiency. Following this perspective, the expatriate's profile is only related to the components described above in Figure 1, more related to a human resources definition.

But, if the organization is looking to grow and to develop itself within a determined environment, then an optimum allocation of resources will not be enough, also considering the human resources. The organization should seek not just for profit and economic performance, but also for a higher value of resources allocated, using the innovation and the human capital knowledge to improve the processes and to create value. Then the human resources, depending on its position on organizational chart, would con-

tribute not just to *adding value* processes for the final product by fulfilling the requirements, but also to *creating value* processes by innovation, developing its potential and contributing to the organizational capital valuation. In that case, the category of 'Human Resources – HR' will not comprise the real substance of the developing model of an organization anymore. There is a real need to make a clear distinction when human resources act in both ways, not just complying but also contributing and bringing their innovative skills and expertise to improve the environment, the processes and the system functionality. That organizational dynamics, when a human resource is involved in creating value together or distinctively from adding value processes, could define widely the Human Capital category, as has been used in the Organizational Development Model (ODM), described in drawing above.

In our case, expats have the possibility not just to act accordingly with the stated rules within the environment, but should also they are able to contribute with their own individual axiological system to the organizational values and culture, using their knowledge and creative potential, considered as centrifugal forces for an organizational evolution, determining not just performance but also development and sustainable growth. The relation between expats and the organization becomes in this case a bivalent one, the international employees being able both to comply and to transfer knowledge and innovative potential to the hosting employer. In this case, the institutional throughput will not be centred exclusively on conformity, as a present imperative, but it will consider the human capital value as a sum of human resources proactive contributions for development and innovation, embedding a dynamic character to the organization (Figure 2).

### Summary and Concluding Remarks

As resulted from the literature review endeavour, the international human resources role is unquestionably recognized. The expatriates' migration wave is adding value to most industrialized or developing economies already and the most relevant authors were concerned about how the selection and recruitment processes should be improved to hike this impact on the organizational level, and further on the national level. As outlined from the literature, the expatriates' profile has been set up in main streams and connections with the organizational environment were depicted, following some relevant steps in the qualitative methodological approach. First, the present research has synthesized the major concepts in the international human resources definition, depicting the major descriptor of expatriates' profile, under the matrix of a *Static Perspective of Expatriates' HR Profile Determinants* (Figure 1). Secondly, once the profile features were revealed, the study has been enlarged in order to update the contemporary relation between expats

and organizational environment, under the matrix of *The Human Capital Profile for Expatriates* (Figure 2). The differences between those two perspectives are related to the new considerations about the expats' selection, recruitment and adjusting processes, designed for knowledge transfer and better retention of valuable international human resources.

Just resuming to a simple static perspective as presently asserted, an organisation will be efficient but will miss the developing and growth potential that will affect the overall national potential for sustainable development, based on innovation and value chain creation. Then the expats will just generate added value but will not create values, the major purposes of their performance being related just to the labour trade off in income terms and personal wealth. The relation of environment-expatriate will be an univalent one, where the organizations will pay for skill, knowledge and expertise but with no retention on a sustainable basis, and will no further benefit from knowledge transfer. In this respect, the authors tried to underpin that in the lack of human capital valuation, knowledge transfer and innovation will be hampered, with no benefits for the hosting nation except the economic results in the short run. There should be a conflict between the organizational goals (referring to a short-run perspective of profit and efficiency) and the national interest that is seeking for sustainable development in the long run, targeting innovation and creative potential. For this reason, the authors promote the idea of differentiating between the Human Resources concept, which is limited to the relation of 'organization ↔ employee (expatriate),' and the concept of Human Capital, which reflects both sides involved in these dynamics, seeking for a bivalent relation of 'organization ↔ employee (expatriate).'

Seeking to describe the major organizational model from an expats' point of view, the authors found that there are two major types of organizations, namely: a) *conservative organizations* (static profile), classically oriented toward economic performance and HR conformity, following the market trends and the shared knowledge; and b) *developing organizations* (dynamic profile), focused on value chain creation and knowledge improvement, using human capital, and creative and innovative potential (Figure 2).

In synthesis to this dual perspective, we have to deal with two organizational models as revealed by the analysis carried out (Figure 3):

- The *static model*, described by the next equation: 'static organization ↔ human resources profile ↔ rules compliance ↔ individual performance ↔ added values' – one way perspective organizations shaping expatriates' profile based on compliance and adjustments;
- The *dynamic model*, described by the next equation: 'dynamic organization ↔ human capital profile ↔ adjustment and contribution ↔ inno-

variation → value creation' – one way perspective organizations shaping expatriates' profile based on compliance and adjustments.

- In this respect, once accepted the imperative of expatriates' HR policies reassessment, the next measures should be implemented within the corporate system in order to improve the dynamic performance of the organizations in the overall endeavours of knowledge transfer and growth: an implementation of an *individual dynamic profile* assessment in the recruitment and selection processes is needed, following the major descriptors in the static matrix as presented in Figure 2, considering both individual potential and organizational requirements, with a greater stress on the creative and innovation potential of international manpower;
- the prior analysis of internal manpower needs is necessary, in order to identify the real *requirements for innovation in a growing perspective* and the implementation of those inquired policies and procedures accordingly to support the continuous process of organizational improvement on a sustainable basis, as depicted in Figure 3;
- prior to any selection process launched for expatriates recruitment, a *general organizational/team profile should be described* as to define the individual further fitting variables in the group variables – thus the employer will find out with accuracy the effective needs and expectations from its international human resources that will impact the organizational development potential;
- after recruitment but before expatriates' involvement in daily tasks and assignments, considering the group profile defined as above described, *wider adjustment training programs* should be applied, in order to accommodate the employee to the organizations' cultural issues;
- among the key performance indicators, various vectors of *individual valuable contribution to the organizational/team culture* should be included, as to stimulate the knowledge transfer from expatriates toward the organization – the expatriates' human capital should be assessed in terms of various group impact factors, quantified based on accepted individual contributions to the group profile definition (e.g., process improvements, risk/crisis management, innovative initiatives, cultural understanding and norms/values ratio of acceptance, etc.).

In conclusion, the host nations should be more interested to be able to stimulate not just the qualified expatriates' recruitment but also the knowledge transfer and HR value retention in a wider area of expertise, into a sustainable manner. Different proactive organization acting in the academic

area, technological field, energetic sector or even in public services need to adopt the contemporary dynamic model, once they assume continuous development and innovation as imperatives. If the expatriates' movement will not bring but only additional manufacturing potential with no innovation and knowledge transfer valences, then the whole process will be diluted to simple trade-offs in labour and money remittance flow, in which case the host nation will not retain much from the added value and will no further create value for their future societies. This imperative becomes essential in order to get real advantages from the globalization phenomenon, assumed to be the most relevant driven force of the humanity at least for the next decades.

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# Envisioning Incentives for Improving University Governance: A Ghanaian Perspective

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The incentive to strengthen university governance system has three implications: (1) improving the quality of the university education system, and thus providing students and the general public value for money, (2) enhancing the utilization of resources invested in university education, and (3) contributing significantly to the formation of human capital, quality of public leadership, and best services to the society. However, there are limited studies on how this can be realized in Ghana. This is a qualitative study seeking to explore the following questions: What is needed to ensure desirable university governance? And how can it be achieved? In-depth interviews and documentary research were used to collect data from twenty-three participants. The study examines key governance issues such as funding, accountability, infrastructure, trust, and regulation. The study contextually contributes to the literature on university governance and management by bringing to the fore the incentives needed to enhance it for a better output to meet the development needs of the Ghanaian economy and the African continent with similar challenges as a whole.

*Keywords:* university governance, education policy, trust, accountability, management, Ghana

## Introduction

Education is generally accepted as a principal mechanism for promoting economic growth and for Africa, where growth is ever more essential if the continent is to climb out of poverty, education is particularly of more impor-

tance. The importance of university education in Africa cannot be underestimated as former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, in a speech maintained that (Kurtz & Schrank, 2007, p. 6):

The university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century. Universities can help develop African expertise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic universities; serve as a model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights, and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars.

Education remains the most single dosage that many multilateral universities, organizations and agencies have prescribed to addressing not only the world's health issues but also political, economic, and social ones, among others. Education brings about better ways of life, and conveys stronger social and economic benefits to a nation, to a community and to the individual (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2005). Education goes well beyond its obvious role of providing a setting for teaching and learning.

In response to the need for the physical and human capital, a number of countries have undertaken significant transformations of their tertiary education systems, including changes in patterns of financing and governance, the creation of quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms, curriculum reforms, and technological innovations (Holm-Nielsen, 2001). But progress has been uneven and sharp contrasts remain across and within tertiary education systems the world over. Most developing countries continue to wrestle with difficulties produced by inadequate responses to pre-existing challenges, some of which are the expansion of tertiary education coverage in a sustainable way, the reduction of inequalities of access and outcomes, the improvement of educational quality and relevance, and the introduction of effective governance structures and management practices. Even though tertiary level enrollments have grown significantly in virtually all countries in the developing world, the enrollment gap between the most advanced economies and the developing nations has become wider (Holm-Nielsen, 2001). Financial resources have been insufficient to sustain the growth of enrollment and at the same time improve quality at both the public and private university levels.

A good education system that works for the good of the nation depends partly on the governance structures and principles upon which it is anchored. Such elements of good governance may be varied but include effectiveness, rule of law, regulatory quality, and control of corruption (Forson, Buracom, Baah-Ennumh, Chen, & Carsamer, 2015; Forson, 2016; Vries,

2013). Good governance must be responsive to the demands of the citizens (Roy, 2005). To achieve this, there is need for public participation since good governance is political and requires non-governmental actors to shape political policy (Elahi, 2009). Because good governance issues are complex, there is a need to integrate different issues, such as leadership, resources and competitiveness, when searching for solutions (Babacan, 2014). Others are also of the view that the concept entails the state providing quality services to the state (Bingab, Forson, Mmbali, & Baah-Enumh, 2016; Machado & Macagnan 2015). Government should also open avenues for citizens to participate in decision-making in order to influence priorities (Lameck & Kamugisha, 2015). Good governance should also take into account adequate representation and concerns about citizen satisfaction with the services provided (Bebe & Bing, 2015; Forson & Opoku, 2014).

While there is broad agreement on the importance of university governance for the achievement of universities' missions, especially in the 21st century, there is little or no specific information that looks at university governance issues in Ghana especially in the wake of the challenge that has to do with the resultant university output. The quality in recent times has been questioned and is a matter that has drawn public concern. More particularly that university governance has received relatively little attention in the higher education research literature until quite recently, and most of what has been written on the topic is not grounded in empirical research (Jones, Shanahan, & Goyan, 2004). If such research is conducted, key university governance issues that will emerge from the research findings will constitute a guide to the university community to enable them concentrate on which governance issues matters most in their systems of operation.

On this basis one can infer three implications: (1) strengthening university governance system will improve the quality of the university education system, providing students and the general public value for money. (2) Improving university governance will enhance utilization of resources invested in university education. (3) Good university governance will play a more effective role in formation of human capital, quality of public leadership, and best services to the society. In light of these, this is a qualitative study seeking to explore the questions: What is needed to ensure desirable university governance in the Ghanaian context? And how can it be achieved? The implications for the emerging issues are discussed for policy and practice.

### **Method and Techniques**

This is an exploratory qualitative study. Yin (2009) argues that 'what' and 'how' questions are best suited for exploratory research, as such questions develop pertinent premises and does not limit the research to what

**Table 1** Respondents, Representation and Codes

S/N	Respondent	Representation	Code
1	Council Chair A	Public University	CC A
2	Council Chair B	Private University 1	CC B
3	Council Chair C	Private University 2	CC C
4	Vice-Chancellor A	Public University	VC A
5	Vice-Chancellor B	Private University 1	VC B
6	Vice-Chancellor C	Private University 2	VC C
7	Registrar A	Public University	Reg A
8	Registrar B	Private University 1	Reg B
9	Registrar C	Private University 2	Reg C
10	Finance Officer	N/A	FO
11	Student Leaders A	Public University	SL A
12	Student Leaders C	Private University	SL C
13	Executive Secretary, NCTE	NCTE	ES-NCTE
14	Executive Secretary, NAB	NAB	ES-NAB
15	Former Vice-Chancellor	N/A	FVC
16	Former Executive Secretary, NCTE 1	NCTE	FES-NCTE 1
17	Former Executive Secretary, NCTE 2	NCTE	FES-NCTE 2
18	Former Executive Secretary, NAB	NAB	FES-NAB
19	Former Student Leaders	NUGS	FSL

you find but how such issues have been or are being handled, as captured in this study's research questions. Documentary data, in-depth interviews, specifically semi-structure interviews, and the authors' experience in university administration were used to collect data from high level university leaders who were serving or had served three top universities in Ghana. For instance, questions such as 'What is university governance in Ghana?' and 'How does good university governance enhance quality university education?' were some of the questions often asked. The researchers sought to learn from the experiences of these other senior university management staff, the students and the regulators. Twenty-three participants were interviewed.

The participants were former and serving university governing council chairs, former and serving university Vice-Chancellors, university registrars, senior finance officers, former and serving executive secretaries and student leaders who served on university governing councils. Data recording, note taking, transcribing, and documentary techniques were used to collect data. Transcribed data was read repeatedly to make sense of thematic issues emerging from the data. Significant quotes were derived from the participants' responses and integrated into the report writing in order to highlight key issues and voice. In so doing, as Bernard and Ryan (2010)

pointed out, to be able to select quotes from narratives, the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon plays a great role and support, and so does the authors' level of involvement in the university governance processes. On ethical issues, the study was much concerned about this and thus Boijie's ethical principles were followed (Boijie, 2010). As a consequence, strict ethical principles, such as ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, obtaining information consent and permission, and ensuring participant's privacy, were adhered to, and not just dragged into, the study. Table 1 captures the respondents together including how they were represented with codes for the purpose of ensuring anonymity. The final draft was sent to the participants to obtain feedback regarding the accuracy of their contribution and whether changes were necessary before proceeding further with the analyses.

## Result and Discussions

### *The Key Desirable University Governance Issues*

If it is true that university governance is about the structures, systems, policies, processes and procedures that universities adopt in the quest to guide everyone in the enterprise to justify their activities for legitimacy to meet its visions and missions, then it should sound normal to say that university governance is a process and not an event. Governance involves collaboration between management, the board and stakeholders. It also takes into account factor inputs such as structures, systems and sometimes the means that the universities can ride on to achieve set objectives.

It is, therefore, important to find out the desirable university governance issues that arise in this process of working to achieve the objectives of the university. Several issues have come up from the respondents. Key among these issues subjected to further deliberations has been grouped into three broad thematic areas: *accountability and funding*, *trust among stakeholders* and *infrastructure*. The details of the themes have been discussed below.

### *Accountability and Funding*

A terminology that is almost synonymous with funding is accountability. The two words almost always go together because of their complementing role in governance. At the public funded university level, it has become a *cliché* to say that government funding to universities have kept reducing over the years, but has the accountability aspect also been reduced? Certainly not, at least from the views of respondents and also based upon the fact that, as the world develops, more civil society groups are springing up and more individuals are getting enlightened on the most appropriate use of public funds. As posited by former ES-NCTE 2, 'You know all over the world, public support for tertiary education has been dwindling over the years' and supported by the Finance Officer (FO) that:

During the past 10 years, we have gradually learnt to reduce our dependency on government; it used to be 75%, now we are only 49%. The intention is within the next 10 years, we should be less than 20%.

The FO further posited that ‘more accountability, less money, they give you more work to do, ask, demand more from you in terms of accountability and they give you less money.’

They give [. . .] government gives us [. . .] when we were given 75%, they give us on quarterly basis. So generally, I have my funding for January, February, and March. By March ending early April, I have April, May, June. Now they give it to me on a monthly basis in arrears. I have to look for the money, spend and then send PVs. They no longer depend on our resolve and our reports and signatures. They want to see the actual PVs before they reimburse. So they are demanding more accountability. You will be there they will just tell you reviewers are coming from the Ministry of Finance to come and check your books. Unannounced visits. They come. Every month, you will send the report on salary to NCTE and to the Ministry of Finance through the Ministry of Education. You have to send to the auditor here, not our auditor here but the audit service which are external. You have to send to them every month for them to audit, then you attach the PVs. And if salaries (what government actually pays) goes up by 2% from the previous month, you need to explain.

The Chair of a governing council of a public university advanced that, in many respects, ‘the things that senior management do’ in as far as management of the university’s funds are concerned ‘are done on behalf of the university council’ and, therefore, ‘the council must ensure that Universities are accountable at every level’ of their operations. Another council chairman had this to say: ‘University councils must see to it that all levels of accountability are respected by management because they act on behalf of the council.’ According to an Act of one of the public universities:

The Council shall control the finances of the university as well as other finances arising out of the administration of the university as well as other determining questions of finance which directly affect the educational policy of the University.

Both at the public and private university levels, there are internal mechanisms that have been put in place to manage the funds of the university. Apart from the finance committee that reports to the university council on all payments and receipts of the university, all payments or expenditure so incurred in the name of the university must have received approval before



it is processed. A key office that ensures that this compliance is adhered to is the internal audit that carries out pre-audit activities. In addition to ensuring that such an expenditure or request has received the necessary approval, the internal audit also ensures that the payment requested for falls in line with laid down policies. All the funds that are received on behalf of the university are required to be paid into the university bank accounts within a stipulated time, though the time might vary from one university to another.

This is a form of accountability that allows the people's representation, the parliament, to review the activities of the public universities for that particular year. All these are aimed at given credence to the works of universities in terms of accountability. Similarly, at the private university level, accountability is an issue, as VC B puts it 'I think we have been able to use our money effectively because we have control of what we use the money for [...] We are very prudent with the way we spend our money.' Indeed, if effectiveness and being prudent are anything to do in as far as money is concerned, then it is obviously about being accountable.

Additionally, accountability is not different at the private universities as well, because at private universities funding is linked to control systems at all levels of university governance. As VC C put it:

Though we are allowed to charge tuition and other fees, we are also concerned about affordability because if the fees are high and they cannot afford, it comes back to the same thing and for the fees to be approved by the council you must show how the previous fees have been applied.

In essence, whereas public university managers think that their private counterparts are able to charge full fees, this thinking has a limit as the councils of the private universities also need to be convinced that the proposed fees are affordable and reasonable. According to the respondents from the private universities in terms of accountability, private universities, just like their public counterparts, are audited each year by external auditors appointed by its parent institution (owners) and their report is submitted to the university council and finally to the parent organization, apart from the internal audit units that carry out pre- and post-audit activities. Data available also show that the private universities have tuition fees charged on students as their main source of funding. Other sources of income include: contribution from the the university's parent organization (faith-based universities), donations, research grants and other commercial activities that the university engages in, such as canteen services, operating shops, and the list differs from one university to another. So to be accountable within the framework of university governance is about 'openness,' 'transparency,'

through 'effective communication' and 'adhering to Acts, policies, rules and regulations within the system' according to Vice-Chancellor B. The essence of these regulations is to meet required standards for effectiveness and efficiency in the governance process.

So, whether at the public or private university level, 'every revenue/income/funds generated in the name of the university becomes a public fund and must be accounted for,' according to the due process as set out by the enabling law or policy of the university, as the former ES, the National Accreditation Board (NAB), posited. Indeed, it is against this background that 'financial accountability remains key to university governance.'

### *Trust amongst Universities and Some Stakeholders*

A key desire in every organization is trust among stakeholders but an important element that supports governance seems minimal within the public universities and the relevant agencies within the public university system. An example of such, according to VC A, is that public universities face its major financier, the government, through the Ministry of Education and the NCTE makes promises and, although it fulfills some of the promises (usually at a very late hour), many other promises are left unfulfilled. As a Finance Officer put it: 'Government cannot be trusted when it comes to releasing funds and other promises.'

As noted earlier, government is unable to release salaries for example at the right time, sometimes in five months arrears, because not enough is coming into the national kit or even the little that comes in there are more priority areas that must be attended to first. Government last year promised public universities furniture because they were requested to increase their enrollments but far into the second semester of the 2013/2014 academic year only about 45% of the furniture has arrived meanwhile the universities had already increased the enrollments from the beginning of the academic year.' The behavior of the government in this regard has the tendency to ruin the trust that exists between public universities and the government and, by extension, the same mistrust could affect relationship with the private universities as well.

### *Infrastructure*

Another key issue that is needed to ensure desirable university governance in Ghana is infrastructure, if sound and prudent academic and administrative desired targets are to be achieved. The Council Chair A admits that unfortunately, however, infrastructural inadequacies and deplorable conditions of the existing infrastructure in universities in Ghana remain a huge challenge to university education. He admits that infrastructural issues are linked to funding and accountability, because the most essential and critical

of funding for university education is in the area of infrastructure. Explaining further, he said, infrastructure in the context of physical and non-physical facilities are an essential component of quality measures that university education needs at all times. And so, when funding is inadequate, there is a tendency to not getting the required infrastructure in both quality and quantity. Vice-Chancellor B, for example, says 'we wish we had more resources.' 'Infrastructure is even more an issue because of the huge increment of student numbers at the public universities,' he adds. Lecture halls, for instance, in the public university, from the account of a student leader, are not spacious to accommodate the large student numbers and this affects teaching and learning and, in some cases, lecture halls are not equipped with the necessary equipment, as she says that one of the key issues that they as students face is not being 'in modern lecture halls with the state of the art equipment.' Also, former VC thinks that inadequate funding deprives the universities from embracing the ICT world, because ICT comes at a cost.

Former ES-NCTE also alludes to the fact that inadequate budgetary allocation has caused the deteriorating infrastructure on the university campuses. Inadequate infrastructure has been a problem in the past and even now. This is evident in the work of Sawyer (2004) when he alludes that infrastructural inadequacies led to poor morale and decline in academic standards across all sectors of the educational system in Ghana. Another area where inadequate funding cripples is in library resources. Indeed, the way forward in addressing the physical infrastructural inadequacies according to VC A is to look beyond the traditional form of education, where physical space becomes an issue, into rather thinking about e-learning. In his university, for example, in recent times the majority of the student population is learning through distance education, where the university does not necessarily need to have all the physical space to accommodate the student numbers.

At the private university level, Registrar C, for example, states that 'as a university you do not only need funding to pay staff, but you also need to put up infrastructure; facilities have to be provided, all the requisite facilities – varying kinds,' he concluded. So to run a university involves huge investment in infrastructure (ICT, Buildings, etc.). Even the instance when some of the physical and non-physical facilities have been provided, there is need to adequate funding to keep these facilities abreast with modern times apart from the maintenance cost.

Indeed, how can universities provide quality skills if they have inadequate funds leading to poor or inadequate infrastructure on their campuses? For quality university education, there must exist the necessary logistics (funding, faculty, facilities and infrastructure) so that quality is earned and sus-

tained. The data available therefore suggest that there is infrastructure limitation, which can lead to poor training of graduates. Certainly, to have a weak university education system is to suggest that other levels of the educational systems will be in jeopardy, since it is the product of universities that serve the manpower needs at these levels, and that production levels in the country may be low.

### ***Achieving Desirable University Output: The Way forward and Challenges***

For university education across the globe to meet minimum standards, there must be some level of quality. But quality cannot be the reserve of a single university or entity and, therefore, there is the need for a body to regulate the activities of universities at all levels. We explore how quality can be achieved by considering agencies that regulate university education, and requirements for university education in Ghana. These issues are discussed alongside challenges faced by these agencies in dispensing their duties.

### ***Regulating University Education***

Universities in Ghana are regulated; public and private alike. Regulations forms part of the university governance as posited by the former VC and supported by the former ES-NCTE<sup>1</sup>. Their argument is that it is part of regulating university education that some state agencies and universities have been established. Established by an Act of parliament, Act 454 of 1993, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), serves as the supervisory and regulatory body that advises government through the Minister responsible for education on policies relating to tertiary education (National Council for Tertiary Education, 2014). Additionally, the NAB also exists as the quality assurance body at the tertiary education level. The place of call to either apply for a new program or establish a university is the National Council for Tertiary Education. After the NCTE has given approval for the establishment of a university or program NAB then takes over, as its executive secretary put it: 'we facilitate the establishment of both public and private tertiary universities, and ensure that standards are set and maintained.' In doing so, NAB appreciates that university education has over the years become an international commodity and, as a country, Ghana needs to be abreast with world trends. The Board therefore carries its mandate through the collaboration of both local and international stakeholders. Such partnership and information sharing or engagement informs the operations of the board. Just like other parts of the world, it is proper that governments take every step necessary to regulate the activities of universities.

As stated by the executive secretary (ES) for NCTE (ES-NTCE), it is dangerous to leave the operations of the universities entirely in the hands of the public universities not to talk of the private ones. As regulatory agencies,

he adds, every effort must be made to sensitize Universities and their operations to ensure that necessary and relevant conditions are met for the effective and efficient operations of universities. While there is no contest that government should provide some level of oversight to university education industry to ensure that quality is not compromised, the universities themselves should continue to peer-review their activities as a balance to that oversight is carried out by the regulatory agencies.

### *Requirements of Universities*

Under the national regulations, to set up a new university, the law requires that when a university is to be set up, a formal application is submitted to the National Council for Tertiary Education for approval. In the case of a public university, the government sends a request to the NCTE requesting its advice, but in the case of the private university, approval is sought. NAB is thereafter in charge of finding out if the necessary quality assurance requirements have been put in place. Ideally, the current norm requires that, for a new university to be set up, it must undergo a mentorship of not less than ten years under a university that has a charter to award its own degrees, diplomas and certificates. Which means, under normal circumstances, a university that is younger than ten years in operation can only award the degrees, diplomas and certificates of its mentor university.

All universities are required to adhere to national regulations when it comes to minimum admission requirements, quality and quantity of faculty, library resources among others. Supporting this, VC C declared that, though they are a chartered private university, they still have the regulatory agencies coming to check to see if they are operating according to the 'admission procedure and criteria' that has been put out for all universities to adhere to. The position that universities should be regulated is supported by all respondents in general and by the institutional theory that posits that universities, just like other organizations, must conform, for survival and legitimacy purposes, to rules, policies, regulations and other guidelines that may have been imposed on them by the environment.

### *Perceived Biases of Regulatory Agencies*

To regulate within the framework of university governance is to have standards that each and every one must comply for the purpose of achieving the desired quality. In the view of VC B, when it comes to regulating universities, it appears government is doing it to the advantage of the public universities. As he put it, 'government is way away from private universities.' He argues that, though the ES-NAB, in what regards enforcing the rules of the game when it comes to university governance, is not tilting in favor of public universities, he eventually admits that due to the importance of university

education, coupled with the fact that private universities are new in the terrain of university education, the regulatory agencies focus more on that category of universities, as compared to public universities, which he described as already established and having some level of quality structures in place. Addressing the issue of inequality when it comes to the rules from his office, he responded 'yes, the rules are the same and so there are no distinctions.' However, when he was reminded of few instances he stated that:

Well, you see the universities, especially those that preceded the NAB, had their own standards of ensuring academic excellence and quality, so there is an observable tradition of running a university. But for the private ones, these are completely new terrain for them and it is our considered view that they should be tutored along the lines of operating tertiary education universities.

Agreeing to the view expressed by VC B and ES-NAB, the former ES-NCTE 2 said that to some extent he agrees with that observation, because it is almost impossible to ask some public universities to close down, as witnessed in some private universities. To confirm the views expressed by the former ES-NCTE 2, he said; 'it will take a long time for anybody to say Legon (University of Ghana) is closed because of this or that. That's the difference whereas in the case of private universities, it can easily be done once they have violated a regulation that requires that.' But ES-NAB again says that, although they have not attempted to close a public university before, there have been instances in which they had written to public universities to suspend the admission of students into some programs that, in their view, the public university had not met the minimum requirements to run the program. As he put it, 'sometimes we have asked them not to admit into a program until certain things are put right.'

This idea of enforcing the rules more strictly on public and private universities appears to be more visible in the case of setting up new universities. Though this norm is strictly enforced when it comes to private universities, it appears relaxed when it comes to the setting up of public universities. ES-NAB, justifying the discriminatory nature of applying some regulations, had to say:

I can assure you that the private universities have to be under affiliation for a period not less than 10 years before they become full fledged. But Ho and Sunyani Universities were just set up by an Act of Parliament. They are new, they didn't have anything but they have been set up and they can award degrees today and we advised but government will not listen. So these are the challenges; and some-

times the private Universities have a case when they say that the law is not been applied equally. Because there is no way a private university can start like that without going through an affiliation. So as it is, the law is been applied discriminately, because why should it only be the private Universities that should apply for and go through affiliation for at least 10 years and not the public universities?

Whatever the rationale might be for those who put in place this part of the law, the researcher's interpretation is that the purpose of this arrangement is to enable the new university structures and systems under the guide of an older (experienced) university. The reason being that, since the certificates to be awarded are those of the mentor university, that Mentor University will ensure that all quality measures have been carried out before the award of the certificate. Especially that in the past a university that started on its own as a fully-fledged university faced numerous quality assurance issues. As explained by the ES-NAB:

For example, UDS faced serious challenges in quality assurance issues in terms of teaching staff, physical infrastructure and we should have learnt from that. The point about history is that we are not learning about history and that is where our hands are tied as regulators.

The point here is that in setting up new public universities, 'political expediency outweighs professional advice,' as advocated by ES-NAB. Alluding to ES-NAB, the ES-NCTE further opined that they, as a regulatory agency, never advised the government against setting up and giving a new public university the full autonomy to award its own degrees, diplomas and certificates. When the researcher further asked if he thought that, as the agency is fully responsible for policy direction on tertiary education, they had failed the people of Ghana on this particular subject, he responded in the affirmative:

I agree with you. That is a failure on our part. We have not tested this system. And what I mean is, government has declared this intention, and has gone ahead, sometimes with our assistance and we complain at the level of the council. But to my knowledge, we have never stated our position to the government, to say that this is wrong, don't do it this way, and government has refused. So I think we have failed in that aspect. We should be able to tell the government that this is not right, but we haven't done that.

This to a certain degree shows how some State Owned Agencies are not doing enough to safeguard the quality of the university system in Ghana. It will be in the interest of the country and that of all stakeholders in the university enterprise to take a critical appraisal of these lapses in enforcing

some of these laws, so that, if there is need to revise these rules, it is done instead of it to be enforceable only on some group of stakeholders.

#### *Difficulties/Dilemmas Faced by Regulatory Agencies*

Perhaps, it is the weakness in the Acts that established those regulatory agencies that seem to have disabled the agencies. Most probably it is due to these dilemmas that one of the agency identifies in its strategic plan for 2010–2014 independence as a second value and as a core principle. Unlike the University Commission of Nigeria, whose decision on university matters are final and not subject to the discretion of any political influence, it is not so in Ghana. 'I can tell you that the University's Commission in Nigeria is very powerful. This is because their decisions are final.' The refreshing news, however, is that these agencies are in the process of asking for a review of their Acts to make them more autonomous so that their decisions will no longer be just advisory to the Minister responsible for Education but final.

Because our current status as a board allows us to advice, so we are in the process of making a preposition to the Minister to make it an Authority to give it more powers. We have done a draft.

The further argument is that 'tertiary education landscape is changing very rapidly in that lately you can find transnational education or cross boarder education' in every part of the world. With some of them setting up in Ghana, using online in various modifications for their programs, it is therefore in the interest of the nation for these regulatory agencies to move with time. On the other hand, this is a clear case of political power being the most dominant in the wake of nation building.

#### *Quality as an Issue*

Quality is influenced and determined by the inputs and processes that a product goes through. In the case of quality university education, the inputs, processes and the effectiveness and efficiency of the various actors in the university governance process all play a role in determining the desired quality.

To talk about quality is to talk about standards and in the case of university governance, it is about world standards, as posited by VC B that, if we require quality, 'there should be a homogeneous system that all of you can tap into just like the world of standardization.' So deciding on who qualifies to be a management member or qualifies to be faculty or what curriculum must go into a program of study in a university setting, all must be geared towards quality. So how to recruit staff, putting in place the right structures on how examinations are conducted, the grading system, the right physical



structures for academic work and providing adequate resources to handle student numbers are all measures aimed at ensuring quality with the environs of a university as mentioned by the respondents.

Regarding quality university education, another area of concern is that university governance faces in Ghana, just like in other places in the world, is what can be termed as 'mcdonalization' of university education. The term 'mcdonalization' comes from the fast food giant McDonald's, where food is readily made available to customers in a matter of minutes. This is what the former ES-NCTE 2 stated:

There is a major concern worldwide, not just here in Ghana, with what has been called mcdonalization of university education. Fast food, you know what McDonald's is, within seconds you have food. If we don't take care, increasingly, we are going to have that.

Some individuals, especially those who have very limited knowledge in university education, think that university education should not take so long to pursue, forgetting that university education is a process and not an event. As expressed by the former ES-NCTE 2, in order to ensure quality within the university fraternity, it is important for all stakeholders, students, managers of universities, industries, regulators, civil society and the citizenry at large, to be mindful of such negative developments. Universities, therefore, must be seen engaging these stakeholders more.

### *Increase in Enrollments*

The exponential increase in enrollments (from 52,712 in the 1999/2000 academic year to 165,000 in the 2012/2013 academic year) has created problems for public universities in Ghana because this increase has not matched the increase in faculty and physical infrastructure, a situation the NCTE has captured in its strategic plan as a threat: 'explosion in enrollments in public universities (National Council for Tertiary Education, 2014) for university education.' For now, the high student numbers may appear to be in public universities, but there is no certainty that it will not happen in the private or public universities, bearing in mind there is a high demand for university education that public universities alone cannot handle. For example, according to the World Bank, private higher education universities enrolled almost 40% of the student population in Portugal, 35% in Jordan, 30 % in the Cote d'Ivoire and in Iran, and 15% in Bangladesh (World Bank, 2002).

In the same report, private higher education universities provided access for more than half of all students, for example, in the Philippines private higher universities enrolled 80% and in Korea 75% of students (Salmi, 2003). So clearly it is possible that, at a point in time, private universi-

ties may enroll more students than their public counterparts. However, the high demand for university education has created a market for the private sector, some of which is very new to the university landscape in Ghana. It is against this background that quality assurance becomes an avoidable issue of concern not only to the regulators but also to the university community and the country at large. How Ghana will ensure the quality of this growing enterprise and how university education is set and maintained remains important. Specifically, how will it protect Ghanaians from fraudulent providers and counterfeit qualifications, especially when some providers emanate from other countries? Ghana therefore requires a quality assurance system that is robust, own and can become an integral part of the university's structures.

### *Self-Regulatory*

Universities must pride themselves of their own quality assurance system and demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt to the general public that the internal structures are adequate to address quality issues at all sectors of the university's operations. Indeed apart from the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), created with the mandate to coordinate and provide policy direction by setting the appropriate guidelines for tertiary education, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) has also been set up to ensure, among other responsibilities, that national standards are met to achieve the desired quality at all levels of tertiary education in Ghana. For a more sustainable quality assurance system, this is what ES-NAB said:

You see [...] we want to throw the issue of quality assurance to the universities themselves. They must take up the issue of quality assurance seriously and we will only come as external body to validate. Internal quality assurance must be owned by the university. The structures must be in place to ensure that just like an engine, the systems are working well. The external quality assurance only comes in to validate what you are doing.

The preceding statement justifies the regulator's desire to see universities recognize and accept quality assurance as part of the entire university governance operations and not as a separate entity from the university. Invariably, universities think that the issue of quality assurance is the duty of the regulator, a thinking that is being contested by VC A, who holds the view that 'quality is the underlying strength of every university.' Universities, he asserted, have now established quality assurance offices and senior academics have been appointed to these offices. He further opined: 'look at our buildings, our examinations, our staff, our curricula, and the graduates we turn out, all these will clearly tell you that quality assurance is been

taken serious.’ According to him, ‘universities themselves want quality’ in whatever they do because, ‘you want to issue out a certificate that will not be treated as sub-standard,’ especially as parents are paying so much for the education of their wards in recent times. His position on this matter is that universities, as academic institutions, will have to guide and protect the integrity of all what they do. And, in doing so, they must ensure that the desired standards are met.

#### *Incidence of Compromising Quality*

The universities must regularly review their courses and put in place all necessary measures that will ensure that the certificates that are issued are based upon justifiable performance from the students, even in the case in which the certificate has been awarded in a mentee university. But ES-NAB stated however that some mentor universities have not lived up to their responsibilities:

There has been an instance in one private university where students were due for graduation but had not met the minimum requirements for graduation and it took a leak from an insider for us to know. So sometimes that is how we get our information. So we had to send a team there and they did confirm so we had to write to the mentor university to stop those people from graduating until they have made good the requirement for graduation.

Here, the officer speaking on behalf of the regulator sought to confirm that, despite of the desire of universities to protect the certificates that are issued, there might still be some lapses that need to be addressed, citing the case of this private university as a case in question. He also mentioned the case of a public university that was hit with an examination scandal, which cost the Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor their jobs.

His argument is that the issue of quality is not only a challenge in private universities but also in public ones and must be dealt with properly so that the level of confidence of public universities regarding university certificates are not only maintained, but improved. In the case of the said public university, the university used its internal structures to get the matter addressed and to look into the wider challenges facing the university. It also instituted a Visitation Panel that was made up of distinguished personalities, purely outside of the university.

After a cursory study of the views expressed by respondents, one can conclude that regulation of universities has been accepted by all stakeholders as a conduit for quality university education in spite of the challenges that private universities have in terms of the perceived partiality regarding the enforcement of rules being carried out by regulatory agencies. The limi-

tation, however, of regulating universities is that excessive regulations may limit the ability of universities to be innovative, as they might just focus on complying with the rules and policies of the regulators.

### Implications for Policy and Practice

In the effort of making a difference between poverty and wealth, knowledge becomes an indispensable means, and university education is at the centre of such knowledge. James D. Wolfensohn, the former World Bank President in 2000, affirmed that it is impossible to have a complete education system without an appropriate and strong higher education system (Holm-Nielsen, 2001). As a consequence, university governance through which knowledge is produced should be of importance to the Ghanaian State, the African continent and the world at large. Good governance remains the bedrock of development. Indeed the roles of universities in the production of leaders remain pivotal, and so does the management and administration of universities. For its reason, university governance should be of interest to every good meaning person. Consequentially, questions on which are the key desirable university governance issues and how can these issues serve as a conduit for ensuring quality are central to this study. These have been explored and its implications for policy and practice outlined.

Universities, through their governance systems, build their cultures through values, ideas, beliefs, norms (Morgan, 2006). And thus, to gain legitimacy, every university ought to strive to do what is right so that they are in agreement with this set of norms, rules, laws, policies, and form the guide in as far as university governance is concerned. Indeed, a system to monitor progress of compliance must always be in place with the agreed or set norms. However, it is a more refreshing approach to establish internal institutional mechanisms that will allow the universities to do self-appraisal at periodic intervals in order to inform policy direction and not just depend on the external monitoring schemes.

Openness, transparency and accountability can be synonyms of good governance not only in universities but also in other spheres of the human endeavour, only if the impact of these virtues can be beneficial to those who are being governed. It is for this reason that good governance can be contentious when it comes to its measurement; what is good governance to you might not be for another. But should there be any difficulty measuring what stakeholders have agreed in relations to structure, laws, policies and processes? It is for this reason therefore that governance should not be built on an individual but on organizations and universities. This is not to suggest by any least of imagination that governance can be effective and efficient if there are no good leaders. But it is a more sustainable way to build governance around universities and organizations rather than on

its leadership. Universities, therefore, must not only pride themselves with good governance systems because they are accountable and all the right policies are in place and are being implemented, but also because of how relevant such rules and regulations have been to the graduates, as well as to the benefit of the larger society or the immediate communities that these graduates find themselves.

The call for public universities to be managed like businesses continues to be a contentious issue, therefore the term governance and its discussion might not end any moment soon. For the proponents of this idea, public universities are no longer getting the needed resource support from the state and, by implication, the state does no longer view university education as a social good. Therefore, universities must find their own way of operating by introducing reasonable fees to generate revenue. However, the school of thought against this ideal, believes that university education must continue to be treated as a social good because it is geared towards the development of the country. If it is expensive and if it is left just to those who can afford it, the poor and disadvantaged will be marginalized, and so the state directly or indirectly must continue to fund university education. Funding cannot be devoid of accountability and so are the appropriate policies that guide the disbursement of revenues that the universities accrue. However, though there is less funding support from the state to public universities, yet there is an ever-increasing demand for accountability in as far as university governance is concerned.

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# Mobile Banking Adoption: A Study of Customers in India

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The present paper has made an attempt to analyze the adoption pattern of mobile banking services among the banking customers in India. In order to serve the purpose of the study, primary research focusing on banking customers in India has been conducted. The results have depicted that the mobile banking services are being underutilized by the users. Further, it has been found that the mobile banking services are used for the purpose, namely, balance inquiry, shopping, etc. While exploring factors affecting the usage pattern of mobile banking, personal disposition towards technology adoption, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and effectiveness of mobile banking services are found to play a significant role. On the basis of the findings of the study, various suggestions have been made to the banks for enhancing the usage of mobile banking services.

**Keywords:** mobile banking, technology adoption, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, effectiveness

## Introduction

Technology has restructured the operations of the banking sector by bringing exemplary changes in its operations. Gone are the days when customers required personal visits to the banks for carrying out their banking transactions. Presently, all the banking activities can be carried out at the doorsteps of the customers and as per their convenience level thanks to the use of the latest banking technological developments (Robinson, 2000). Ranging from withdrawals and deposits of money to instant loan applications, each and every banking activity requires the use of technology (IDRBT, 2013). Among such technologies, the most recent and new entrant is the mobile banking technology. It has been defined as the provision of availing banking services with the help of mobile devices. Through the use of mobile banking, various banking activities can be made by the customers from any place and at any time with the use of their smart phones. The activities include balance inquiries, fund transfers, bill payments, etc. Indeed, the use of mobile banking also provides customers with messages regarding their transactions through SMS when the transaction is being conducted as an internet banking service. Thus, the banking customers are increasingly adopting mobile banking services for serving their banking needs. Consequently, with a view to analyze the usage pattern of mobile banking services

among the banking customers in India, the present composition has been framed.

### **Status of Mobile Banking in India**

The extensive penetration of mobile phones in India over and above internet has laid the foundation of mobile banking. In India, the mobile subscriber base is 811 million, while only 200 million people have bank accounts (Tare, 2014). It signifies that 68 per cent of the total population of 1.2 billion people has mobile phones, which provides an attractive opportunity for the banks to utilize mobile banking platforms for reaching the 'unbanked' population and providing them with banking solutions at anytime and anywhere (Jamaluddin, 2013). Launched in 2009 in India, the transactions carried out with the use of mobile mode of banking has witnessed a 13-times increase in volume and value terms (Jamaluddin, 2013). According to the reports published by RBI (2014), 3 per cent of the total transactions out of 800 million transactions are being made through mobile banking mode of banking. This depicts that the usage of mobile banking services is still low (IDRBT, 2013), though the key players, such as banks, mobile network operators and mobile payment service providers are attempting to promote mobile modew of banking as an alternative form to the banking customers (Karnouskos, 2004; Taga & Karlsson, 2004; Sharma, 2011, Anckar & D'Incau, 2002). Although the secondary statistics pertaining to the usage of mobile banking depict an enhanced usage of mobile banking services by the banking customers in India, yet the reported figures are found to be lower than the expected usage level, thereby substantiating lower acceptance of mobile banking services as a medium of conducting banking transactions by the banking customers in India (Sreelatha & Sekhar, 2012). Accordingly, the present study attempted to explore the usage pattern of mobile banking services among banking customers in India and to explore the reasons for the low reported usage among customers.

### **Research Methodology**

**Sample Design**In the present study, the population are the banking customers in India. For selecting the representative sample of banking customers in India, all the twenty-nine states of the Indian Union have been categorized into four categories on the basis of per capita net State Domestic Product at factor cost (current prices) for the year 2012–3 retrieved from Government of India. From each of the four categories, one state has been chosen randomly, out of which the city with highest gross domestic product has been selected for collecting the sample in the present composition. The selected cities include Mumbai, Hyderabad, Delhi and Gurgaon and a total of 120 customers from each of the selected cities have been

contacted by visiting branches of different commercial banks operating in India.

While selecting banks, efforts are made to ensure that the customers of almost all the commercial banks should be contacted. Further, the selection of branches and the customers from each branch is based on the convenience of the sampling approach. Accordingly, a total of 480 responses of the customers have been collected during the period of November 2014 to May 2015. Primarily, the entire data of 480 respondents have been scrutinized against outliers, missing responses and incomplete responses. Accordingly, 167 responses have been removed owing to the reasons such as non-response, incomplete responses, etc., thereby, reducing size of the usable data to 413 responses.

Accordingly, an insight into the socio-economic characteristics of respondents indicated that 78% of the respondents were males with age group between 34–58 years (44%) and with family income equals to Rs. 1, 20,000 or below (51%). Further, 77% of the respondents were employed in different private/government/public sector organizations and were either graduates or undergraduates (54%).

## Measures

For collecting responses from the representative sample of the banking customers in India, a well structured, pre-tested comprehensive questionnaire has been developed. The questionnaire has explicitly asked whether the respondent himself or herself is holding bank account and, if yes, for how long the bank account is being operated by the respondent. The responses of the customers having their own account in commercial bank for more than six months have been taken for the present study, as this is the time by when customers may, usually, get acquainted with almost all the different facilities/technologies offered by the banks. Further, for analyzing the usage pattern of mobile banking services, the questionnaire includes questions, such as the number of bank accounts operated by the customers, the reasons for operating more than one single account, the frequency of using mobile banking service, the purpose of using mobile banking services, etc.

Also an attempt has been made to explore the difference in the usage pattern of mobile banking services among the banking customers on account of other factors, such as the effectiveness of mobile banking services and the various technology adoption facets, which has been found to exhibit a significant role in altering the technology adoption decision of the customers, such as perceived usefulness, personal disposition towards technology adoption, facilitating conditions, etc.

Accordingly, effectiveness of the mobile banking services has been analyzed through five dimensions, namely, accessibility, economical, time flex-

ibility, safety & security, and customization dimensions, and on a 10-point scale ranging from 1 to 10, wherein 1 represents 'Least Effective' and 10 represents 'Highly Effective.' The decision to take the above-mentioned dimensions was based on the research work done by Gikandi and Bloor (2010), Dhingra (2011), Taleghani (2013), Mashhour and Zaatreh (2008), and Khrais (2013).

Further for analyzing the factors that affect the usage pattern of mobile banking services, technology adoption facets (namely, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, personal disposition of customers towards technology adoption, facilitating conditions, behavioral intentions, and attitude towards technology adoption) have been taken on the basis of research attempts by Parasuraman (2000), Ratchford and Barnhart (2011), Agarwal and Prasad (1998), Compeau and Higgins (1995), Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989), Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis (2003), Venkatesh (2000), Limayem and Hirt (2003), Bagozzi and Dholakia (1999), Kim, Malhotra, and Narasimhan (2005), Smith et al. (2008); Bartone, Ursano, Wright, and Ingraham (1989), Windle, Markland, and Woods (2008), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Ajzen (1991), Wu and Chen (2005), Malhotra and Galletta (1999). Accordingly, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, personal disposition towards technology adoption, facilitating conditions, behavioral intentions and attitude towards technology adoption have been assessed with scales having 5, 5, 15, 6, 6, 4 measures, respectively. The responses for the construct, namely, PU and PEOU were taken on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 to 7, as recommended by Davis et al. (1989), where 1 represents 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 represent 'Strongly Agree.' The responses pertaining to personal disposition, facilitating conditions and behavioral intentions were taken on five-point-Likert type scale ranging from 1 to 5, wherein 1 represents 'Never' and 5 represents 'Always.'

Furthermore, the attitude has been assessed through a seven-point bipolar inventory. All the inventories assessing the aforesaid six constructs have been scrutinized against normality, reliability, dimensionality and structural validity assumptions and the data has been found to fulfill all the prescribed norms. Accordingly, normality of the constructs has been established through the values of skewness and kurtosis (which are found to fall in acceptable range suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham 2012, i.e., between +2 to -2 in both cases). Further, the values of Cronbach's alpha are reported to fall in the range between 0.860 to 0.972 for the aforementioned constructs, which is above the prescribed limit of 0.70 suggested by Hair et al. (2012), Tavakol and Dennick (2011) and Donio et al. (2006). The dimensionality of all the aforesaid constructs has been established through an Exploratory Factor Analysis approach. The values of KMO statistics (ranging from 0.627 to 0.959) and Bartlett's test of spheric-

**Table 1** Model Fit Indices of Constructs

Constructs	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	CFI
PD	4.946	0.057	0.864	0.827	0.943
PU	3.847	0.049	0.995	0.982	0.999
PEOU	4.970	0.058	0.993	0.975	0.998
FC	2.449	0.035	0.999	0.990	0.990
Att	4.897	0.057	0.997	0.984	0.995
BI	3.913	0.049	0.988	0.973	0.995
Referential values	< 5.000	< 0.060	$\geq 0.850$	$\geq 0.800$	$\geq 0.900$

**Notes** *df* – degrees of freedom,  $\chi^2$  – chi-square, RMSEA – Root Mean Square Residual, GFI – Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI – Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index, CFI – Comparative Fit Index.

ity (all values are statistically significant at 1 per cent level of significance) are found to meet the norms prescribed by Hair et al. (2012), Williams, Brown, & Onsman, (2012), and Beaumont (2012), thereby substantiating the statistical fitness of the data for employing EFA approach. Also, the values of communalities and factor loadings are found to be above the threshold limit of 0.50, as suggested by Hair et al. (2012) in the case of all the measures assessing the respective construct. Adding more to the dimensionality of the constructs, the application of principal component analysis and varimax rotation has yielded a single factor solution in the case of all the aforesaid constructs, and the percentage of variance is found to fall in the range between 64.502 per cent to 86.845 per cent in the case of all the constructs.

Besides, the structural validity of the constructs, namely, personal disposition, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, facilitating conditions, attitude towards technology and behavioral intentions towards technology adoption has also been examined. Accordingly, the results of construct validity and reliability are found to fall in the range between 0.56 to 0.80, which is above the threshold limit prescribed by Hair et al. (2012). The model fitness values, namely,  $\chi^2/df$ , RMSEA, GFI, AGFI and CFI are found to meet the referential criterion values (i.e., < 5, < 0.06,  $\geq 0.850$ ,  $\geq 0.800$ ,  $\geq 0.90$ , respectively), suggested by Hair et al. (2012) and as depicted in Table 1. Since all the aforesaid constructs have shown adequate normality, reliability, dimensionality and structural validity, the aggregate of all the aforesaid measures has been taken in the present composition for analyzing the difference in the usage pattern of mobile banking services.

## Analysis and Discussion

### Number of Bank Accounts Operated by Mobile Banking Users

As represented in Figure 1, the majority of the mobile banking users (89 per cent) are found to hold multiple bank accounts. It is being followed by

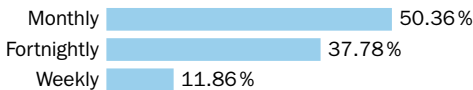
**Table 2** Reasons for Holding Multiple Bank Accounts by Mobile Banking Users

Reasons	f	%
The single bank account does not provide latest technology for carrying out all my banking transactions	320	77.44
The banking transactions and updates provided by the single bank cannot be easily accessed globally	353	85.47
The cost involved in carrying out the banking transactions with the use of the latest banking technologies is high in the case of one single bank	96	23.20

**Notes** As the question is 'tick as many as applicable type,' the total percentage may exceed 100.



**Figure 1** Number of Bank Accounts Operated by Mobile Banking Users



**Figure 2** Usage Frequency of Mobile Banking

11 per cent of the mobile banking users who are found to hold an account in two banks. Further, none of the mobile banking users hold an account in single bank account.

**Reasons for Holding Multiple Bank Accounts by Mobile Banking Users**

The results (Table 2) highlight that 85.47 per cent of the mobile banking users hold multiple bank accounts due to lack of global presence of one single bank. Further, 77.44 per cent of them said that they hold multiple bank accounts as the single bank account does not provide them with all the latest banking technological developments for serving their banking needs. Also, 23.20 per cent of the mobile banking users responded that the cost involved in availing all the services of a single bank account is higher, due to which they have opened accounts in other banks also.

**Usage Frequency of Mobile Banking**

The review of usage frequency of mobile banking services reveals that half of the aforesaid users (50.36 per cent) are utilizing mobile banking services on a monthly basis for carrying out their banking activities (refer to Figure 2). Whereas, 37.78 per cent have been found to utilize mobile banking mode of banking fortnightly. Besides, a low proportion of the mobile banking users, i.e., 11.86 per cent are found to utilize the mobile banking services on a weekly basis.

**Table 3** Purpose of Using Mobile Banking Services

Reasons	f	%
Bill payments	106	25.66
Shopping	157	38.01
Balance inquiries	364	88.13
Money transfers	10	2.40

**Notes** As the question is 'tick as many as applicable type,' the total percentage may exceed 100.

**Table 4** Effectiveness of Mobile Banking

(A)	Effectiveness Rating										(B)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Access- sibility	0	0	0	0	6	72	158	141	34	2	2.59
	0	0	0	0	1.5	17.4	38.3	34.1	8.2	0.5	
Econom- ical	0	0	0	2	15	193	113	63	27	0	2.36
	0	0	0	0.5	3.6	46.7	27.4	15.3	6.5	0	
Time flexibility	0	0	0	1	73	174	99	45	17	4	2.26
	0	0	0	0.2	17.7	42.1	24	10.9	4.1	1	
Safety & security	0	0	0	10	130	147	94	22	10	0	2.11
	0	0	0	2.4	31.5	35.6	22.8	5.3	2.4	0	
Custom- ization	0	0	0	20	145	181	59	8	0	0	2.01
	0	0	0	4.8	35.1	43.8	14.3	2	0	0	

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (A) attributes, (B) overall mean value. 1 – highly ineffective; 2 – most ineffective; 3 – more ineffective; 4 – much ineffective; 5 – fairly ineffective; 6 – fairly effective; 7 – much effective; 8 – more effective; 9 – most effective; 10 – highly effective.

**Purpose of Using Mobile Banking Services**

As evident from the results presented in the Table 3, only 38.01 per cent are found to utilize mobile banking services for shopping purposes. Whereas, 25.66 per cent of the total mobile banking users are found to utilize the said services for bill payments, and only 2.40 per cent are found to avail the service of money transfers through mobile modes of banking. Besides, 88.13 per cent of the mobile banking users are found to utilize the mentioned services for the purpose of balance inquiries.

**Effectiveness of Mobile Banking**

Further, the effectiveness of mobile banking services has been examined on the basis of five dimensions, namely, accessibility, economical, time flexible, safety & security and customization dimensions.

Accordingly, the results depict that the majority of the mobile banking users (38.3 per cent) rate the said services as more effective services on the attribute of accessibility than the rest of the attributes, namely, economical (46.7 per cent); time flexibility (42.1 per cent); safety and security (35.6

per cent) and customization (43.8 per cent). This indicates that the mobile banking services are not being considered much effective by its users and this might be the reason for the low adoption of mobile banking services by the users, as depicted by the earlier results of the present composition.

### **Uncovering the Difference in Mobile Banking Usage Frequency**

The difference in the usage pattern of mobile banking services has also been examined. In order to ascertain this, mobile banking users have been classified into two categories on the basis of their mobile banking usage pattern. The two categories are named as regular users ( $N = 205$ ) and irregular users ( $N = 208$ ). Regular users included customers who have been found to utilize mobile banking services weekly and fortnightly, whereas, irregular users included those utilizing the said services monthly. A mobile banking service is the recent entrant in the catalog of banking technologies owing to which the services might not have much penetration among the banking customers. Taking this into consideration, the weekly and fortnightly usage of mobile banking services has been considered as a regular usage of the mobile banking services and the users are named as regular users, whereas the monthly usage has been considered as irregular usage and the users are categorized as irregular users. The difference in the usage pattern of mobile banking services is discussed in the forthcoming paragraphs.

### **Mobile Banking Usage Pattern and Purpose of Usage**

In order to analyze the difference in the usage pattern of mobile banking services on account of the purpose for which the said services are being used,  $\chi^2$  statistics has been employed. The null hypothesis set for the same is

H0.1 *There is no significant difference in the mobile banking usage pattern on account of the purpose of using the mentioned service.*

Accordingly, the results (see Table 5) highlight statistically significant differences in the usage pattern of mobile banking on account of three kinds of purposes (i.e., bill payments, shopping and balance inquiries). On the other hand, the difference in the usage pattern of mobile banking services for the purpose of money transfer is found to be statistically insignificant, thereby leading towards a partial rejection of the hypothesis H0.1.

The results of  $\chi^2$  statistics have highlighted that 59.25 per cent and 54.77 per cent of the mobile banking users utilizing the said services for the purpose of bill payments and shopping, respectively, are the regular users of these services, while the remaining 40.75 per cent and 45.23 per cent are the irregular users of mobile banking services. Further, 51.10 per



**Table 5** Mobile Banking Usage Pattern and Purpose of Usage

Purpose	(1)		(2)		(3)	4
	f	%	f	%		
Bill payments	64	59.25	44	40.75	5.720*	108
Shopping	86	54.77	71	45.23	1.974***	157
Balance inquiries	178	48.90	186	51.10	2.624***	364
Money transfers	6	60.00	4	40.00	0.381	10

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (1) regular users of mobile banking, (2) irregular users of mobile banking, (3) chi-square, (4) total number of users. \* Statistically significant at 1 per cent level. \*\*\* Statistically significant at 10 per cent level.

cent of the mobile banking users who are found to utilize mobile banking services for the purpose of balance inquiries are regular users of mobile banking services, while the remaining 48.90 per cent out of the total of 364 users are irregular ones.

### Mobile Banking Usage Pattern and Technology Adoption Facets

The difference in the usage pattern of mobile banking services on account of various technology adoption facets, namely, personal disposition, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, facilitating conditions, behavioral intentions, attitude and effectiveness (dimension-wise) have also been examined. For analyzing this, the hypothesis set is:

*H0.2 There is no significant difference in the mobile banking usage patterns on account of various technology adoption facets, namely, personal disposition, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, facilitating conditions, behavioral intentions, attitude and effectiveness dimensions, namely, accessibility, economical time flexibility; safety & security and customization.*

Accordingly, the results of independent sample *t*-test (see Table 6) depicts a statistically significant association between mobile banking usage pattern and technology adoption facets, namely, personal disposition, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and effectiveness (all the five dimensions). Whereas the relationship between mobile banking usage patterns and technology adoption facets, namely, facilitating conditions, attitude, and behavioral intentions, has been found to be statistically insignificant. Thus, the hypothesis H0.2 has been partially rejected.

The higher mean values (3.38) of the responses of regular users of mobile banking on the facet, namely, personal disposition, indicates that the mobile banking users having more favorable personal disposition towards the adoption of the latest banking technologies are utilizing the above-mentioned services more regularly than those with less favorable personal

disposition towards technology adoption. Further, it has been found that the mobile banking users perceiving the latest banking technological developments as useful and free of mental and physical efforts are utilizing mobile banking services more regularly for serving their banking needs. The same is also being reflected through the relatively higher mean values in the case of regular users of mobile banking on the facets, namely, PU (7.77) and PEOU (7.81).

The results of Table 6 depicts a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.01$ ) in the usage pattern of mobile banking services on the account of the effectiveness of the said services. The relatively higher mean values of the responses of regular mobile banking users pertaining to all of the five dimensions of effectiveness highlights that the use of mobile banking services is regular when users consider the said services more effective on the dimensions of accessibility, economical, time-flexible, safety & security and customization. Besides, the results of Table 6 depict a statistically insignificant association of the usage pattern of mobile banking services with facilitating conditions, behavioral intentions and attitude.

Synthesizing the usage pattern of mobile banking services, results have stated that the users of mobile banking are holding multiple bank accounts primarily for the reason that the technologies and the services provided by the banks cannot be accessed anywhere easily. Furthermore, the majority of the mobile banking users utilize these services on a monthly basis, thereby revealing that the mobile banking services are not been regularly utilized by all the users. Being a recent entrant into the banking system, it might be possible that mobile banking services are not being fully explored by the customers and, as a result, customers are not utilizing these services regularly for serving their different banking needs. In addition, mobile banking services are found to be utilized mainly of the purpose of balance inquiries and shopping, thereby depicting an under-utilization of mobile banking services by the customers. The same can be attributed to the fact that mobile banking services are prone to problems like network congestion, weak signal, etc. Besides, the analysis of the effectiveness of mobile banking services has revealed that the said services are rated comparatively less effective on the dimension economical, time flexible, safety & security and customization than the dimension of accessibility, thereby indicating the need to focus on these dimensions. Since the mobile banking services can be utilized with the help of mobile phones and the like, they have shown a dramatic increase in recent years. This reveals an easy accessibility of mobile banking thanks to which they might have rated mobile banking services highly on accessibility dimension. But the comparatively low rating of the said services on the other three dimensions of effectiveness should call for the attention of the banks towards adopting steps that enhance the

**Table 6** Mobile Banking Usage Pattern and Technology Adoption Facets

Facets	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Personal disposition	R	205	3.38	-1.82***	408.06
	I	208	3.33	-1.83***	411.00
Perceived usefulness	R	205	7.77	2.92*	411.00
	I	208	7.58	2.92*	380.95
Perceived ease of use	R	205	7.81	2.83*	411.00
	I	208	7.61	2.82*	392.79
Facilitating conditions	R	205	2.91	0.77	411.00
	I	208	2.83	0.77	410.99
Behavioral intentions	R	205	4.85	0.33	411.00
	I	208	4.83	0.33	394.16
Attitude	R	205	1.81	0.36	411.00
	I	208	1.79	0.36	401.26
Accessibility	R	205	7.25	4.24*	411.00
	I	208	6.41	4.23*	354.31
Economical	R	205	6.69	4.65*	411.00
	I	208	5.84	4.64*	366.49
Time flexibility	R	205	6.38	4.30*	411.00
	I	208	5.60	4.29*	373.85
Safety and Security	R	205	6.00	4.56*	411.00
	I	208	5.23	4.55*	378.14
Customization	R	205	5.64	3.79*	411.00
	I	208	5.03	3.78*	372.32

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (1) usage pattern (R – regular usage, I – irregular usage), (2) number, (3) mean, (4) *t*-value, (5) degrees of freedom. \* Statistically significant at 1% level of significance. \*\*\* Statistically significant at 10% level of significance.

effectiveness of mobile banking services. Moreover, the usage pattern of mobile banking services is found to be regular for some activities, namely, bill payment and shopping. In the present contemporary world (characterized by intense competition and a career-oriented approach of the people), customers opt for means and methods that save their time and efforts in carrying out their routine activities. This might be the reason owing to which the use of the mobile banking services is regular for activities of recurring nature, such as bill payments (electricity and mobile bills, etc.) and shopping. However, the low usage of banking services for the purpose of money transfers again indicates an underutilization of mobile banking for all the intended purposes.

On the other hand, it has also been found that the users of mobile banking services having favorable personal disposition towards technology adoption are utilizing the respective technologies regularly for serving their

banking needs. The customers with favorable personal disposition towards technology adoption are found to be highly optimistic, innovative, risk taking, self-confident, and considered as psychologically resilient individuals having the habit of using technology. Thanks to these traits, such customers develop high tendency towards technology adoption, which induces them to use technology regularly (Parasuraman, 2000). The same rationale may also be attributed for the significant association between personal disposition towards technology adoption and the usage pattern of mobile banking.

Also, the usage pattern of mobile banking services is found to be regular in the case of those users perceiving these technologies as useful and easy to use. When customers consider the latest banking technological developments useful and easy to use, they tend to use these technologies regularly (Taleghani, 2013; Nasri, 2011). With the same notion, it can be said that when users of mobile banking services perceive the latest banking technological developments useful in carrying out their banking activities (such as money transfers, bill payments, etc.), they tend to utilize these services more regularly. Similarly, when customers believe that it is easy for them to learn and become skillful at using the latest technologies, they tend to utilize mobile banking services more regularly (Shoki, Ariff, Min, Zakaun, & Ishak 2012; Abdel-Wahab, 2008; Aboelmaged & Gebba, 2013). Whereas mobile banking users who have not been found to give much preference to facilitating conditions, as well as behavioral intentions regarding the latest banking technological developments, while deciding the frequency of using mobile banking services.

Further, the difference in the usage pattern of mobile banking services on the account of the five dimensions of effectiveness implicates a statistically significant difference in the usage pattern of these services on all the five dimensions of effectiveness. This indicates that the mobile banking users consider accessibility of banking services important, along with other dimensions (i.e., economical, time flexible, safety & security and customization). The growth of mobile phones is still at a nascent stage (IDRBT, 2013) which results in a lack of easy accessibility, as these services can be utilized only with the help of mobile phones. This might be one of the plausible reasons for the concerns of the mobile banking users regarding their accessibility while developing their pattern of usage.

On the basis of the findings of the present composition, banks are suggested to focus on enhancing effectiveness of the mobile banking services. This can be done through various ways. For instance, effectiveness of the mobile banking services on the dimension of time flexibility can be enhanced by increasing the bandwidth of the mobile banking services, so that customers can avail the mobile banking services at any time irrespective

of the network congestion at different periods of time. In addition, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the mobile banking services on the economical dimension, banks are suggested to provide ways through which the cost of the customers can be saved. The use of mobile banking services requires the use of smart phones, as well as the availability of Internet on these smart phones, and both aspects entail costs. Thus, banks should try to explore the ways of reducing/controlling such a cost. One of the implications in this regard can be that banks may collaborate with handset providers or internet providers in order to offer more cost-effective solutions regarding the use of mobile banking services to customers. Likewise, safety and security of mobile banking services needs to be improved by the banks in order to enhance their effectiveness. Although steps in this regard have already been initiated, yet there is a need to adopt a more rigorous phenomenon in order to maintain the safety and security of the users while using these services. In this regard, a speedy protection through a multi-layered security should be adopted, which will not only reduce the chances of cybercrime but it will also allow banks to identify the defaulter party/person. In order to enhance customization of mobile banking services, customers can be allowed to make changes in their mobile banking accounts by themselves, such as changing the icons or a series of different icons as per their use, adding a third party instantly, etc. Doing so not only improves the effectiveness of mobile banking services but it also enhances the usage pattern of mobile banking services (since the aforementioned dimensions of effectiveness were found to affect the usage pattern of mobile banking services).

Banks are also suggested to focus on personal disposition, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in order to raise the use of mobile banking services among banking customers. Accordingly, with the view of enhancing personal disposition towards technology adoption, banks are suggested to focus on the personal traits of their customers (as personal disposition comprises personal traits, namely, optimism, innovativeness, self-efficacy, social influence, habit, psychological resilience, risk taking propensity). Moreover, banks should focus on explaining the benefits of the latest technologies to the customers in serving their banking needs. This can be done through various methods, such as organizing camps at various local places, playing short films, road shows, etc. Indeed, while targeting the usefulness of the latest banking technologies, the specific benefits of the latest technologies over the traditional technologies should be highlighted. This will enable customers to make comparisons between the traditional and the latest banking technologies, allowing them to explore the competences of the latest banking technologies in serving their needs in a much improved manner.

Finally, efforts should also be made to enhance the perceived ease of use regarding technology. In view of that, banks can provide hands on training to their customers on the use of the latest banking technological developments. Indeed, the training should be a blend of a classroom, as well as practical training, wherein, primarily, the use procedure of the latest banking technological developments could be explained and then customers would be allowed to use this technology under the supervision of the bank's personnel. Thereafter, customers may be allowed to use technology on their own in order to explore their cognizance regarding the usage procedure of the latest banking technologies. Moreover, fresher demonstration sessions should be organized by the banks from time to time in order to explore issues/apprehensions of the customers pertaining to the use of the latest banking technological developments. Doing so will enable banks to enhance the use of mobile banking services, thus benefiting from a maximum utility as the result of the introduction of mobile banking services into the banking system.

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# The Impact of Media on Consumers' Environmental Behaviour

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People, companies and society are becoming more mindful about the environment, and thus the market demand environmentally-sustainable merchandises and services. Today consumers act more pro-environmentally, as in the past decades they have changed their behaviour. We all recognise that the development of different types of media, especially the Internet and social media, has generated a different approach from societies and traders towards the individual consumer. In this research, we have established that the Internet, social media and TV have at the moment the largest influence on consumers' environmental behaviour, due to the fact that companies and marketers are targeting at the same time different target groups of consumers. In the case of the Internet or social media, the marketers are very aggressive, although many consumers have the sense that they are something special for the companies and, therefore, change their environmental behaviour following the marketers and companies' desires.

*Keywords:* media, Internet, social media, consumers, environmental behaviour

## Introduction

Environmentally sustainable products have become mainstream in today's consumer-oriented society. For that reason, it is very important for producers to adopt their products and their marketing approach to the factors that influence the consumers' environmental behaviour (Driessen, 2005). We focused our research on the influential role of marketing (especially different media) on consumers' environmental behaviour. We want to find out if the use of different marketing approaches and media can affect and influence consumers' environmental behaviour. Different media have an important influence on consumers' values, beliefs and environmental behaviour (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004).

Different consumers' environmental values have a primary role in their behaviour (different personal beliefs lead to different environmental behaviours) (Stern, 2000; Jagodič, Dermal, Breznik, & Roncelli Vaupot, in press). As we can find out from the different above-mentioned research, pro-environmental values lead to pro-environmental behaviour but do not guarantee pro-environmental behaviour. In addition, recent studies showed that environmentally conscious people do not necessarily behave pro-

environmentally (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Ohtomo & Hirose, 2007). Some other authors (Crane, 2000; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008) have concluded that consumers who claimed being environmentally friendly do not purchase environmentally-friendly products on a regular basis.

Moreover, research (Kees, Burton, & Tangari, 2010; Sung & Choi, 2011) shows us that advertising and different marketing activities have an important role in the persuasion of consumers' environmental behaviour. That is the main reason why producers use different marketing and advertising approaches to environmental consumers, and try to show them a positive impact on the society (Mintel, 2012).

The environmental purchasing behaviour of consumers is mainly based on their subjective motives and subjective issues, and often not on objective, measurable indicators (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Peters, Agostl, Popp, & Ryf, 2011).

In this paper, we would like to explore the impact of media on consumers' environmental behaviour in Slovenia. We would like to find out how Slovenian consumers behave in order to save the environment. Another important part of this research is to elucidate which media they use and how they impact on consumers' environmental behaviour. In this paper, we at first introduce the basics of what the environment is, why we have to take care of our environment and what does environmental behaviour consist of. Secondly, we present the media and how they can impact on consumers' behaviour. In addition, we go through the research methodology and analysis of the results. Finally, we set forth the conclusions and the reference list.

### **Environment and Environmental Behaviour**

The word 'Environment' comes from the French word 'Environ,' which means 'surrounding.' Everything that affects an organism and its surrounding is collectively known as the environment. In other words, we can say that environment consists of water, air and land, and also of the interrelationships with other human beings, organisms and property. The environment includes the physical and biological surrounding and their interactions (Kalavathy, 2004). The environment is a complex system with many variables interrelated with all the elements above. But firstly we have to define the term 'attitude.' The term is in the literature defined as:

- An enduring combination of emotional, perceptual, motivational, and cognitive processes with a connection to the environment (Krech & Crutchfield, 1948).
- Learned predisposition, how to react to consistent stimulus in connection to the environment (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

- A person's overall evaluation of objects and issues (Petty & Wegener, 1998).

Very often attitudes are divided into two parts: an effective and a cognitive component (Kraus, 1995). Disinger and Tomsen (1995) described attitudes as 'to be in close relation with a worldview,' but we have to be aware, that a worldview is dynamic and changeable, and for this reason, McKenzie (1998) described worldview as constructed and changed by the influences of knowledge and experiences of the person.

The term 'behaviour' is mostly understood intuitively and, from the psychological and sociological point of view, we cannot find any suggested definitions. We usually understand the term 'behaviour' as any active response to something, in our case, to environmental issues.

We usually perceive an environmental attitude as a precondition for environmental behaviour. Hines, Hungerford, and Tomera (1987) found out that the most important determinant of pro-environmental behaviour is the 'intent to act,' which can consist, among other variables, of a connection between attitude and behaviour. Hungerford and Volk (1990), Chawla (2006) and Bamberg and Moser (2007) got the same results. All of this research regarding the process of influencing attitudes indicate that those persons with stronger attitudes are more stable and have a larger impact on their behaviour. Stronger attitudes can be identified by their point of view on the problem/situation and confidence that they are right.

Different authors (Stern, 2000; Winter & Koger, 2004) have researched the environment and human behaviour towards the environment and they all agree that the most important parts are the attitude and the behaviour of adults. They found out that adults' environmental attitudes are based on beliefs, and they have to be critical to non-environmental attitudes and behaviours. They also pointed out that adults with higher education have more pro-environmental beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

Diekmann and Preisendörfer (1992), Auhagen and Neuburger (1994) and Grob (1995) discovered three important environmental attitude components (affect, knowledge – recognition and intention or purpose) and, consequently, environmental attitudes are occasionally measured independently of their components.

Several researchers (Abrahamse, Steg, Vlek, & Rothengatter, 2005; Swim et al., 2011) have described the categories of factors of pro-environmental behaviours. Some of them include a variety of factors but, according to Gifford (2006), non-psychological factors, like geophysical conditions and political influences, are also important. Some other authors mentioned the values-beliefs-norm model (Stern, 2000), the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and the focus theory of normative con-

duct (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). Latest research has shown that the above-mentioned elements could be expanded to include other personal and social factors (Chen & Tung, 2010; Raymond, Brown, & Robinson, 2011).

One of the most important elements of environmental behaviour depends on childhood experiences, and some authors (Palmer, 1993; Eagles & Demare, 1999) concluded that children are more environmentally concerned if they talk and read about the environment at home.

In recent studies, some authors (Robelia & Murphy, 2012; Fielding & Head, 2012; Levine & Strube, 2012) have inferred that a high level of knowledge about environmental problems and perceived difficulties with the environment can be considered (seen) as a behavioural prediction. However, the level of the knowledge also depends on the education. Persons with higher education in general show higher concern about the environment (Klineberg, McKeever, & Rothenbach, 1998; Chanda, 1999). On the other hand, persons who studied business (Synodinos, 1990) and technology (McKnight, 1991) are mostly less environmentally concerned than persons from other disciplines (Tikka, Kuitnen, & Tynys, 2000).

The personality of the individual consumer is also an important factor of environmentally-oriented behaviour. People must be open to experiences, which leads them to engage in more pro-environmental activities (Markowitz, Goldberg, Ashton, & Lee, 2012). Hirsh (2010) investigated the connection between the environmental concern and agreeableness of individuals, their emotional stability and conscientiousness. Following the studies of Milfont and Sibley (2012), openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness are strongly linked to the environmental engagement of people.

It looks like that locus of control acts as a link between values and pro-environmental behaviour, and we can understand that as a great willingness to buy environmental products (Ando, Ohnuma, Blöbaum, Matthies, & Sugiura, 2010; Fielding & Head, 2012).

Consumers' personal values have a strong influence on environmental attitudes (Schultz & Zelezny, 1999). It is the same with personal norms, which we can identify as a moral obligation towards taking action. Personal norms are subjective and they represent someone's behaviour, which is very much the same as from society expected behaviour and that the personal norms have a heavy impact on environmental attitudes and behaviours (Matthies, Selge, & Klöckner, 2012).

New studies (Gilg, Barr, & Ford, 2005; Pinto, Nique, Añaña, & Herter, 2011) ascertained that older people have more pro-environmental-oriented behaviour than younger people. If we call for a look on gender, recent studies (Luchs & Mooradian, 2012; Scannell & Gifford, 2013) show us that women have stronger environmental attitudes, business organisation and behaviour

than men, as personality mediates the effect of gender on environmental behaviour.

We can assess the environmental attitude by the relationship of environmental and ecological behaviour (Berger & Corbin, 1992; Moore, Murphy, & Watson, 1994; Grob, 1995). Agreeing with Lynne and Rola (1988), the environmental attitude consists of the strong connection between environmental knowledge (effect), environmental values and ecological behaviour intention.

As we can deduce from the theory of planned behaviour, someone's subjective norms is the combination of normative beliefs concerned about the environment and the effect on his/her intention to behave ecologically (Midden & Ritsema, 1983). Environmental values relate to ecological behaviour intention; merely they are sometimes mediated with the third variable, which is, according to the theory of planned behaviour, the environmental behaviour intention (Stern, Dietz, & Kalof, 1993; Grob, 1995).

The environmental behaviour intention has an important connection with ecological behaviour. Simply, we have to note that ecological behaviour is affected by environmental attitudes, environmental knowledge, environmental values or environmental behaviour intention (Berger & Corbin, 1992). However, specific environmental attitude measures are better predictors than general ecological measures, because the general ones usually show us findings of not comparable measures (Smith, Haugtvedt, & Petty, 1994).

### The Media and Their Impact on Consumers' Behaviour

We can define medium as a channel of communication. People understand a medium as a mean through which they send and receive information. We know different media such as printed, spoken, electronic, written and video. Today the most important ones are mass media, which are ordinarily applied to the transfer of information to a large number of people (audience), and for which different sorts of media can be used.

- We can define mass media as a transmitter of information in different forms using different channels to large numbers of people. We classified mass media as a 'one-to-many' communication, where the one who is delivering the information does not receive simultaneous feedback from the audience. Dutton, O'Sullivan and Rayne (1998) suggest that, traditionally, the definition and the understanding of mass media has been differentiated from other types of communication, and they mentioned the following essential differences: Communication between the people who send and a person who receives messages is implemented with a distance and is impersonal, with a lack of immediacy, and directed just in one direction;

- Mass media require a receiver (TV, printer, telephone, network, ...) and technological equipment that enables the broadcasting of the message or the information;
- One of the most significant characteristics of mass media is the wide scope of audiences, which can be reproduced and created at the same time almost all over the globe;
- A really interesting feature of mass communication is the commodity of use, but we need to have the appropriate receiver, or we have to pay for the service that can accompany the messages.

We live in a society where it is not possible to clearly distinguish between mass media, which involve a one-to-many communication, and non-mass media, which mostly mean a one-to-one communication. The development of different forms of communication technologies (mobile phones, e-mail) gives us the possibility to use technology in both ways, i.e. for interpersonal (one-to-one) and for mass (one-to-many) communication. The way of using it depends on what we want and what we want to achieve across the communication.

The growth of computer networks, mobile telephone networks and accessibility to the required equipment to utilise services that have become incredibly important has changed our ways of communicating: computer networks, for instance, open the possibility of a many-to-many communication, where a mass audience can simultaneously communicate and interact with each other at the same time (e.g., e-classrooms, chat-rooms, social networks).

For that understanding, we have to redefine the concept of mass media and create a distinction between:

- Old (traditional) mass media, such as TV, books and newspapers, involving a one-to-many communication and based on a one-way process from a producer who uses equipment for transmission to a large number of consumers; and
- New mass media, such as social networks and computer networks, involving a many-to-many communication, based on a two-way communication with several participants in the communication, and where it is irrelevant if the participant is a producer or a consumer.

We should likewise note the dimension of the communication that marks separates from the traditional configuration of mass media and some new media, as some new media apparently blur the traditional differences between consumers and manufacturers. An important fact is that past traditional forms of mass media are based on the clear distinction between who is producing the media and who is consuming them, but today new forms



of media do not necessarily fall into such an easy and clear differentiation. Crosbie (2002) indicates that the characteristics of new mass media are in a case that we combined them, we build them entirely different from other forms of media, which include:

- That this media cannot exist without appropriate computer technology;
- Messages are individualised (tailored) to each participants' particular needs and desires, and we can deliver them to the differential and the vast number of participants; and
- Each participant in the network has the potential ability to share, change and develop the content of exchanging information.

In the last decades, we can see increasing recognition of the importance of behaviour influence to attain suitable outcomes. Jackson (2005) researched sustainable consumption, Darnton (2008) investigated the changes of behavioural models in general. Hine, Peacock, and Pretty (2008) explored the impact of volunteering on environmental behaviour and Southerton, McMeekin, and Evans (2011) looked into other relevant behavioural contexts. They all agree that behavioural theories and examples of behavioural changes can inform of the implements regarding the alterations and the reasons that caused behavioural changes.

Michie, Johnston, Francis, Hardeman, and Eccles (2008) mentioned that their theory can provide a helpful basis for preparing intervention for behavioural modification, but they provide little information about how to do this. We have to be aware of the best way to influence consumer behaviour. If we wish to modify behaviour, we need to recognise the answers to the following questions:

1. Whose behaviour do we want to change?
2. What behaviour do we want to change?
3. What change do we wish to see?
4. Why this behaviour should be modified?

The behaviour is very resistant to change, Mearns found out (2012), because people are a creation of habits, and we want with the minimum effort to achieve the maximum results. Branson, Duffy, Perry, and Wellings (2012) came to the conclusion that we do not necessarily respond well, if someone told us what, why, when and how to do something.

Jackson (2005) discovered that marketing and advertising influence consumers' behaviour, so we have to incorporate different internal and external factors if we want to influence or modify the behaviour. His further research shows that financial and non-financial costs and benefits of the

individual consumer also have an influence on purchase behaviour. His theory describes the relationship between attitudes, intention and behaviour, while Courtenay-Hall and Rogers (2002) emphasise the gap between intention and behaviour. However, Maio (2011) emphasises the gap between value/attitudes and activity. Butt (2000) found out that behaviour depends on specific beliefs and values, and he manages to integrate the aforementioned internal and external elements of influencing behaviour into an 'attitude behaviour.'

Evidence show us that learning (as a change in behaviour) can occur without any changes in attitude and also attitude (and behaviour) changes can occur without acceptance of the persuasion message (Jackson, 2005), because the empirical evidence establishes that social learning is very important for behavioural changes. The social learning theory highlights the right environmental behaviour, as we are learning by observing how others behave and by modelling our behaviours (by what others do, how they do things, what we see around us and how we understand our living environment). By his research findings, it is much more difficult to influence routine behaviour.

Darnton (2011) established a practice theory as a model to help the description of these elements, which comes together in practice if we want to influence or change the behaviour, so he mentioned that it is not necessary to target the individual consumer directly. In this sense, the research findings of Uzzell (2012) also suggest that the focus on the practice is very important. For an effective influence on behaviour, we must have a focus on the conditions and reasons that drive the behaviour of an individual consumer (and also of a group of consumers) rather than on the behaviour itself.

On the other hand, we can see the advancement of the Internet in the development of different social media (Lu, Zhao, & Wang, 2010): the Internet and other electronic and virtual communities have deeply transformed and changed society, consumers and companies with widespread access to information, higher levels of social networking and enhanced communication abilities. As a consequence, social media can have a very important influence on consumer behaviour (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The most significant part of social media is how they changed the way of communication between consumers and marketers (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). Social media has given individuals the opportunity to contribute, interact and generate the content in different possibilities of communication, without any need for physical meetings (Gruzd, Wellman, & Takhteyev, 2011). The development of social media gives individuals the opportunity to share and access information in the easiest possible way (Chen, Xu, & Whinston, 2011a).

Consumers have today access to a wide range of information sources and information. Recommendations from other consumers can facilitate them (Senecal & Nantel, 2004), and that can be a very important factor of marketing activities from customer involvement in social media. Wu, Chen, and Chung (2010) stated that individual consumers provide and share values through networking on social media.

Moreover, for that reason, companies can develop marketing strategies, which will help influence and modify the individual consumers' behaviour by using social media for building trust from individual consumers (Liang & Turban, 2011). Ridings and Gefen (2004) found out that social media and online communities offer companies the opportunity to organise a better consumer relationship management system. As Mersey, Malthouse, and Calder (2010) have stated, social media provide an opportunity for companies and marketers to engage and interact with potential consumers as individuals, increasing the sense of intimacy with consumers, which helps to build trust and good relationships. Consequently, it is key for companies to have a business model that will allow them to adapt to those social media that are mostly used by their target consumers (Liang & Turban, 2011). Social media, therefore, allow companies to become more universally attractive to different groups of target consumers (Chen, Fay, & Wang, 2011b). Some marketers believe that companies can use social media and their intimacy relationship with the consumer by using an aggressive promotion approach (Moise, 2011). Potential target consumers use social media on a daily basis for various reasons, and, because they join different groups, the marketers can use social media to inform them and to influence the behaviour of all the members of the group at once (Kozinets, Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). It is also significant the fact that the use of social media is a low-cost tool for companies and marketers, which allows them to have a great influence on consumers' behaviour (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

### **Research Methodology, Sample and Analysis**

We developed a new measurement scale for the present research, by using the combined scales developed by Picket-Baker and Ozaki (2008) and Kim (2011), and we combined them with some of our own questions. We made statistical verification of the scale in the sample of 50 participants. Scales were originally in English, and we translated them into the Slovenian language, following the approach suggested by Harkness (2010), which meant translating the questions, making a review of the translations and adjudicating them with back translations. In nearly all of the measurement scales (except the demographic data – gender, earnings, the post number, . . .) we used the 5 points Likert Scale. For the processing of survey collected data, we used the program package tool IBM SPSS 22.0.

To gather the research information, we used the method of the interview. We gathered data at the beginning of November 2015 at a shopping centre by asking passing people to answer to our structured interview questionnaire. We collected 585 completed questionnaires filled correctly.

77% (453) of the questionnaires were completed by females and the rest 23 % (132) by male respondents. 45% (264) of the respondents in the sample were aged up to 25 years, 28% (165) were between 25 and 40 years old, 20% (117) were between 40 and 55 years old, and 7% (39) were aged over 55 years. The average age of the respondents was over 38 years. 38% (223) of the respondent earned less than 400 EUR, 24% (138) earned between 400 and 800 EUR, 31% (181) earned between 800 and 1.500 EUR, 5% (30) earned between 1.500 and 2.500 EUR and 2% (13) of respondents earned more than 2.500 EUR per month. On average, respondents earned 840 EUR per month. 64% (375) of the respondents lived in a house and 36% (210) lived in an apartment. About 10% (58) of the respondents lived alone, 20% (119) lived with someone in the same household, 25% (147) lived in the household of 3, 28% (162) of the respondents lived in the household of 4, 9% (51) of respondents lived in the household of 5 and 8 % (48) of the respondents lived in the household of 6 or more persons. On average, respondents lived in households of 3.45 persons.

We all recognise that different respondents accompany different media. The scale for assessment of the media was between 1 and 5, where 1 is never and 5 whenever possible. In Table 1, we have established the importance of media for respondents. We can conclude that the Internet was the most important media for respondents, with an average score of 4.33 points out of 5 potential spots. The next most important media were social networks, with an average score of 3.86 points out of 5, and very close to that is TV, with an average score of 3.57 points out of 5 potential spots. We found out that newspapers had an average score of 2.45 points out of 5 and Journals and magazines had an average score of 2.30 points out of 5 possible stops, which make them the least important media for respondents.

There is a significant positive relationship between the environmental behaviour of the respondents and advertising on different media (Table 2). For research data, we have four predictors (TV, Journals and magazines, Internet and Social Networks) with positive *B*-values indicating positive relationship, but 2 of these predictors (Radio and Newspaper) have negative *B*-values and indicate a negative relationship. If the company invests in advertising, it has to choose the right media. For instance, if they choose to invest in radio and newspapers, they will hardly spend money, but the advertisement will not have a positive influence on the environmental behaviour of clients.

**Table 1** Importance of the Media for Respondents

Media	(1)	(2)	(3)
TV	3.57	1.201	460
Radio	3.16	1.172	460
Newspapers (daily, weekly)	2.45	1.124	458
Journals and magazines	2.30	1.072	460
Internet	4.33	1.035	461
Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, ...)	3.86	1.393	460

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (1) mean, (2) standard deviation, (3) N.

TV, as a medium with a positive influence on the customers' behaviour, has a very strong influence ( $B = 0.153$ , sig. = 0.011). Journals and magazines also have a strong positive influence ( $B = 0.173$ , sig. = 0.22). However, on the other hand, newspapers have a very strong negative influence on customers' behaviour ( $B = -0.185$ , sig. = 0.012).

Multiple regression model:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Influence} = & 2.035 + (0.153 \times \text{TV}) + (-0.32 \times \text{radio}) \\
 & + (-0.185 \times \text{newspaper}) \\
 & + (0.173 \times \text{journals and magazines}) \\
 & + (0.015 \times \text{internet}) + (0.032 \times \text{social networks}). \quad (1)
 \end{aligned}$$

If a company invests in one advert on TV, in a journal or a magazine, on the Internet and social media, it will get a positive influence on consumers.

We can conclude that companies and marketers should invest into advertising on TV and in journals and magazines if they want to have a strong positive influence on consumers' environmental behaviour. They have to avoid advertising on the radio and in newspapers, as they have a negative influence on consumers' environmental behaviour. Investment in advertising on the Internet and social networks will influence consumers' environmental behaviour, but we have to put in a lot more energy, effort and money to achieve the same results as on TV, journals and magazines.

The SPSS output (Table 4) tells us that the value of  $t$  is different, and between 2.768 and 2.807 the number of degrees of freedom on which this was based was 541, and that it was not significant at  $p < 0.05$ . We can also see the means of each group (Table 3).

On average, we can see from Table 3 and Table 4 that advertising has a more significant influence on women ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SE = 0.067$ ) than on men ( $M = 2.31$ ,  $SE = 0.122$ ). The difference is not significant  $t(541) = 2.768$ ,  $p > 0.05$  and it represents a very low sized effect  $r = 0.12$ .

Therefore, women are more likely to change their behaviour if they see advertising or if they get information about environment topics. This is a

**Table 2** Coefficients for Regression Model

Media	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Constant	2.035	0.323		6.296	0.000	1.400	2.671			
TV	0.153	0.060	0.134	2.565	0.011	0.036	0.271	0.129	0.120	0.785
Radio	-0.032	0.061	-0.027	-0.523	0.601	-0.153	0.089	0.001	-0.025	0.788
Newspaper (daily, weekly)	-0.185	0.073	-0.151	-2.529	0.012	-0.329	-0.041	-0.047	-0.118	0.596
Journals and magazines	0.173	0.075	0.135	2.300	0.022	0.025	0.321	0.077	0.108	0.622
Internet	0.015	0.080	0.011	0.192	0.848	-0.142	0.172	0.067	0.009	0.603
Social networks (Facebook, Twitter,...)	0.032	0.058	0.033	0.558	0.577	-0.081	0.146	0.083	0.026	0.622

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (1) *B* (unstandardized coefficient), (2) standard error (unstandardized coefficient), (3)  $\beta$  (standardized coefficient), (4) *t*, (5) significance, (6) 95.0% confidence interval for *B* – lower bound, (7) 95.0% confidence interval for *B* – upper bound, (8) zero-order correlations, (9) partial correlations, (10) tolerance. Dependent variable: Does advertising significantly influence your environmental behaviour?

**Table 3** Group Statistic about Gender of the Respondents and Influence of Advertising on Their Environmental Behaviour

Gender	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Woman	421	2.70	1.383	0.067
Man	122	2.31	1.349	0.122

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (1) *N*, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation, (4) standard error of the mean.

**Table 4** Independent *t*-Test for Influence of Advertising on Respondent Environmental Behaviour

Equal variances	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Equal variances assumed	0.089	0.766	2.768	541	0.006	0.392	0.141	0.114	0.669
Equal variances not assumed			2.807	200.642	0.005	0.392	0.140	0.117	0.667

**Notes** Levene's test for equality of variances: (1) *F*, (2) significance; *t*-test for equality of means: (3) *t*, (4) degrees of freedom, (5) significance (2-tailed), (6) mean difference; (7) standard error of the difference, (8) 95.0% confidence interval of the difference – lower bound, (9) 95.0% confidence interval of the difference – upper bound.

very important information for marketers, as they have to prepare the appropriate advertising messages and choose the right media for women, and they will have more success to change their environmental behaviour.

## Conclusions

We have in the present research investigated how media have an impact on consumers' environmental behaviour. We were interested especially in the impact of the Internet and social media on consumers' environmental behaviour. In the literature review, we find a lot of research and empirical evidence from different authors in the recent times confirming that TV, journals and magazines have a strong influence on consumers' environmental behaviour.

With this research, we have found out that marketers should prepare messages for women, as they are more keen to change their environmental behaviour, if they get information through advertising, on TV, in journals and magazines and on the Internet and social media. It is also a significant element for companies and marketers that they should use those media that allow them to get a better outcome and a higher impact on consumer environmental behaviour. Companies should also bear in mind that consumers are more willing to modify their environmental behaviour if they receive additional information. Especially, if they feel that companies or marketers treat them as a very special and important consumer, and if they match the individual consumer's demands and desires.

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## Abstracts in Slovene

### **Razumevanje dejavnikov neformalnega učenja na delovnem mestu: uporaba teorije virov v praksi**

*Debora Jeske in Christian Stamov Roßnagel*

Teorija virov izpostavlja več dejavnikov, ki lahko vplivajo na neformalno učenje zaposlenih. V presečni raziskavi 113 nemških delavcev, zaposlenih v energetskem sektorju, smo preučili več možnih napovedovalcev neformalnega učenja in pozitivnejšega odnosa do neformalnega učenja. Rezultati so pokazali, da sta proaktivno iskanje pomoči in strokovna samoučinkovitost dobra napovedovalca pozitivnega odnosa do neformalnega učenja. Starejši delavci, ki so se z veseljem učili, ki so sami iskali pomoč in ki so pri učenju pokazali samoučinkovitost, so imeli bolj pozitiven odnos do formalnega učenja. Zaposleni, ki so imeli bolj pozitiven odnos do neformalnega učenja, so organizacijske učne vire ocenili kot manj pomembne, kar lahko pripišemo dejstvu, da so bili proaktivni iskalci pomoči. Vodstvo je organizacijskim učnim virom pripisalo manjši pomen, v primerjavi z zaposlenimi na nevodstvenih položajih, vendar je treba poudariti, da so vodstveni delavci izkazali višjo raven strokovne samoučinkovitosti. Te okoliščine lahko vplivajo tudi na njihovo odločanje v zvezi s potrebo po zagotavljanju učnih virov drugim na delovnem mestu.

*Ključne besede:* neformalno učenje, samoučinkovitost, iskanje pomoči, učni viri, teorija virov

IJMKL, 5(2), 145–165

### **Prepoznavanje sociološko-kulturnih dejavnikov, ki vplivajo na uporabo prosto dostopnih izobraževalnih virov v lokalnih javnih upravah**

*Julia Stoffregen, Jan M. Pawlowski, Eric Ras, Snežana Ščepanović in Dragica Žugić*

Cilj tega prispevka je opredeliti pomembne ovire za izmenjavo prosto dostopnih izobraževalnih virov v lokalnih javnih upravah. V okviru nadgradnje kulturnega modela smo opravili intervjuje z enajstimi strokovnjaki, ki so podali svoje ocene različnih dejavnikov, med katerimi velja izpostaviti odprtost za razprave, učenje na delovnem mestu in podporo nadrejenih. Na podlagi rezultatov smo izluščili vrsto sociološko-kulturnih dejavnikov, ki vplivajo na uporabo prosto dostopnih izobraževalnih virov v lokalnih javnih upravah. Med pomembnejše dejavnike štejemo neodvisno izbiro učnih virov, naravo platforme, izbiro razpoložljivih formatov in dostop do tehnologij. Strokovni delavci uporabljajo te dejavnike pri oceni pripravljenosti javnih uprav k uporabi prosto dostopnih sistemov za e-učenje. Prispevek rezultatov raziskave k akademskim razpravam o kulturi v okviru e-učenja, sestoji iz alternativnega modela, ki je kontekstualiziran tako, da izpolnjuje zahteve kontekstov javnega sektorja. V splošnejšem

smislu pa raziskava predstavlja pomemben prispevek, saj je raziskav o prosto dostopnih sistemih za e-učenje v javnem sektorju razmeroma malo, prav tako pa primanjkuje raziskav o kulturi upravljanja učenja in izmenjave znanja.

*Ključne besede:* prosto dostopni izobraževalni viri, javna uprava, mešana metoda, ocena strokovnjaka, socialno-kulturni kontekst, kulturni model v prosto dostopnem e-učenju

IJMKL, 5(2), 167–187

### **Spretnosti in učni stili zaposlenih v inovativnih podjetjih**

*Agnieszka Sitko-Lutek in Monika Jakubiak*

Sodobne organizacije morajo biti zmožne učinkovitega poslovanja, tudi ko se soočajo z različnimi izzivi. Med izzivi velja izpostaviti globalizacijo, tehnološki napredek, poslovanje v stalno spreminjajoči se družbi in ustvarjanje intelektualnega kapitala, ki prinaša konkurenčno prednost. Zaradi vsega naštetega je uspešno upravljanje sodobne organizacije z raznoliko delovno silo, ki podjetju omogoča, da posluje učinkovito in brez ustvarjanje izgub ali konfliktov, kritičnega pomena. V današnjem času morajo organizacije nenehno iskati inovativne načine za opravljanje svoje dejavnosti. Iz analize primerov organizacij, ki delujejo uspešno, lahko potegnemo zaključek, da je tematika raznolikosti človeških virov vredna podrobnejše obravnave. Zlasti je pomembna analiza vodstvenih sposobnosti in učnih stilov v kontekstu inovativnosti podjetij. Vodstvene sposobnosti in njihov razvoj so osnova za uspešne procese upravljanja v sodobnem podjetju. Cilj te študije je bil opredeliti in oceniti spretnosti in učne stile zaposlenih v inovativnih podjetjih. Gradivo za empirično analizo je bilo zbrano leta 2016 na podlagi raziskave, izvedene med zaposlenimi inovativnih podjetij s sedežem na Poljskem. Rezultati pričujoče raziskave so bili podlaga za analizo vpliva neodvisnih spremenljivk anketirancev na njihove sposobnosti in učne stile. Na podlagi rezultatov raziskave smo oblikovali priporočila za vodstvene delavce in strokovnjake za upravljanje s človeškimi viri (HRM), za uspešno upravljanje različnih spretnosti in učnih stilov zaposlenih.

*Ključne besede:* spretnosti zaposlenih, učni stili, inovativno podjetje

IJMKL, 5(2), 189–200

### **Sodobni prilagodljivi model za profil izseljencev**

*Catalin Popa, Imre Reczey, David Quansah in Filip Nistor*

Ob upoštevanju globalnih stvarnosti in tehnološkega razvoja, so v okviru na znanju temelječega gospodarstva številne organizacije usmerjene v razvoj človeškega kapitala, pri čemer se ne vzpostavljajo samo organizacijski standardi, ampak tudi spodbujajo okoljska merila prilagajanja človeških virov, z namenom zagotavljanja trajnosti v postopkih zaposlovanja in izbire zaposlenih. Razvoj prilagojenega profila zaposlenih za izseljence je zato eden od glavnih imperativov za funkcijo mednarodnega upravljanja s človeškimi viri. Ta prispevek zagovarja stališče, da je funkcija mednarodnega upravljanja s človeškimi



ena od temeljnih funkcij znotraj organizacijske strukture, ki je odgovorna za prilagajanje vedenja mednarodnih zaposlenih, v skladu z okoljem organizacije in zunanjim domačim okoljem, s ciljem spodbujanja skupne vrednosti tujih delavcev za nacionalno gospodarstvo, kulturo in družbo.

*Ključne besede:* človeški viri, organizacijska kultura, delovno okolje  
IJMKL, 5(2), 201–222

### **Predvidene spodbude za izboljšanje univerzitetnega upravljanja: perspektiva Gane**

*Bernard Bekuni Boawei Bingab, Joseph Ato Forson, Oscar Siema Mmbali, Theresa Yaaba Baah-Ennumh in Joshua-Luther Ndoye Upoalkpajor*

Spodbuda za krepitev sistema upravljanja univerz ima tri posledice: (1) izboljšanje kakovosti univerzitetnega izobraževalnega sistema in s tem zagotavljanje dobrega razmerja med ceno in ponudno tako študentom kot širši javnosti (2), smotnejšo uporabo sredstev, vloženih v univerzitetno izobrazbo, in (3) pomemben prispevek k oblikovanju človeškega kapitala, h kakovosti javnega vodenja in k razvoju najboljših storitev za družbo. Kljub temu je zelo malo študij, ki bi poskušale odgovoriti na vprašanje, kako vse to doseči v Gani. Pričujoča študija je kvalitativna študija, katere cilj je raziskati naslednja vprašanja: Kaj je potrebno, da se zagotovi zaželeno raven upravljanja univerz? Kako lahko to dosežemo? V raziskavi je sodelovalo triindvajset (23) udeležencev. Za zbiranje podatkov smo uporabili metodi poglobljenih intervjujev in analize dokumentov. Študija preučuje ključna vprašanja upravljanja, kot so financiranje, odgovornost, infrastruktura, zaupanje in pravna ureditev. Študija vsebinsko prispeva k literaturi na temo vodenja in upravljanja univerz, saj v ospredje postavlja spodbude, ki so potrebne za izboljšave na tem področju, za doseganje boljših rezultatov in za zadovoljitev razvojnih potreb ganskega gospodarstva in celotne afriške celine, ki se sooča s podobnimi izzivi.

*Ključne besede:* upravljanje univerz, izobraževalna politika, zaupanje, odgovornost, vodenje, Gana  
IJMKL, 5(2), 223–244

### **Sprejemanje mobilnega bančništva: študija bančnih strank v Indiji**

*Irbha Magotra*

Prispevek predstavlja poskus analize vzorca sprejemanja mobilnih bančnih storitev med bančnimi strankami v Indiji. Za namene študije je bila izvedena primarna raziskava, ki se je osredotočala na bančne stranke v Indiji. Rezultati so pokazali, da uporabniki premalo posegajo po storitvah mobilnega bančništva in da mobilno bančništvo večinoma uporabljajo za preverjanje stanja na bančnem računu, nakupovanje, ipd. Raziskava je pokazala, da imajo stališča posameznika do sprejemanja tehnologije ter dojemanje uporabnosti, enostavnosti uporabe in učinkovitosti mobilnih bančnih storitev pomembno vlogo med različnimi dejavniki, ki vplivajo na vzorec uporabe mobilnega bančništva. Na

podlagi ugotovitev študije so podani različni predlogi ukrepov, s katerimi bi lahko banke spodbujale uporabo mobilnih bančnih storitev.

*Ključne besede:* mobilno bančništvo, sprejemanje tehnologije, dojemanje enostavnosti uporabe, učinkovitost

IJMKL, 5(2), 245–261

### **Vpliv medijev na okoljsko vedenje potrošnikov**

*Gregor Jagodič*

Posamezniki, podjetja in družbe se vse bolj zavedajo pomena skrbi za okolje. S tem se na trgu povečuje povpraševanje po okoljsko trajnostnih izdelkih in storitvah. Potrošniki so danes bolj naklonjeni okolju prijaznim opcijam, kot v preteklih desetletjih in so temu primerno spremenili svoje vedenje. Vsi se zavedamo, da je razvoj različnih medijev, zlasti interneta in družabnih medijev, pripomogel k temu, da so družbe in trgovci razvili drugačen pristop do posameznega potrošnika. Izsledki raziskave so pokazali, da na okoljsko vedenje potrošnikov trenutno v največji meri vplivajo internet, družabni mediji in TV, kar je posledica dejstva, da podjetja in tržniki istočasno nagovarjajo različne ciljne skupine potrošnikov. Na internetu in na družabnih medijih tržniki nastopajo z izrazito agresivnim pristopom, kljub temu, da imajo potrošniki občutek, da jim podjetja pripisujejo velik pomen in temu primerno spreminjajo svoje okoljsko vedenje, v skladu z željami podjetij in tržnikov.

*Ključne besede:* mediji, internet, družabni mediji, potrošniki, okoljsko vedenje

IJMKL, 5(2), 263–281

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