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**Learning Organisation, Affective Commitment and Cultural Intelligence: The case of expatriates in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries**

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## ABSTRACT

The economic development and diversity strategies in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries have created an attractive business environment to multi-national engineering and construction organisations. Those organisations heavily depend on expatriates who represent more than 90% of the workforce in the GCC countries. However, expatriates encounter several challenges due to the national culture and nationalisation policies, which affect their affective commitment. Organisations are now in a crucial need for a mechanism to improve expatriates' organisational affective commitment to be able to maintain their competitive advantage and to respond to the constant environmental changes quickly. This research explores the learning organisations role and moderating influence of cultural intelligence towards expatriates' affective organisational commitment within organisations in the engineering and construction industry in the GCC countries. There is a growing interest in the learning organisation concept and its influence on work-related outcomes, including employees' retention and commitment. However, existing literature has mostly focused on Western, Far Eastern, and North American countries. The cultural factor has not been considered when attempting to implement the learning organisation models across boundaries. To address this gap, the research has adopted a pragmatic epistemology by adopting a variety of research methodological approaches at different stages. Mixed qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been adopted as a complementary process to overcome limitations. The findings have illustrated correlations between learning organisation dimensions, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence moderates the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment. The findings are also essential to provide useful insights to inform policymakers, organisations, and Human Resource professionals of future thinking on managing individual talents in the GCC countries. The research is unique in exploring the learning organisation and cultural intelligence in the GCC countries offering a number of academic and practical recommendations on how to improve business practices and policies in the future.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the problem statement, research aim and purpose, research significance and contribution, and definitions of terms. It also provides an overview of the research scope, objectives, design, analysis methods, and findings. Additionally, the chapter introduces the document structure, chapters' scope and the thesis content.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT AND FRAMING

Today's business environment becomes agile, turbulent, and challenging to organisations. Globalisation and advancement in technology have influenced the business environment practices and traditional concepts (Ghemawat & Altman, 2019). Although there are predictions that globalisation is collapsing due to the wave of nationalism and 'Brexit' (the United Kingdom Leaving the European Union), it continues to influence the globe's business environment (Ghemawat and Altman, 2019). The expansion of businesses beyond national boundaries has created an environment characterised by rapid changes, evolving processes, products, and customers. These global variations have forced organisations to change their practices and approaches.

Organisations must stay connected to their environment and quickly respond to their changes to survive and maintain their competitive advantage (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Lau *et al.*, 2017). According to the International Monetary Fund (2018), the business environment has become unpredictable, with only one constant "change". With all these challenges, traditional organisations must transfer to learning organisations to adapt to these changes within the current business environment to survive (Schwartz & McCarthy, 2007; Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011; Pedler & Hsu, 2019). As Marsick and Watkins (2003:136) argued "a learning organisation is one that has embedded the capacity to adapt or to respond quickly and in novel while working to remove barriers to learning". Therefore, organisations need to enhance their capability to acquire and transfer knowledge at all levels, including individual, group, and organisational. Many organisations aim for more efficient performance by continuously reorganising and exploring new strategies and techniques to improve their processes and products. In this process, organisations have recognised that their talented expatriate employees are essential to surf through the high waves of the current turbulent global business environment. Organisations become increasingly focused on employee commitment, job satisfaction, and employee retention (Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013a; Lau *et al.*, 2017). Hence, they need to promote a learning culture that encourages their employees to learn and to share their knowledge, which by turn, will increase their ability to learn and to convert this learning into knowledge

For example, companies like Nokia could not survive and have failed due to their inability to be agile, learn, and be connected to environmental changes (Schrage, 2011). According to Michael (2011), it was not an innovation problem but an inability to adjust to the market changes and customer demand. When Apple introduced its iPhone with the new technology and applications concept, which attracted many customers in different markets, Nokia did not respond to the market changes. However, other companies like Google and Samsung have learned and changed their strategies to compete and survive. Those companies survived and became the main competitors of Apple and even overtook them in some markets, for example, the Asian Markets. Figure 1 below illustrates the decline of Nokia’s market share and increased Apple and Samsung market shares since 2011.

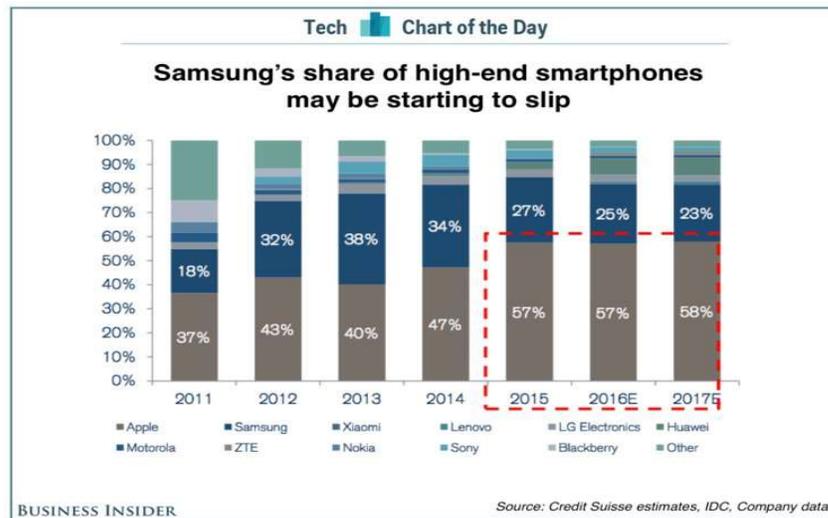


Figure 1 – Smartphones Share Comparison  
 (Source: Credit Suisse estimates, IDC, Company Data cited in Dunn, 2016)

The above emphasised how crucial it is for organisations to learn to survive and compete and grow in the marketplaces. As Jack Welch comments, “An organisation’s ability to learn and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage” (Barnett, 2016:1). Since organisational learning has been recognised as one of the most important sources of sustainable competitive advantage in today’s business environment, organisations and scholars have invested in exploring learning organisation approaches. Since Peter Senge published his book “The Fifth Disciplines”, the learning organisation concept has attracted organisations and human resource development (HRD) studies. The five disciplines of Senge (1990) to build a learning organisation are: Systems thinks, personal mastery, shared vision, mental model, and team learning.

In contrast, Armstrong and Foley (2003) stated that “a learning organisation has appropriate cultural facets (visions, values, assumptions, and behaviours) that support learning environments and structural facets that enable learning activities to be supported and implemented in the workplace” (cited in Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009:106). Other scholars see learning

organisation due to its employees' learning and knowledge sharing behaviour (Wang & Ahmed, 2003). Stinson, Pearson & Lucas (2006) are looking to learning organisation as organisational problem solving and learning tools rather than just a simple learning process for employees. The literature is rich with research studies that have explored the learning organisation concept aiming to interpret, define, conceptually model, and implement the concept to different contexts (i.e., Peter Senge, Marsick and Watkins, and Pedler). The concept of the learning organisation has been studied in several countries, including Korea and China (Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013a), Singapore (Retna & Jones, 2013), The United Kingdom (Shehu & Akintoye, 2010), Lebanon (Dirani, 2013), India (Malik & Garg, 2017), and the United States of America (Egan, Yang & Bartlett, 2004). These research studies have been conducted in several industries, including engineering, construction, learning, healthcare, information technology, and project/programme management in both the private and public sectors (Holt, Love & Li, 2000; Díez et al., 2005; Davis & Daley, 2008). They have found positive correlations between the learning organisation dimensions at different levels and work-related outcomes including organisational commitment, employee retention and performance (Dirani, 2013; Retna & Jones, 2013; Malik & Garg, 2017). In fact, the learning organisation concept is seen to not only help organisations to learn and to respond to their environmental changes, but also to potentially improve the commitment of expatriate employees.

Additionally, the global economic changes have forced organisations to reduce their cost in some areas of the world; for example, the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries. The economy of the GCC countries is heavily dependent on oil and gas productions (Beidas-Strom et al., 2011). However, the prices of oil and gas have dropped below US\$ 50 per barrel over the last decade (Platt, 2017). The low oil crude prices have a significant negative impact on countries' economy as it is the main and, in some cases, the sole source of income (Beidas-Strom et al., 2011). Thus, those ambitious countries seeking to diversify their economy and invest in projects have been forced to cut their funding budgets. The current commitments, for example, World Cup 2022 is hosted by the State of Qatar, are preventing those countries from spotting their investment in infrastructure projects. The governments of the GCC countries have requested the organisations to come up with innovative ideas to reduce their costs and, when possible, mutually fund the projects (Platt, 2017). Therefore, organisations working in these countries had to reduce their costs to accommodate those new strategies and practices, which by turn impacted the workplace.

Organisations in the GCC countries are heavily dependent on expatriates due to the lack of qualified local resources (Naithani & Jha, 2010). The expatriates represent an average of more than two-thirds of the total workforce in the GCC countries marketplaces (Beidas-Strom et al., 2011). However, the work environment in the GCC countries is neither convenient nor prepared for those expatriates (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Hvidt, 2013). The expatriates are facing several social, cultural, and economic challenges while working in the GCC countries. Hence,

organisations in the GCC countries are in crucial need of a mechanism to improve employee levels of commitment by increasing their capabilities to respond to constant changes in the marketplace rapidly.

Additionally, national culture is playing a vital role in the work environment in the GCC countries. Some of these countries have developed a policy to nationalise jobs. The vision, for example, in the United Arab Emirates, is known as Emiratisation, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, known as Saudisation and in the State of Qatar, known as Qatarisation (Al-Dosary & Rahman, 2005; Al-Homsi, 2016). These policies impacted the work environment; for example, the government sector in these countries have inflated the wages, increased paid holidays and end of service benefits, and introduced shorter hours for their local employees (Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014). Priority in senior position was given to nationals regardless of their level of experience or education, making the government sector less attractive to expatriates. Most expatriates experience a culture shock due to language barriers, national culture, and traditions (Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014). Several studies have explored potential solutions to overcome culture shock; for example, Earley and Ang (2003) have argued that cultural intelligence is a potential solution for expatriates to settle in a cross-culture work environment and perform, by turn, increase their commitment to their organisations. Other authors like Harrison and Michailova (2012) have highlighted the need for cross-culture training for expatriates to adjust to a new cultural setting. The training will help increase the expatriates' cultural intelligence by understanding the cultural difference between their home countries and the United Arab Emirates in their case. Hence, cultural intelligence is seen as a potential factor that could help organisations improve their expatriate employees' commitment to the GCC countries.

## **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research explores a mechanism to improve expatriates' organisational affective commitment working within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries. In the GCC countries, multinational organisations are involved in both engineering and construction activities. It is prevalent that organisations are involved in one project and then awarded the construction supervision later. Further to that, the Design and Build (DB) model is commonly used on infrastructure projects in the GCC countries. Organisations are involved in both engineering and construction activities. The two industries are seen as one industry referred to as engineering and construction in most of the GCC countries.

Several studies have presented and discussed the business environment characteristics, challenges, opportunities, and risks encountering expatriates in the GCC countries, including leadership style, lack of qualified local resources, culture shock, skills perception, and labour law issues (Naithani et al., 2010; Beidas-Strom et al., 2011; Al-Malki et al., 2014; Corby, 2014; EIU,

2014; IMF, 2019). However, there is an absence of studies that provide solutions on improving organisations' practices and the business environment. This research is an opportunity to partially fill this gap and provide organisations with guidelines and recommendations on improving their expatriate employees' organisational commitment under the new directions and constraints in the GCC region's marketplaces.

The research has taken the learning organisation model developed by the Fifth Discipline of Peter Senge (1992) and Marsick & Watkins's (2003)'s model of Dimension of Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ) as a theoretical foundation. The research has explored the critical dimensions associated with the workplace environment in the GCC countries, how cultural intelligence influences the relationship between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment, with particular emphasis on engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries. The reason is that the engineering and construction industry is expanding to accommodate these countries leaders' visions (Hvidt, 2013). The engineering and construction industry have the most significant portion of investments given these countries' desert nature and the requirement to host the Expo and the world cup events. The engineering and construction industry is currently worth around US\$ 1.3 Trillion, of which US\$ 935 Billion is in construction, including long-term megaprojects, US\$ 81 Billion in the tender stage, US\$ 211 Billion in engineering, and US\$ 136 Billion in the inception stage (Corby, 2014). Moreover, some countries have come up with what is known as "Visions" (Dixon, 2018). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 has planned to invest more than US\$ 48 Billion in transportation and social infrastructure. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on those policies and visions (Amnesty International, 2020). The pandemic significantly impacts the GCC countries markets. The pandemic, combined with the decline in oil prices, has brought significant uncertainty to organisations in the GCC countries (Ivanov, 2020). Tens of thousands of expatriates have left the GCC countries since the start of this pandemic (Amnesty International, 2020). The research is intended to help those organisations sustain their competitiveness in the GCC countries markets and assist new organisations in their business strategies to penetrate those markets.

Therefore, the following are the specific objectives of this research.

1. Address this gap in the literature around the learning organisation concept in the GCC countries;
2. Identify and verifies the key dimensions of learning organisation associated with the workplace environment in the GCC countries at the individual, group, and organisational levels;
3. Identify the dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels that positively influence expatriate employees' organisational commitment;
4. Identify whether cultural intelligence strengthens the relationship between the learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment.

The research is intended to achieve the above objectives through two consequential stages. The first stage of the research is qualitative to verify the critical dimensions associated with the work environment in the GCC countries. The scope was to provide answers to the first research question. The first stage forms the learning organisation framework that comprises the verified dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels. As an interdependent process, the second stage utilises the learning organisation framework to explore the correlation among the research constructs, including affective organisational commitment and culture intelligence. The research findings have provided answers to the following research questions to address the research's aim:

- 1. Do engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries implement the learning organisation concept? Are there specific learning organisation dimensions associated with the GCC countries?*
- 2. What is the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and the affective organisational commitment in engineering and construction organisation?*
- 3. Do cultural factors influence learning organisation dimensions perception or moderate their correlation with the affective organisational commitment in engineering and construction organisations?*

## RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION

Within the existing literature, there are limited studies conducted to investigate the correlation between the learning organisation and organisational commitment in the developing countries such as Lebanon and Jordan (Abu Khadra & Rawabdeh, 2006; Dirani, 2009; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009). Hence, there is a gap in the existing literature related to learning organisations in the GCC countries. There are no or minimal studies that have explored this concept focusing specially in the GCC region. Several studies have taken place in China and countries in the Far East, such as Korea (Xiaojun & Mingfei, 2008; Joo & Shim, 2010). This research offers a unique opportunity to partially fill this gap, given the region's economic and social importance.

Additionally, this research is significant because the explored cultural factor moderation impact on the relationship between learning organisation and affective organisational commitment attempted to address another literature gap. Several empirical studies within the learning organisation literature have investigated the relationship between learning organisation dimensions and work-related outcomes, including organisational commitment. However, these studies have not taken into consideration the effect of the cultural factor in different context and multi-cultural settings. For example, Shipton, Zhou & Mooi (2013a) have investigated whether a learning organisation's global model can be implemented across countries. They used a sample of 6,000 companies from 15 different countries, including western countries like the United Kingdom and non-western countries like China and Singapore. These companies covered

different industries, including consulting, Information Technology, commercial, railway engineering, energy, and oil production. The study's findings show that there is a significant correlation between learning organisation and development orientation, innovation, sustained competitive advantage, and financial performance in 14 countries. Although, Shipton, Zhou & Mooi (2013a) have studied the impact of learning organisation on innovation and performance of organisations, they did not address the cultural factor influence on the applicability of the model across national boundaries. However, they have argued that the different cultures may be a valid reason of why the western model of learning organisation is not achieving the targeted outcomes in other regions. They have also highlighted that the culture had an influence on the employees' commitment lead to its performance. It shed light on an important relationship between learning organisation and work-related outcomes including employee retention, satisfaction, organisational commitment and performance. The organisational commitment is seen by researchers as less volatile than job satisfaction that might change based on the status of the employee (ALDamoe, Sharif & Hamid, 2013).

However, the majority of the existing research studies within the literature have investigated and studied the correlation between the learning organisation concept and organisational commitment based on existing theories/frameworks such as the Fifth Discipline of Peter Senge (1992) and Peddler (1997) in western contexts. These research studies have used the existing instruments, such as Marsick & Watkins' Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires (DLOQ). These research studies have not attempted to adjust the models to suit the setup and context being studied. Hence, the study's significance is that the critical dimensions of learning organisations associated with the workplace in the GCC countries have been verified. Therefore, the research model is suitable for the GCC countries context considering all its characteristics, including cultural factors.

Furthermore, several research studies have investigated the business environment and challenges encountering expatriates within the GCC countries (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Beidas-Strom et al., 2011; Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014; Corby, 2014). However, there is an absence of studies that provide recommendations on improving the work environment and the expatriate employees' organisation commitment. Hence, the thesis has contributed to partially fill this gap by providing recommendations on improving the expatriate's organisational commitment by applying the learning organisation concept in the GCC countries. Traditionally, organisations in the GCC countries have used financial rewards that have been used to retain and attract qualified and talented expatriates (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Beidas-Strom et al., 2011; Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014; Corby, 2014). In the GCC countries, organisations mainly depend on expatriates to deliver their services due to the lack of qualified and experienced local resources in those countries (Hvidt, 2013). The governments' new direction in the region to cut spending due to a drop in the primary source of income (oil and gas) has forced organisations to

explore an approach to adopt the new practices and changes in the GCC countries marketplaces. Hence, the research contribution to exploring that approach.

The research is expected to potentially improve organisations' practice and to serve as a guide to organisations that are willing to penetrate the GCC countries markets. The research may have a significant impact on both boundaries, academics, and practitioners by addressing the gaps previously detailed and extend the body of knowledge around the learning organisation to cover non-western regions like the GCC countries. It also affects different stakeholders, including the organisations' leaders and employees, by providing a solution about how to improve the workplace environment for better business practice. Engineering and construction organisations, and possibly other organisations, could benefit from the research findings by increasing their competitive advantage through effective learning decisions. To achieve that, the research has answered its questions through two interdependent stages. The first stage has verified the critical dimensions of a learning organisation associated with the work environment in the GCC countries. The second stage explores the relationships between the research constructs being the verified dimensions in the first stage, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence.

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

While reviewing the literature, it was found that some of the terms, including learning organisation, organisational commitment, affective organisational commitment, and culture terms, have various definitions and interpretations. Therefore, the following are the definition of each of the primary constructs to be used for this research:

- **Learning organisation:** “A learning organisation is one that has embedded the capacity to adapt or to respond quickly and in novel while working to remove barriers to learning” (Marsick & Watkins, 2003:136).
- **Organisational commitment:** “a psychological link between the employee and his or her organisation that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organisation” Allen & Meyer (1996:252).
- **Affective organisational commitment:** is the employee's “... identification and involvement with, and emotional attachment to, an organisation and its goals” (Li et al., 2015:1148).
- **Cultural intelligence:** “a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts' and therefore refers to 'a form of situated intelligence where intelligently adaptive behaviours

are culturally bound to the values and beliefs of a given society or culture” (Earley & Ang, 2003: p. 59 cited in Chen et al., 2011).

## SUMMARY AND STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

Globalisation and advances in technology have created an agile and turbulent business environment with continuous changes as the only constant. For organisations to maintain their competitive advantages in marketplaces, they need to learn, transfer their knowledge, and be connected to their environment to accommodate those changes. However, organisations learning is only achieved through its employees. Historically, organisations have been using financial rewards to improve the commitment of their expatriate employees. However, this is not the best approach given the current cost reduction direction, particularly in countries like the GCC countries. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a mechanism that help organisations to retain their expatriate employees as the most valuable asset and, by turn, their competitiveness.

This research aims to explore a mechanism to assist the engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries improve the affective commitment of their expatriates. With the emphasised importance for organisations to learn, the research has built on the existing learning organisation models. However, the research has filled several gaps in the literature, including considering the influence of cultural factors, adjusting the model to suit the context in which it will be implemented, and providing recommendations on improving the workplace practices in the GCC countries to improve the expatriates employees’ commitments. Finally, the primary constructs used for this research were defined. This document comprises eight chapters as follows:

**Chapter One: Introduction and Background** – this chapter has introduced the research purpose and provided a background of the research's problem. The chapter also discusses the research’s significance and contribution and defines the primary constructs used in this research.

**Chapter Two: Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries and organisational context** – this chapter provides an overview of the Gulf Co-operation Council Countries' business environment, characteristics, and associated risks and challenges. The second part of this chapter discusses the organisational context, workforce mock-up, and organisations' challenges.

**Chapter Three: Theoretical development** – this chapter reviews and discusses the existing literature and study areas related to this research. Moreover, this chapter discusses the theoretical development and conceptual framework of this research. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the learning organisation, its evolvement, and existing theories and models within the literature. The second part provides and discusses the existing literature around affective organisational commitment, evolution, and existing theories and models. The third section

provides an overview of cultural intelligence, its relevance to the research, and existing theories and models within the relevant literature. Then the chapter moves to the fourth section discussing the conceptual framework developed for this research. Afterward, the chapter discusses the correlation between the research constructs learning organisation, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence based on the relevant literature studies. The chapter discusses the correlation between the constructs in three separate sections. This chapter also details the research questions and hypotheses in its last section.

**Chapter Four: Methods** – this chapter discusses the research methodology. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the research philosophy, strategy, sampling design, data collection techniques, analysis methods, and ethical considerations. The second part of this chapter discusses this research's qualitative stage, including the qualitative approach, qualitative technique, qualitative sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods for qualitative data. The last part of this chapter discusses this research's quantitative stage, including the quantitative approach, quantitative technique, quantitative sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods for quantitative data.

**Chapter Five: Qualitative findings** – this chapter presents the analysis of the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the data presents the participants' understanding and perception of the learning organisation. Additionally, it presents the dimensions emerged from the workplace practice and the cultural factor influence in the GCC countries. This chapter is mainly structured around the main themes that emerged from the interviews and the data analysis.

**Chapter Six: Quantitative findings** – this chapter discusses and presents the quantitative data findings. The analysis includes demographic statistical analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Cronbach's alphas, Multiple Regression Analysis, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The chapter also discusses the reliability and validity tests of the scales used to collect the quantitative data.

**Chapter Seven: Discussion**– this chapter summary discusses and evaluates the research results and findings. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section of this chapter summaries the research. The second section summaries and discusses the qualitative and quantitative results and findings and is divided into two sub-sections: one to discuss and evaluate the qualitative stage results and findings; the second to discuss and evaluate the quantitative stage results and findings. The third section of this chapter discusses the limitations of the research and the recommendations for future research.

**Chapter Eight: Conclusion, implications, and recommendations** – this chapter concludes the research and discusses the implications of the research findings and results. This chapter is divided

into three main sections. The first section discusses the research implications and conclusion, the second section discusses the research limitation and recommendation for future research, and the third section provides a chapter summary.

## CHAPTER TWO: GULF CO-OPERATION COUNCIL COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

### INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on engineering and construction organisations operating in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries. Therefore, it is essential to provide a closer overview of the region, business environment, organisational set-ups, and expatriates work environments. Hence, this chapter's primary purpose is to provide an overview of the characteristics, challenges, opportunities, risks, and opportunities of the GCC countries business environment. The chapter also informs the client of the challenges encountering expatriates working in those countries and the role of culture and its influence on expatriates and their challenges in the workplace. The second part of this chapter discusses the organisational context, workforce mix-up, and challenges encountering organisations in the GCC countries.

### OVERVIEW OF BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

This research focuses on the GCC countries. The reason is that the high oil & gas have made from these countries economically rich countries. The leaders of these countries have shared strategies and visions to diversify the economy, which is currently heavily, if not solely, dependent on oil and gas productions (Beidas-Strom et al., 2011). The GCC countries are less impacted by and could sustain their stability during the global financial recession in 2008 (The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014). The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) was created in 1981 and comprises six countries: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, the United Arab Emirates. These are illustrated in the Figure 2 below.



Figure 2 – Gulf Co-operation Council countries  
(Adapted from [www.mapsofworld.com](http://www.mapsofworld.com))

The visions and strategies of these countries' leaders, accompanied by high income from oil and gas productions, have created an attractive business environment for investors (The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014). Moreover, the hosting of the FIFA 2022 World Cup by the State of Qatar and the World Expo 2020 by the United Arab Emirates have further increased attention and investments in different industries. The initiated visions or "non-oil economy" included investment in the fields of tourism, infrastructure, real estate, and manufacturing industries (Beidas-Strom et al., 2011; Hvidt, 2013). In addition to that, leaders have put investment plans into action to achieve the intended economic diversity (Dixon, 2018; International Monetary Fund, 2019). The developed plans included investments in 1) infrastructure projects including roads, schools, and hospitals, 2) capital-intensive industries, 3) manufacturing industries, and 4) production sector and services such as agriculture, aviation, and real estate (Dixon, 2018; International Monetary Fund, 2019).

Nevertheless, the engineering and construction industry has the most significant portion of investments given these countries' desert nature and the requirement to host the Expo and the world cup events. In the GCC countries, multinational organisations are involved in both engineering and construction activities. It is prevalent that organisations are involved in one project and then awarded the construction supervision later. The Design and Build (DB) model is commonly used on infrastructure projects in the GCC countries. Organisations are involved in both engineering and construction activities. Therefore, the two industries are seen as one industry referred to as engineering and construction in most of the GCC countries. Organisations operate in both when they have the required resources and skills. According to Corby (2014), the engineering and construction industry in the GCC countries for five-year investment plans worth US\$ 1.3 Trillion, of which US\$ 935 Billion is in construction, including long-term megaprojects, US\$ 81 Billion in the tender stage, US\$ 211 Billion in Design and US\$ 136 Billion in inception stage (Naithani & Jha, 2010).

Additionally, the leaders of the GCC countries have initiated what is known as "Vision." The kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has planned to invest US\$48 Billion in transportation and social infrastructure projects. The social infrastructure investments include power, water, hydrocarbon, road, rail, seaport, and airport sectors. On the other hand, the United Arab Emirates is investing more than US\$300 Billion to diversify its economy. The State of Qatar is also planning to spend more than US\$200 Billion in infrastructure projects in the preparation of hosting the 2022 World Cup. Those infrastructure projects include ports, highway expansion, hotels, and world-class building stadia (Dixon, 2019). Figure 3 illustrates the value and type of project investments included in their five-year plans from 2014 to 2020.

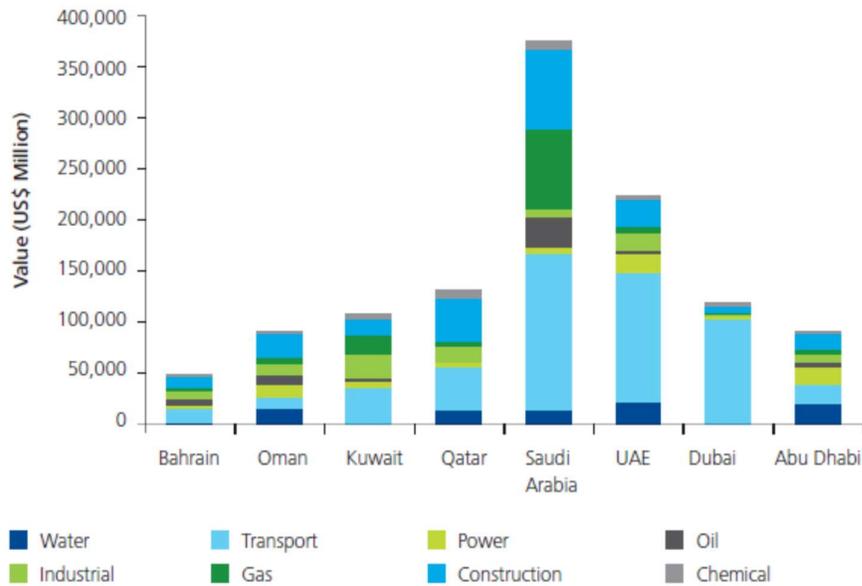


Figure 3 – Value and Types of Projects in the GCC countries from 2014 to 2020  
(Adapted from MEED cited in (Corby, 2014: p.7))

On the other hand, these investments, combined with the existing risks to the region's investors, have impacted the business environment and practices in the GCC countries (The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014). According to several reports like the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Survey (Corby, 2014), inadequate investor protection, and punitive bankruptcy laws are risks to the investors in this region. The dependency on oil and gas as the primary source of income and funding sources for these projects represents another significant risk to businesses in the region. The significant and frequent fluctuation of oil and gas prices in recent years has significantly impacted these countries' economies and funding budgets (Hvidt, 2013; The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014). According to the Kuwait times (2015), the GCC countries has budgeted a revenue based on an average of US\$ 90 per barrel. However, this price has fallen over the last five years to under US\$ 65 per barrel. The drop in the oil and gas prices have resulted in a revenue reduction of approximately 8% of GDP. The revenue reduction has, in turn, a significant negative impact on the budgets of these countries, particularly in the absence of other income sources of income.

Conversely, several other reports have concluded that the business environment in the GCC countries has been improved over the years to overcome some of the discussed risks (Beidas-Strom et al., 2011; Dixon, 2018; IMF 2019). These reports have also concluded that the business environment in the GCC countries is generally attractive to both investors and organisations. However, there are other challenges that organisations operating in this region encounter. The following section discusses the organisational context and workplace challenges.

## ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The business environment in the GCC countries has attracted many organisations in various industries (Hvidt, 2013; The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014). Those organisations are mostly multinational organisations that are expanding their business beyond national boundaries. Those organisations are using their experience in providing similar services taking advantage of the absence of local organisations in the GCC countries markets. On the other hand, the governments of these countries have opened the markets to foreign ownership. However, an organisation's foreign ownership is restricted to a percentage that does not exceed 51% (The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014). Through this restriction, the GCC countries' governments have intended to protect the local interests and presence in the marketplaces.

Ownership restrictions are not the only challenge facing the multinational organisations operating in the GCC countries. According to The Economist and Intelligence Unit (2014), low transparency, corruption, labour protection laws, and nationalisation policies are other challenges in the GCC countries marketplaces. Nevertheless, the significant challenge for organisations in the GCC countries is the lack of qualified local resources (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Hvidt, 2013; The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014) due to the inadequate education systems in these countries, forcing organisations in the private sector to depend on expatriates (Hvidt, 2013). According to the Economist and Intelligence Unit (2014), the public sector in these countries has inflated the wages, increased paid holidays and end of service benefits, and introduced shorter hours for their local employees, particularly for the nationals. The public sector's practices and policies have made the private sector less attractive to those nationals. The high demand for professionals and skilled labour has forced the private sector to depend heavily on expatriates (Naithani & Jha, 2010). The expatriates are professionals and skilled workers from different foreign countries under limited contracts (Naithani & Jha, 2010). Those expatriates are accompanied by their significant others (their spouses and children), which requires social and cultural adjustments (Naithani & Jha, 2010).

The expatriates represent an average of more than two-thirds of the total workforce in the GCC countries marketplaces (Beidas-Strom et al., 2011). For example, the expatriates in the State of Qatar are 1,200,000 out of the 1,277,000, representing 94% of the workforce (De Bel-Air, 2017). The expatriates are facing several social, cultural, and economic challenges while working in the GCC countries. Those challenges include visa regulations, transfer from one employer to another, weak labour laws, labour market liberalisation, and living cost (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Hvidt, 2013). Those challenges created a work environment that is neither convenient nor prepared for the expatriates (Naithani & Jha, 2010). Most expatriates experience a culture shock due to language barriers, national culture, and traditions (Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014). The culture shock challenge has brought attention to the role cultural factors play in this

region's workplace. There is also a challenge for the nationals to learn from expatriates. According to Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell (2014), there is an incorrect perception that the local resources in the GCC countries are motivated by financial rewards, status, and promotion to nationals on account of the expatriates.

The above-discussed challenges, combined with the current turbulent business environment, have shed light on the need for organisations to increase their expatriate employees' organisational commitment to maintaining a talented and skilled workforce. In the past, organisations have been utilising the financial rewards to motivate, retain and attract qualified expatriate workers from different countries (Naithani & Jha, 2010). The paradox is that due to the recent changes in the funding budget strategies in the GCC countries (Kuwait Times, 2015), organisations should reduce the costs transferred to the clients and, at the same time, maintain their market competitiveness. Since talented and skilled employees are considered as the most valuable asset and source of competitive advantage for most organisations (Abu Khadra & Rawabdeh, 2006; Davis & Daley, 2008; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Liao, Chang & Wu, 2010) organisations have to re-evaluate their practices to attract and retain highly qualified employees. According to Sahi & Mahajan (2014), it is not accurate to simplify the retention of talented employees through financial rewards and extrinsic motivations. It becomes necessary for organisations to find a mechanism to increase expatriate employees' commitment and retention. Hence, this research is an excellent opportunity for organisations to improve their expatriate employees' commitment and maintain their competitive advantage in those markets.

There is a growing interest within the literature around learning organisation and its impact on organisations' ability to adapt and to respond to marketplaces changes and challenges quickly (Pedler & Hsu, 2019). The learning organisation concept was explored in contexts other than the GCC countries including Western European countries, North American countries, and countries in the Far East (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Dirani, 2013; Pedler & Hsu, 2019). The concept of learning organisations has been found to have a positive influence on employees' satisfaction, retention, and organisational commitment (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013b). Additionally, the concept was explored to be implemented across boundaries. However, the exploration was not considering to adjust the model to suit the context of where it will be applied (Retna & Jones, 2013; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013a). Thus, such organisational challenges offer an excellent opportunity to explore the applicability of the learning organisation concept in the GCC countries considering the influence of cultural factors.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

To summarise this chapter, the economies of the GCC countries are heavily dependent on oil and gas productions. The fluctuation of oil and gas in international markets has a significant impact on the primary source of income for those countries. Hence, those countries' leaders have developed strategies and policies to diversify their economic sources and transfer them to the “non-oil economy”. To achieve its aim, the GCC countries has invested in various industries, including tourism, infrastructure, real estate, and manufacturing. However, the engineering and construction industry has the largest percentage of the investment. The engineering and construction industry in the GCC countries for five-year investment plans worth US\$ 1.3 Trillion, of which US\$ 935 Billion is in construction, including long-term megaprojects, US\$ 81 Billion in the tender stage, US\$ 211 Billion in Design, and US\$ 136 Billion in the inception stage (Naithani & Jha, 2010). The investment visions and plans in the GCC countries have made the business environment an attractive one, not only to investors but also to multinational organisations.

However, those countries heavily depend on expatriates due to the lack of qualified and skilled local resources. The expatriates represent more than 90% of the workforce in some of the GCC countries. The expatriates are not appropriately accommodated within the GCC countries' business environment. The expatriates are encountering several challenges in the GCC countries marketplaces. Those challenges include low transparency, corruption, labour protection laws, and local policies. By turn, those challenges impact organisations that work on maintain their competitive advantage in the marketplace. This situation has created a crucial need for a mechanism to improve their expatriates' commitment. The high level of commitment would potentially motivate those expatriates to overcome the business environment's challenges. Moreover, organisations need to adapt and respond to the business environment changes quickly. Hence, this research's significance is to explore the learning organisation concept as a potential solution to this problem.

## CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews and discusses the existing literature and study areas related to this research. It discusses the theoretical development and conceptual framework of this research. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the learning organisation, its evolution, and existing theories and models within the literature. The second part provides and discusses the existing literature around affective organisational commitment, evolution, and existing theories and models. The third section provides an overview of cultural intelligence, its relevance to the research, existing theories, and models within the relevant literature. Then the chapter moves to the fourth section discussing the conceptual framework developed. Afterward, the chapter discusses the correlation between the research constructs learning organisation, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence based on the relevant literature studies. The chapter discusses the correlation between the constructs in three separate sections. The chapter also details the research questions and hypotheses in its last section.

The enormous changes in the economic environment resulting from globalisation and advanced technology have forced organisations worldwide to make radical transformations to continuously adapt to the environment changes to survive in the future (Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000). Learning organisation has gained massive attention within Human Resource Development (HRD) literature to help organisations survive in the current turbulent environment (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013b). HRD has investigated the concept of learning organisation and its impact on and correlation with work-related outcomes, including retention, job satisfaction, commitment, and performance. The studies have expanded further to explore the impact of learning organisation on organisations' financial performance. Other studies have provided models on building a learning organisation and for organisations to become a learning organisation. The following sections provide a more detailed overview of this concept.

## LEARNING ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

### Learning Organisation history and definitions

Within the literature of HRD, organisational learning, and learning organisations, terminologies have been used interchangeably (Sense, 2011). Several research studies have distinguished between the two terms; organisational learning was linked to the organisation's organisation process while learning organisation is the organisation practices, culture, focus, and outcomes (Wang & Ahmed, 2003; Dirani, 2009). The learning organisation terminology is used for this research.

The learning organisation concept was evolved on the theory that organisations can learn and transfer knowledge (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Organisations learn through their employees and systems. The learning organisation concept is perceived as an environment structured to encourage learning, teamwork, collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing. The learning organisation as a concept is not a new concept, but one that has evolved due to the current climate change in the economic environment. The learning organisation's idea came to light some 30 years ago (Pedler & Hsu, 2019). In 1990, Peter Senge was the first to discuss the organisation's idea to learn in his book *The Fifth Discipline*. In his book, Senge (1991:13) defined learning organisation as “[a place] where people are continually discovering how they create their reality and how they can change it”.

Furthermore, Senge (1991) has argued that organisations have to change their traditional thinking methods (mental models), learn to be open with others (personal mastery), understand how their organisation works (systems thinking), develop a joint organisational vision (shared vision), and then work together to achieve that vision (team learning). However, other scholars have also defined learning organisation based on their interpretation and perception of the concept. As a result, there are various definitions of the concept in the literature. The aim is to increase the employees' intrinsic motivation and to increase the sense of commitment. By this mechanism, organisations can create an environment that increases commitment to continuous learning. Pedler et al. (1997) have defined a learning organisation as “... an organisation that facilitates learning to all its members, and consciously transforms itself and its context” (1997:3). Following the same approach and perspective of studying learning organisation, Örténblad (2004:132) defined learning organisation as “Learning organisation is an organisation where the four aspects, organisational learning, learning at work, developing a learning climate and creating Learning structure exist/present”. On the other hand, Marsick & Watkins (2003:136) have defined learning organisation as a “learning organisation is one that has embedded the capacity to adapt or to respond quickly and in novel while working to remove barriers to learning”.

### Learning organisation theoretical models

Like various definitions and interpretations of the learning organisation concept, scholars have developed various theoretical models, tools, and scales. Senge (1990) has identified five main disciplines required for an organisation to be a learning organisation. Those disciplines include systems thinking, personal mastery, shared vision, mental model, and team learning. Senge sees these disciplines as a process where organisations aim to expand individual capacities to achieve the desired result (mental models), learn how to communicate and share knowledge (Personal Mastery), understand the process and procedures of the organisation (systems thinking), understand the common goals and objectives (shared vision), and then work with the team to achieve those goals and objectives (team learning). Senge has, however, identified obstacles that cause what he referred to as ‘learning disability.’ These obstacles include the myth of the management team (skilled incompetence), the delusion of learning from experience; I am my position and the illusion of taking charge. However, the concept has found it challenging to be understood due to the inclusion of too many factors (Garvin, 2000). These factors have included behavioural, process, policies, leadership styles, organisational culture, and systems. So, it is not entirely clear for individuals when to perceive their organisations as learning organisations.

The complexity of Senge’s introduction to the learning organisation concept has encouraged other scholars to explore further the concept of learning organisation (Corby, 2014; Örtenblad, 2015). Those scholars have explored the learning organisation concept from different perspectives to define it in a more simplified way. For example, Pedler et al. (1997) have argued that learning organisation combines multiple factors that include process, decision making, tasks, structure, and employees rather than single process and independent factors (Moilanen, 2001). Pedler's (1997) work has been extended beyond defining the learning organisation concept contrary to their predecessors. Pedler’s research has developed a tool to measure the learning organisation. Pedler’s tool comprised in its first stage of nine dimensions and then eleven dimensions in its final version. Those dimensions are: 1) a learning approach to strategy; 2) participative policy making; 3) informing; 4) formative accounting and control; 5) internal exchange; 6) reward flexibility; 7) enabling structures; 8) boundary workers as environmental scanners; 9) inter-company learning; 10) a learning climate; 11) self-development opportunities for all.

Additionally, Pedler’s tool emphasises employees' role in the organisation and not just leading or being the agent of the learning process (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009). Pedler’s tool is a holistic and comprehensive tool of the organisation, including operation, structure, strategy, and processes (systems) (Moilanen, 2001). Pedler’s tool is known as the Learning Company Questionnaires, and per Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009), several British organisations used it. However, the tool was not tested and focused on encouraging learning within the organisation (Moilanen, 2001). The tool was developed based on interviews, workshops and joined workdays

with British companies. However, the tool was not statically tested for its validity and reliability (Moilanen, 2001), representing a significant weakness in the tool.

### **Learning organisation measurement scales**

Pedler's tool has opened a new angle of exploring the learning organisation concept within the literature. Scholars like Sarala & Sarala (1996) and Redding & Catalanello (1997) have explored the learning organisation concept and developed tools to measure it within organisations. The main characteristic of these tools is the identification of whether an organisation is a learning organisation. These tools have not been widely used within the literature due to the absence of testing and comprehensive view. Building on the effort of Sarala & Sarala (1996) and Redding & Catalanello (1997), Moilanen (2001) has developed the Learning Organisation Diamond known as The Diamond. Moilanen's tool, or the Diamond, is characterised by covering both employee and organisation levels. The Diamond covers five main elements of a learning organisation: driving forces, finding purpose, questioning, empowering, and evaluating (Moilanen, 2001).

Nevertheless, Marsick & Watkins (2003) have continued defining the learning organisation concept and exploring a tool to measure it. Marsick & Watkins (2003) see learning organisation as a capability rather than a status or a process organisation implement. They argue that organisations that can acquire information, transfer it into knowledge, and adapt it to respond to environmental changes are learning organisations. Other scholars like Dirani (2007) and Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009) have argued and reached the same conclusion.

In addition to their definition of the learning organisation, Marsick and Watkins (2003) have developed a scale to measure learning organisation perception at multiple levels. Marsick and Watkins's scale, or what is known as the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires (DLOQ), is one of the most popular scales in the business research (Moilanen, 2001; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009). The DLOQ measures the perception of learning organisation at the individual, group, and organisational levels. Moreover, the full version of the DLOQ measures organisational performance (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Marsick & Watkins' (2003) model comprises seven main dimensions: continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry, team learning, embedded system, system connection, empowerment, and provide leadership (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Watkins & Marsick (1993) noted that "to begin to build a learning organization, one must first audit the organization's present capacity to learn and to change" (p. 262) at four levels:

1. Change in individuals' behaviour, knowledge, motivation, and capacity to learn;
2. Change in a group's capacity to innovate and generate new knowledge;
3. Change in organisational capacity for innovation and new knowledge production;
4. Change in the overall capacity of community and society through the quality of work-life and other means.

The model categorises those dimensions based on their relevance over three levels: individual, group, and organisational. The categorisation of the dimensions at each level and their definitions are detailed in Table 1 below.

<i>Level</i>	<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Individual</i>	Create continuous learning opportunities	Learning is designed into work so that people can learn on the job; opportunities are provided for ongoing education and growth.
	Promote inquiry and dialogue	People gain productive reasoning skills to express their views and the capacity to listen and enquire into the views of others; the culture is changed to support questioning, feedback and experimentation.
<i>Team/Group</i>	Encourage collaboration and team learning	Work is designed to use groups to access different modes of thinking; groups are expected to learn together and work together; collaboration is valued by the culture and rewarded.
	Create systems to capture and share learning	Both high and low technology systems to share learning are created and integrated with work; access is provided; systems are maintained.
<i>Organisation</i>	Empower people toward a collective vision	People are involved in setting, owning and implementing a joint vision; responsibility is distributed close to decision-making so that people are motivated to learn toward what they are held accountable to do.
	Connect the organisation to its environment	People are helped to see the effect of their work on the entire enterprise; people scan the environment and use information to adjust work practices; the organisation is linked to its communities.
	Provide strategic leadership for learning	Leaders model, champion, and support learning; leadership uses learning strategically for business results.

Table 1 – Definitions of the Seven Dimensions of learning organisation  
(Source: adapted from Marsick & Watkins, 2003)

Marsick & Watkin’s model is divided into two main categories. The first category is the individual who works within the organisation. The second category is the organisational structure, and culture created institutionally by the organisation. The learning organisation models have highlighted the need for organisations to work at individual and group levels first (Dirani, 2009). The learning occurs at the individual level first, then transfers to groups and teams. For learning to occur at the individual level, the organisation needs to create a culture that allows for continuous learning, opportunities for individuals to learn on the job, and an environment that encourages open questioning and dialogue. Individual learning has to be transferred and shared with teams for learning to occur at a group level. Organisations have to encourage collaboration and teamwork for knowledge transfer between individuals and use systems to capture and share knowledge to facilitate learning in teams and groups. For learning at organisational level,

individuals have to be empowered to set the organisation's vision and goals. Moreover, organisations have to encourage individuals to scan the environment for best practice and potential process improvements. Leadership style is critical for learning to occur at organisational level; strategic leadership that empowers employees and encourages them to learn is required.

Marsick & Watkins (2003) model was used as a theoretical base for several research types and theses in different countries. However, the model was not investigated in the GCC countries context. Additionally, the existing researches have investigated the model as developed in different contexts without verifying the dimensions associated with those contexts. There is an absence of research in developing countries that have studied the cultural factor. This research has aimed to fill this gap in the literature by applying the model in the GCC countries context after verifying the dimensions associated with the GCC countries' work environment.

Moreover, the questionnaires were translated into multiple languages, and it was scientifically tested and validated (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Marsick & O'Neil, 2013). Marsick & Watkins (2003) conducted reliability analyses, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and structural equation modelling to test the construct validity of the dimensions and the overarching theory behind the questionnaires (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). The tool was used as an instrument in several research studies to measure the correlations between the seven dimensions of the learning organisation and the organisation performance; for example, Jamali et al. (2009). The popularity and strength of the DLOQ came from its scientific and empirical testing and validation. Marsick & Watkins (2003) has validated the tool by revising and rewording various items based on the received feedback from more than 200 companies until they achieved an acceptable coefficient alpha (above 0.7). Although the model was validated and internationally used as mentioned in several studies and in different contexts and industries, scholars have reported issues related to multicollinearity and validity (Kim, Egan & Tolson, 2015). Additionally, the model has changed and expanded since its development, and scholars reported several statistical and validity limitations. The statistical limitations include a lack of discriminant validity, single factor extraction, and multicollinearity (Kim, Egan & Tolson, 2015).

Based on the above discussion of some of the learning organisations models in the existing literature, Table 2 displays the areas of agreement and disagreement among the discussed models:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Agreement Areas</b>	<b>Disagreement Areas</b>
<b>Continuous learning at individual level</b>	<p>Employees should continuously learn and be professionally developed to keep up with the work environment requirement and career progression.</p> <p>Jobs should be designed to allow for employees' continuous learning on the job and to learn from mistakes.</p>	<p>The roles and responsibility of individuals and organisations for allocating the resources, time, planning and assessment of continuous learning.</p> <p>The criteria by which learning vs performance is evaluated and the ways employees help and encourage each other for learning.</p>
<b>Knowledge capturing and sharing</b>	<p>That is an essential process and required for organisations to learn.</p> <p>Organisations need to develop and implement systems to capture and share knowledge. Organisations also need to promote a knowledge sharing culture.</p>	<p>About the single-loop or double loop relevance due to difference in the leaders, business environment's factors.</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities in systems for knowledge capturing and sharing. Is it the employees or organisation responsibility to ensure that the system is being used?</p>
<b>Systemic and Critical Thinking</b>	<p>Employees should systematically and critically think about the impact of their decision on the organisation.</p>	<p>About what capacity and organisational level critical thinking is required by employees (workers vs managers vs executives).</p>
<b>People Empowerment and participation</b>	<p>Employees must contribute in work design, decision-making and setting organisations' visions.</p>	<p>About the extent and required contribution for employees at different organisational levels.</p>

Table 2 – Agreement and Disagreement Areas among the learning organisation models  
(Source: adapted from Marsick, 1998)

Table 3 summarises the characteristics of the learning organisation measuring tools discussed in the above paragraphs. The summary includes organisation type of whether an organisation is a learning organisation or not, is the tool Holistic to cover strategic and operation, comprehensive or not and tested or not:

No.	Tool Name	Organisation Type	Holistic	Comprehensive	Tested
1	Sarala & Sarala (1996): Recognising your organisation	Yes	No	Yes	No
2	Pedler et al. (1997): The Learning Company Questionnaires	No	Yes	Yes	No
3	Redding & Catalanello (1997): Learning Organisation Capability Assessment	Yes	Yes	No	No
4	Marsick & Watkins (2003): Dimensions of the Learning Organisation Questionnaires	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Moilanen (2001): The Learning Organisation Diamond	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 3 – Learning organisation Measurement Tools Characteristics

### Recap and used definition

From the above literature discussion around the learning organisation definitions, models, and measurement scales, it can be argued that despite the growing understanding and research of the learning organisation concept within the literature, there is an ambiguity around the concept and its definition (Corby, 2014; Örtenblad, 2015). However, this ambiguity has its benefit by attracting scholars to investigate the concept and its applicability further. As argued by Örtenblad (2004), vague and unclear ideas are more adaptable and a source of creativity than clear ones. The ambiguity and various interpretations of the concept have provided a kind of “tentative road map”, according to Watkins & Golembiewski (1995). Despite the various arguments, there are several common elements between various definitions, including continuous learning, knowledge transfer, empowering, structure, challenging the status quo, mental models, teamwork and learning, shared vision, organisational learning, and improvement of the learning process within the organisation. Therefore, Marsick & Watkins’s (2003) definition and model of the learning organisation is used for this research. Additionally, the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires is used as a scale to measure the learning organisation perception at various levels.

On the other hand, although there is a growing understanding of the learning organisation concept in the Western, Far Eastern, and American contexts (Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013b), this effort was not matched in regions of developing countries, including the GCC countries. The

learning organisation literature is thin regarding developing countries like the GCC countries, Middle Eastern, and North African countries. For example, Dirani (2009), in his doctorate thesis and published papers, has explored the learning organisation concept in the Lebanese banking industry. Dirani (2009) has explored the correlation between the dimensions of learning organisation and work-related outcomes, including job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Dirani's work has illustrated significant relationships and applicability of the concept. As the study was limited to the banking industry, he recommended exploring other industries. Dirani has argued that there are minimal studies in the developing countries on learning organisations, which justified the significance of his study in filling this gap.

Additionally, Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009) have explored learning organisation in the Information Technology (IT) sector in Lebanon. The significance of their research was based on the limitation of studies in developing countries. The developing countries are an attractive business environment. As discussed in previous chapters of this document, the limited research investigating the learning organisation concept in those countries represents a gap in the literature. Hence, this research is an opportunity to partially fill this gap and add to the body of knowledge.

Several other research studies, and doctoral dissertations have explored the relationship between the learning organisation dimensions and other work-related outcomes, including employee retention and organisational financial performance. For example, these studies include, for example, Joo & Shim (2010), Jamali et al. (2009), Weldy & Gillis (2010), and Dirani (2009). Some other studies explored the applicability of the learning organisation model within different contexts and cultures. For example, Retna & Jones (2013) have studied, through a qualitative interpretive study, the implementation and practice of learning organisations in Singapore. Two public organisations were chosen as a sample for data collection using in-depth interviews and observations. The study's findings have shown that there is a kind of tension around the perception of the learning organisation dimensions and the national culture in Singapore. For example, involvement of the employees in the decision-making was wrongly perceived by senior managers. The findings of Retna & Jones research have illustrated that the senior managers in public organisations are uncomfortable empowering employees to be involved in the decision-making. Retna & Jones (2013) argued that the culture of superiority had a role to play in those managers' management style. Although the study addresses a critical viewpoint, which is the influence of Singapore's national culture on learning organisation practices, the findings are limited to two public organisations. Public organisations have different nature and operation models than private or multinational organisations. Retna & Jones's (2013) discussion again brings attention to the idea that cultural factors may influence the learning organisation implementation and practice.

Shipton, Zhou & Mooi (2003) have also explored the learning organisation model's applicability across global contexts. They have collected their data from 6,000 organisations across 15 countries. Their findings showed that learning organisations consistently and positively impact innovation and performance. In some countries, learning organisation has shown a positive impact on financial performance outcomes. The findings of Shipton, Zhou & Mooi have highlighted the importance of different cultures in the perception of learning organisation and its implementation. However, Shipton, Zhou & Mooi's work has not explored the direct impact of culture, which may have impacted their findings. Studies that considered the cultural factor in interpreting their findings, like Retna & Jones (2013), have found a role that culture plays. Therefore, it is seen that there is a gap that needs to be considered when implementing learning organisation models in different contexts other than its origin. Hence the contribution of this research that considers the cultural factor for studying the learning organisation in the GCC countries business environment. The following section explores the various definitions and theories of learning organisations relevant to this research that exist within the literature.

The learning organisation concept focused on HRD for decades, yet the concept is difficult to define and implement. The concept of learning organisation was evolved on the assumption that organisations learn. Organisations do not have brains but have agents (their employees) and systems that can learn and share knowledge. Continuous learning and knowledge sharing will permit organisations to cope with continuous changes in their environment. Learning occurs at the individual level first, then is transferred to the group who share the knowledge for learning to occur at organisational level. A learning organisation is an environment to encourage continuous learning, promote inquiry and innovation, teamwork, collaboration, knowledge capturing, and sharing through implemented systems and leadership style that promotes learning.

### *Learning Organisation and Current Debates*

It is essential to acknowledge that there is a debate within the literature on whether the learning organisation concept is still alive. Literature has investigated the feasibility of the learning organisation concept and whether it is a valid concept applied in the contemporary business environment. Pedler & Burgoyne (2017) have made the case that the learning organisation is still alive. They suggested that the learning organisation is outdated rather than a dead concept. Pedler & Burgoyne's (2017) study was not their first attempt to answer whether the learning organisation idea is still alive. Pedler & Burgoyne have attempted to answer the question in a study in 2016 by collecting the data using a simple non-scientific survey based on their network. However, no answer has emerged. Half of the responders to the survey has seen the concept still alive and excited about the concept. The second half has seen the concept as a background concept that has evolved with the aspiration of the business environment of 20 years ago. A group of the responders has argued that the learning organisation concept is still alive but under a different

name. Nevertheless, the learning organisation is more ambitious and covers more visionary areas than the emerged concepts like Total Quality Management.

Pedler & Burgoyne's (2017) study is considered as a good base for further studies. For example, Vince (2018) has also investigated the learning organisation feasibility. Vince's study's contribution is represented in its way of looking at the debate of whether the learning organisation concept is a positive or a negative ideology. The study has focused on sustaining tensions to generate possibilities. Vince (2018) has argued that it is important to accept whether the learning organisation concept is dead or alive rather than simply answering Pedler & Burgoyne (2017)'s question. He has also argued that the concept cannot be developed only on positive perceptions. Vince (2018) goes a step further and argued that he is against the concept description to be an ideal approach for a positive performance. In other words, he is against the concept description that does not take into consideration the relational and political complexities and contradictions of learning. However, Vince (2018) still sees the leaning organisation as an interesting area of study in case this tension and paradox are considered

Additionally, Driver (2002) has studied the learning organisation from two opposite perspectives. Driver (2002) has based his study on Coopey (1998)'s a critical review of a learning organisation concerning 'Utopian sunshine' and 'Foucauldian gloom' terms. Driver (2002) has argued that the learning organisation concept is essential with two perspectives to its members: learning organisation as a dream and learning organisation as a nightmare. Driver's (2002)'s study has aimed to reach a middle ground, what the study referred to as 'the learning organisation in fluorescent light'. The middle-ground developed by the study has advanced the idea that the learning organisation is not a paradise work environment and, at the same time, not a prison. The fluorescent light sees a learning organisation as a standard organisation operating by exercising control over its employees. However, Drive (2002) has concluded that the learning organisation is an exciting and essential idea that offers lots of value to organisations and is interesting to study in organisations science. Therefore, the learning organisation concept continues to be a debating concept within the literature. Debating a concept make it alive and open to be modified and applied. The above debate has shown that the concept is still an interesting concept that could be applied to various contexts and across boundaries. This research is in the view that the concept is outdated and not dead. The concept is still alive and open for adjustments and exploration in various cultural setup, and potentially correlated to other constructs like organisational commitment and cultural intelligence.

## AFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT OVERVIEW

Besides the crucial need for organisations to learn, organisations need to retain their most important asset – their talented employees (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). In today's challenging business environment, attaching and retaining a skilled, talented employee is a significant challenge facing organisations. Organisational commitment was seen as a motivational factor that has powerful implications on employee's and organisation's performance. Several scholars, including Ketchand & Strawser (2001), have argued that organisations must have committed employees to survive today's business environment. Committed employees are more creative and productive for their organisations (Shafiq, Zia-ur-Rehman & Rashid, 2013). Therefore, research studies have discussed organisational commitment, outcomes, and how to improve it (Brown, 1996; Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). Like other organisational constructs, the organisational commitment was defined and measured in various ways (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Additionally, the concept of organisational commitment in the workplace has been the focused area in Human Resource Management (HRM), operation management, and organisational behaviour (Mendes & Jesus, 2016). Several studies have been conducted to understand the impact of organisational commitment on employees' and organisations performance (Mendes & Jesus, 2016). Organisational commitment is categorised into three main categories: 1) a strong belief in organisations' goals, objectives, and values; 2) employees are attached to organisations by willing to put extra effort on behalf of the organisation; 3) a strong desire to stay within the organisation (Mendes & Jesus, 2016). Generally, organisational commitment refers to the psychological bond between the employees and their organisation (Joo & Shim, 2010). While for Dirani (2009), organisational commitment is one of the critical factors influencing employees' productivity and, by turn, organisation's overall performance.

Allen & Meyer (1996:252) have defined organisational commitment as “a psychological link between the employee and their organisation that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organisation”. For Steers (1977), the commitment is when there is harmony between the employees and the organisation's goals, whereby the employees extend their effort of the general goals on behalf of the organisation. On the one hand, Northcraft & Neale (1996) see organisational commitment as a reflection of the employee's loyalty to the organisation and its interest. On the other hand, Mowday, Porter & Steers (1985) have identified three components of organisational commitment: bonding to organisation goals and values, feeling part of the organisation, and willingness to put in the effort and represent the organisation. Organisational commitment is broader than satisfaction (Shafiq, Zia-ur-Rehman, and Rashid, 2013). Employees might be unsatisfied with one part of the job but still committed to organisation values and goals. Scholars like Becker (1960) have argued that organisational commitment is built by effective communication, learning, and initiatives to increase shared vision involvement. Becker's (1960)

definition of organisational commitment is ‘Commitment comes into being when a person links extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity’ (p. 32). Becker’s theory views organisational commitment as a behavioural approach that assumes that the employees are consistently engaged.

Additionally, Etzione (1961) has proposed an organisational commitment model that views commitment as compliance with its goals and vision. Etzione’s (1961) model discusses the organisations’ power and authority over committed employees. Etzione sees that organisations have more power and authority over employees with high commitment level. Alternatively, Mottaz (1987) sees that financial compensation is the main predictor of employees’ commitment and satisfaction. Mottaz (1987) proposes that rewards increase satisfaction, which, in turn, increases commitment. The significant model argument is that commitment and satisfaction have a reciprocal effect. Furthermore, Ave (1988) argued that committed employees are consistently involved in four behaviours. Those behaviours are high levels of contribution, staying with the organisation for more extended periods to achieve the organisations’ goals and objectives, highly involved in their jobs, and put in considerably high effort on behalf of the organisation.

All the above theories and definitions have intended to interpret organisational commitment and generally have agreed that it is a desirable psychological relationship between the employees and their organisation. However, all the above-discussed theories about organisational commitment are unidimensional. In other words, those theories view organisational commitment as one type. While Allen & Meyer (1990) defined organisational commitment in more than one dimension, as discussed in the following section.

### **Types of Organisational Commitment**

Allen and Meyer (1990) have argued that it is crucial to understand the differences in organisational commitment's various conceptualisation rather than the similarities. These differences include the psychological attachment, the preceding this attachment, its development, and the outcome behaviours from this attachment (commitment). Allen & Meyer (1990) argued that there are different types and approaches of organisational commitment within the literature, including “behavioural” and “attitudinal” (Mowday et al., 1979; Brown, 1996; Beck & Wilson, 2000). The “behavioural” approach is when the employee’s commitment is due to returned benefits such as a pension, accrued annual leave, and financing education programmes. Salancik (Cited in Brown, 1996:231) summarised the “behavioural” approach as “to act is to commit oneself”. Alternatively, the “attitudinal” approach is when the commitment is due to a combination of work experience and belief in the organisation’s goals and values (Brown, 1996; Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). This approach includes affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Mowday et al., 1979; Brown, 1996; Beck & Wilson, 2000; Shafiq et al., 2013).

Figure 4 below summarises the different types of organisational commitment.

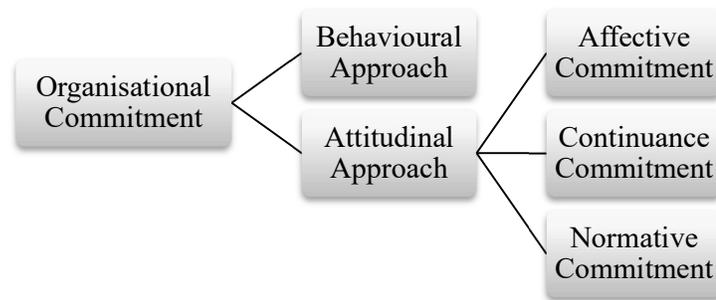


Figure 4 – Organisational Commitment Typology  
(Source: Adapted from Brown, 1996)

According to Allen & Meyer (1990), affective commitment refers to the employee and the organisation's emotional linkage. Contrastingly, Brown (1996) sees affective commitment as the employee's positive and healthy attitude towards the organisation through the commitment to its goals and values. When it is more related to the benefit that the employee will potentially lose in leaving the organisation, it refers to continuous commitment. These benefits may include shares in the organisation, end of service benefit, or accrued over time (Brown, 1996). Becker (1960, cited in Brown, 1996:231) defined continuance commitment as “commitments come into being when a person, by making a side-bet”, links outside interest with a consistent line of activity. Last is the “normative” commitment, which is the employee's engagement due to the sense of obligation to do so (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

Like learning organisation measurement tools, there are different tools to measure organisational commitment (Mowday et al., 1979). For example, Grusky's (1996) scale comprises four dimensions that measure company seniority, identification with company attitudes toward company administrators, and general attitudes toward the company. In comparison, Hrebiniak & Alutto (1972) measure the factors that influence the employee's decision to leave the organisation. Conversely, Wiener & Gechman (1977) measure the employees' own time on work-related activities to identify their organizational commitment level. Additionally, Mowday et al. (1979) have developed a tool comprising 15 multiple-choice questions. The tool is known as Organisational Commitment Questionnaires (OCQ). The employee's OC level is represented by the average of the answers to those 15 questions. The tool is empirically validated and used in several studies investigating the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and organisational commitment. These studies include, for example, Joo & Shim (2010), Jamali et al. (2009), Weldy & Gillis (2010), and Dirani (2009). Therefore, Mowday et al. (1979) have argued that it is a stable and consistent tool. However, there are validity limitations to the model reported by scholars. These limitations include limited predictive validity, conceptual ambiguity of continuance commitment, and concept redundancy between normative and affective commitment

(Mendes & Jesus, 2016). There are also several advantages to the model reported by scholars. These advantages include scales good psychometric properties, acceptable discriminant validity for all three dimensions continuance, normative, and affective. Additionally, current research findings have shown acceptable validity of the three organisational commitment components (Mendes and Jesus, 2016).

The literature around organisational commitment is rich in studies that have focused on affective organisational commitment compared to other organisational commitment (Wei & Lee, 2015). As stated above, affective commitment is the emotional attachment of the employees to their organisations. Affective commitment is the employee's "... identification and involvement with, and emotional attachment to, an organisation and its goals" (Li et al., 2015:1148). In other words, affective organisational commitment is the emotional linkage between the employee and the organisation through the shared values and goals (Shafiq et al., 2013). The emotional attachment occurs when the employee feels that there are shared values and goals with the organisation. Therefore, organisational behaviour, including leadership style, organisational culture, learning culture, and learning organisation, impacts this emotional attachment. For example, Wei & Lee (2015) have studied the moderating effect of leadership on perceived organisational justice and affective commitment in the Chinese context. They have collected data from 10 companies across China. The study has proposed that leadership style positively moderates the correlation between interactional justice and affective commitment. The findings of Wei & Lee (2015) have proven that the employee is more attached to the organisation when feeling treated with fairness. Additionally, the findings are inconsistent with the findings of similar studies conducted in North American countries. The main reason for that inconsistency is the cultural factor in the Chinese context. The research illustrates the impact of organisational behaviour on affective commitment and has proven the crucial role of culture in different contexts.

Moreover, Conway & Briner (2012) have conducted a study in the United Kingdom's public sector to explore the relationship between organisational commitment and employees' and organisations' performance. Their sample included 893 service employees across 39 offices in the United Kingdom. Their research findings illustrated a significant influence of organisational commitment on employees' and organisations' performance. Thus, organisational commitment is considered for this research over other factors, including job satisfaction and retention.

Organisational commitment is an essential factor that influences employees' productivity and an essential organisational performance predictor (Meyer & Allen 1997). As proposed by Meyer & Allen (cited in Mercurio, 2015), affective organisational commitment is an essence of organisational commitment. Several factors impact affective several organisational practices that influence affective organisational commitment. Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are one of those factors. Human Resource Management practices include selection and hiring,

rewards and compensations, training and development, performance appraisals, and human resource planning (ALDamoe, Sharif and Hamid, 2013). ALDamoe et al. (2013) have explored the causal relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and organisational performance using affective organisational commitment and employee retention as mediators. The findings of this study have illustrated that Human Resource Management Practices significantly influence affective organisational commitment and, in turn, organisational performance. ALDamoe et al. (2013) have proposed that well-defined goals and objectives accompanied by the organisational climate that promote development and training and well defined and measured performance increase employee's affective organisational commitment.

Additionally, organisational culture is another factor that influences affective organisational commitment (Lee et al., 2016). Affective organisational commitment is the employee's psychological contract with an organisation correlated to an organisational culture that reflects its values. For example, scholars like Ruiz-Palomino, Martínez-Cañas, & Fontrodona (2013) have found that ethical culture, as part of organisational culture, influences affective organisational commitment (Lee et al., 2016). However, other studies have found no relation between organisational culture and affective organisational commitment, for example, Lok & Crawford (2001 cited in Lee et al., 2016). Lee et al. (2016) are significant contributions because the study first argued that organisational culture is the leading cause of affective organisational commitment due to its effect on factors such as psychological contract fulfilment. Second, the study has explored why and how organisational culture effects employee's affective commitment. Additionally, the study has explored the boundaries under which the effect can be strengthened or weakened. Lee et al.'s (2016) study has found that the employees' affective organisational commitment level is high when they work in flexible organisation cultures that are also adaptable to environmental changes.

## CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE OVERVIEW

### Cultural intelligence history and definitions

Globalisation and advanced technology have promoted the idea that business has no boundaries (Ang et al., 2007). This idea has encouraged organisations to operate and to have branches internationally out of their home countries borders. For example, it is common to have American and British companies operate in Middle Eastern, Far Eastern, and European countries. These companies fill the gap of qualified resources, experiences, and expertise required to accomplish these countries' ambitious economic development goals. Moreover, there is an exchange of resources between Asian countries like Singapore, the Philippines, and India. According to Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011), Taiwan has opened its manufacturing and construction marketplaces to foreign workers to fill the labour shortage gap. Those multinational organisations' resources are composed of local resources and expatriates from various other countries, which has created

a work environment characterised by its cultural diversity (Ang et al., 2007). The workforce's diversity has been accompanied by diverse socio-demographic factors such as religion, race, and nationality. Additionally, expatriates may suffer what is known as culture shock per Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011) when working out of their host countries. Culture shock's definition is "... is regarded as a transitional experience and a mechanism to cross-culture effectiveness either in a work setting or a non-work environment in the host country" (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011:247).

Additionally, Expatriates in the GCC countries experience the culture shock due to local language, national culture, traditions, labour laws, and expatriates (Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014). These factors have created a challenging work environment for expatriates, negatively impacting their ability to adjust to the new work environment setting. As such, the performance and commitment of those expatriates have been negatively impacted. Mumford (1998) has developed a set of questionnaires to measure culture shock. The questionnaires are comprised of 12 items questionnaires composed based on a sample of British volunteers working in a multicultural workplace environment overseas. Mumford (1998) has argued that employees frequently suffer some degree of emotional disturbance when they find themselves working in a new cultural setup. The emotional disturbance or culture shock has a negative influence on employees' performance.

Mumford (1998) also referred to Bock's (1970) work, which argued that the culture shock occurs when employees cannot understand, control, or predict others' behaviours. Expatriates in the GCC countries come from various countries and cultural backgrounds, which create a heterogeneous environment in the workplace. As previously discussed, the work environment in the GCC countries is not prepared to accommodate expatriates or to deal with workplace challenges. Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011) have argued that 16-70% of the expatriates' assignments fail due to the culture shock. Additionally, expatriates in the GCC countries encounter workplace challenges that include low transparency, poor labour protection laws, and localisation policies (The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014).

However, the described complexity in the workplace environment has encouraged scholars to explore a solution that helps improve the situation. Dozens of scholars and studies have explored the relationship between the culture shock and the expatriates' performance and adoption (Black, 1990; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Harrison, 1994; Hisam, 1997; Mumford, 1998; Oberg, 1960; Winkelman, 1994 cited in Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). Those studies have indicated that the root cause is the adoption of expatriates in the new cultural settings. Therefore, the main driver for those scholars was finding a factor that influences the expatriates' ability to adjust in a new cultural context to perform. The organisations' performance and competitiveness depend on those expatriates' performance (Huff, Song & Gresch, 2014).

### Cultural intelligence theories and models

In response to this demand, and as a result of these efforts, Earley & Ang (2003) have introduced the cultural Intelligence construct. Earley & Ang (2003) have developed the concept of cultural intelligence based on the contemporary theories of intelligence (Ang et al., 2007). Earley & Ang (2003) work was an extension of Sternberg's (1986) integrative framework that proposed different intelligence levels within the individual. Sternberg's framework focused on knowledge acquisition, transformation, processing, and implementation. Cultural Intelligence is used to explain the variance in employee's effectiveness and productivity across cultures and new cultural settings (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). In other words, cultural Intelligence is seen as a predictor of employee adjustment and performance in new cultural settings (Huff, Song & Gresch, 2014). Cultural intelligence is a multi-dimensional construct that makes it a problematic term to be used. It is a personal capacity rather than to be learned. Cultural intelligence is a behavioural construct similar to leadership and emotional intelligence. Scholars attempted to explore cultural intelligence have primarily focused on theorising the concept (Ang et al., 2007). For example, Ng & Earley (2006) have explored the distinctions between cultural intelligence, culture-free construct, and the view of culture-bound and emic intelligence. While Earley & Peterson (2004) have developed a systematic approach for cultural intelligence training that links employee's weaknesses and strengths to the cultural interventions, Triandis (2006) has discussed the theoretical relationship between cultural intelligence capabilities and forming accurate judgments (Ang et al., 2007). On the other hand, Brislin et al. (2006) have explored cultural intelligence as a critical predictor of dealing with the unexpected during intercultural interactions. Janssens & Brett (2006) have developed a team collaboration model for making cultural intelligence creative team decisions (Ang et al., 2007).

Earley and Ang (2003:59 cited in Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011) has defined the cultural intelligence as “a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts, and, therefore, refers to a form of situated intelligence where intelligently adaptive behaviours are culturally bound to the values and beliefs of a given society or culture”. They have argued that cultural intelligence is split into four dimensions: cognitive cultural intelligence, meta-cognitive cultural intelligence, motivational cultural intelligence, and behavioural cultural intelligence. Cognitive cultural intelligence is about individual awareness of economic, legal, and social aspects of different cultures, which can be gained from personal and professional experiences. Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011) have argued that employees with high cognitive cultural intelligence are better adaptable in new cultural settings by understanding new experiences. Meta-cognitive cultural intelligence is the individual's mental ability to understand the assumptions of different cultures. They also argued that individuals with high meta-cognitive cultural intelligence have the capability of adapting their mental models considering the cultural assumptions.

Meanwhile, motivational cultural intelligence is about the individual intrinsic interest to work and accomplish tasks in cross-cultural settings. Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011) have argued that individuals with high motivational cultural intelligence can gain more attention to achieve their objectives and perform better in a multicultural work environment. Behavioural cultural intelligence is about individual awareness of different cultures' verbal and non-verbal symbols and actions. Individuals with high behavioural cultural intelligence are better accepted by the other group and can build better and stronger interrelationships (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). To measure these dimensions, Ang et al. (2007) have developed a scale of 20 items that incorporated the four dimensions: cognitive, meta-cognitive, motivational, and behavioural cultural intelligence. The combined scales' reliability test has shown Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.94, and the dimensions individually have shown a range from 0.83 to 0.92 (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). The scale was also used in several studies, including Abdul Malek & Budhwar (2013). They have investigated the correlation between cultural intelligence and expatriates' performance while on an overseas assignment. The study has investigated 134 expatriates working for multinational organisations in Malaysia. The findings showed that cultural intelligence has an impact on the expatriates' adjustment and performance.

Nevertheless, the literature on cross-cultural adjustment is still light, and further studies are required to investigate other factors that may influence the multi-cultural adjustment. The scholars have expanded their studies from investigating other factors to study the correlation between cultural intelligence and its outcomes and related constructs (Ang et al., 2007; Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). Scholars like Huff, Song & Gresch (2014) have explored whether cultural intelligence accounts for expatriates' variance adjustments in multi-cultural environments beyond what is accounted for in the five-factor personality model. The personality factors include neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and intellect/imagination. They have argued that personality traits are correlated to expatriates' outcomes. So, the expatriates' personality traits in multi-cultural environments are significantly correlated to their performance. The study was conducted with expatriates in Japan. Data have been collected from 154 expatriates working in Japan. The findings of Huff, Song & Gresch (2014) have indicated that motivational cultural intelligence or the individual intrinsic interest to accomplish tasks in multi-cultural environments explains the variance in expatriate general interaction and work adjustment over and above the five-factor model of personality. In other words, the greater an individual's motivational cultural intelligence, the more tremendous effort and more energy the individual will put in to adapt to a multi-cultural environment. In turn, the likelihood that individuals will be successful in their assignment increases.

Alternatively, Abdul Malek & Budhwar (2013) have studied cultural intelligence construct from a different perspective than Huff, Song & Gresch (2014). They have explored the cultural intelligence as a predictor of cultural adjustment and, therefore, performance. Abdul

Malek & Budhwar (2013) have considered the cultural intelligence model put forward by Earley & Ang (2003) as a theoretical basis. Abdul Malek & Budhwar (2013) have measured the four dimensions of the cultural intelligence (cognitive cultural intelligence, meta-cognitive cultural intelligence, motivational cultural intelligence, and behavioural cultural intelligence) using the Cultural Intelligence scale developed by Earley & Ang (2003). The data have been collected in Malaysia from expatriates working overseas with their organisations. Their findings have illustrated a significant correlation between cultural intelligence and general adjustment in a new multi-cultural context. The findings have also illustrated that the adjustment caused by the cultural intelligence has a significant positive impact on performance. Although there are other efforts from Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011), the literature around the cultural intelligence concept is limited. Ang et al. (2007) and Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011) have argued that there are limited studies that focused on exploring solutions as to how expatriates can adapt to perform in new cultural settings. Hence, this research is an opportunity to contribute to this vital body of knowledge area.

Based on the above, it can be argued that cultural intelligence is a necessary construct that could help overcome the culture shock issue encountered by expatriates, particularly in the GCC countries. Cultural intelligence could potentially help expatriates adjust to culturally diverse workplaces, increasing their productivity and, potentially, their commitment. Expatriates with a high level of cultural intelligence can adjust to the GCC countries culture setup. Those expatriates can understand the legal and social aspects of the GCC countries culture, which preventing them from the culture shock. Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011) have found that expatriates from the Philippines could adjust to Taiwan's culture and avoid any culture shock due to their cultural intelligence. In summary, it could be argued that when expatriates in the GCC countries understand cultural differences in the workplace, they are more adapted to accept them. This adaptation, by turn, has a positive influence on their productivity and performance.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the above evaluation, it could be argued that there are gaps within the literature around these concepts, their definitions, and how the models were implemented in different contexts and different countries. The literature is often focused on western contexts of studying learning organisation impacts on work-related outcomes. The western context sees learning organisations as visionary ideals resulting from various factors, including personal mastery, learning behaviour, empowering, and team learning (Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013a). Scholars like Abu Khadra & Rawabdeh (2006), Dirani (2009), and Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009) have not considered cultural factors when studying the learning organisation model in other non-western countries. The findings of several studies like Retna & Jones (2013) have illustrated the critical role culture plays in Singapore's workplace. Research studies have implemented the models without exploring

new dimensions associated with contexts the research studied. For example, Dirani (2009) has explored the correlation among learning organisation, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction in the Lebanese banking sector. Dirani (2009) has based his research on the Dimension of Learning Organisation Questionnaires developed by Marsick & Watkins (2003). Although they have translated the questionnaires to accommodate Lebanon's local language, they have not explored dimensions associated with the culture or work environment in Lebanon.

The following conceptual framework shown in Figure 5 has been developed to achieve the research aims and objectives. The framework is theoretically based on the learning organisation model developed by the Fifth Discipline of Peter Senge (1992) and Marsick & Watkins' (2003) model of Dimension of Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ). The conceptual framework diagram shows two stages of the research. In its first stage, the research has initially used the seven learning organisation dimensions identified by Marsick & Watkins (2003) at the individual, team, and organisational levels. By considering the cultural factors associated with the GCC countries context, have been verified. The verified dimensions formed the primary input to the second stage of the research. The correlation among those verified dimensions and affective organisational commitment has been investigated in the second stage of the research. Additionally, the moderating role of cultural intelligence is also explored in this second stage of the research. The conceptual framework shown in Figure 5 is visually presenting the two stage of the research: stage 1 – Qualitative and Stage 2 – Quantitative. As presented, stage 1 – qualitative verifies the dimensions of learning organisation at individual, group and organisational levels. The dimensions verification considers the impact of the cultural factor in the GCC countries. The verified dimensions are the main input to stage 2 – quantitative. The quantitate stage investigated the relationship among the dimensions of learning organisation, affective organisational commitment and cultural intelligence. Additionally, the quantitative stage explores the moderator role of cultural intelligence on the correlation between the dimensions of learning organisation at individual, group and organisational levels and affective organisational commitment.

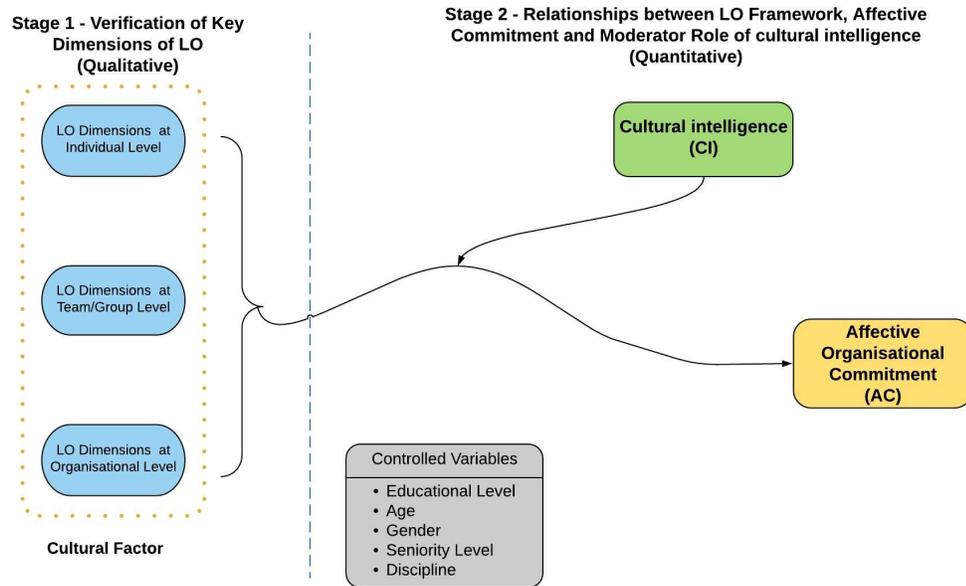


Figure 5 – Conceptual Framework

There are three primary constructs (variables) presented in the conceptual framework, including learning organisation dimensions, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. The role of each of the constructs is detailed hereunder:

**Learning organisation construct (independent variable):** critical insights from the above review show different interpretations of the concept, which has led to the generation of various definitions and models (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009). Despite the subject's diverse nature, Marsick and Watkins (2003) learning organisation definition has been used for this research. Marsick & Watkins (2003:136) have defined learning organisation as “a learning organisation that has embedded the capacity to adapt or respond quickly and, in a novel, while working to remove barriers to learning”. Marsick and Watkins’s definition of the learning organisation is aligned with this research's purpose, which aims to potentially help organisations adapt and respond to their constant environmental changes. The learning organisation serves as the dependent variable for this research. The reason is that the research aims to explore the impact of the learning organisation dimensions on work-related outcomes, including affective organisational commitment (Abu Khadra & Rawabdeh, 2006; Xiaojun & Mingfei, 2008; Dirani, 2009; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Joo & Shim, 2010).

**Affective organisational commitment construct (dependent variable):** Several studies within the literature have found positive correlations between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment. Affective organisational commitment has been selected

over the other work-related outcomes like job satisfaction as it is less volatile (Mowday et al., 1979; Brown, 1996; Beck and Wilson, 2000). Additionally, affective organisational commitment has been selected over the other types of commitment (continuance and normative) as it is associated with sharing the same values and goals as the organisation. The research sees affective organisational commitment as the employee's "... identification and involvement with, and emotional attachment to, an organisation and its goals" (Li et al., 2015:1148). Regarding the research variables, affective organisational commitment serves as a dependent variable. The research has explored how learning organisation dimensions impact the expatriates' affective organisational commitment in the GCC countries.

**Cultural intelligence construct (moderator variable):** The western context sees learning organisations as visionary ideals resulted from a combination of factors including personal mastery, learning behaviour, empowering, and team learning (Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013a). Moreover, scholars like Abu Khadra & Rawabdeh (2006), Dirani (2009), and Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009) have not considered cultural factors when studying learning organisation models in other non-western countries. The findings of several studies like Retna & Jones (2013) have illustrated the critical role culture plays in Singapore's workplace. Furthermore, research studies have implemented the models without verifying or validating the research studied contexts' key dimensions. Dirani (2009) has explored the correlation among learning organisation, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction in the Lebanese banking sector. Dirani (2009) has based his research on the Dimension of Learning Organisation Questionnaires developed by Marsick & Watkins (2003). Although they have translated the questionnaires to accommodate Lebanon's local language, they have not verified or validated the critical dimensions of Lebanese culture and the work environment. Therefore, the research has selected the cultural intelligence concept as a potential mechanism to overcome the expatriates' culture shock in the GCC countries. Cultural intelligence enhances the expatriates' capability to adapt and perform in the GCC countries cultural setting. The research defines the cultural intelligence as 'a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts' and therefore refers to "a form of situated intelligence where intelligently adaptive behaviours are culturally bound to the values and beliefs of a given society or culture" (Earley & Ang, 2003:59 cited in Chen et al., 2011). The research has seen cultural intelligence as a moderator variable to the relationships between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

As the above subsections detailed and presented on the conceptual framework, the second stage of the research has studied the correlation between the constructs. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been developed for this purpose. The following subsections discuss the assumed correlation between the constructs using the existing literature as a guide.

### Learning organisation and affective organisational commitment

The existing literature is rich of studies that have investigated the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and work-related outcomes like employees' performance, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, and work engagement (Abu Khadra & Rawabdeh, 2006; Xiaojun & Mingfei, 2008; Dirani, 2009; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Joo & Shim, 2010). Numerous studies like Lau et al. (2017) have found a strong correlation between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment in Malaysia. The data were collected from 22 private organisations representing three economic industries – services, manufacturing, and agriculture. The response rate was 64.5%, with 516 responses out of 800 distributed questionnaires. The study's findings have illustrated a strong positive correlation between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment. Moreover, Lau et al. (2017) have found that empowerment and respect for people are the most influential learning organisation dimensions on affective organisational commitment.

According to Shafiq, Zia-ur-Rehman & Rashid (2013), affective organisational commitment is the emotional linkage between the employee and the organisation through the shared values and goals. Therefore, the employees' perception of the learning organisation dimensions at different levels impact their level of affective organisational commitment. In other words, affective commitment increases when employees share the organisation's same values and goals, which lets them feel part of the organisation and more of a “bond” to it.

Additionally, there is a school of thought that employees are more productive and committed when they are mainly intrinsically motivated through the complexity of the tasks, learning opportunity, and job satisfaction, not by awards and compensation (Amabile & Kramer, 2007; Joo & Lim, 2009). There is also another school of thought that compensation and rewards are the most influential factors in employees' commitment and productivity (Naithani & Jha, 2010). The author views that to improve the employees' productivity and affective organisational commitment, it is a combination of both factors. The employees are primarily motivated by task complexity, job learning experience, and organisational learning culture, which increases their affective organisational commitment. Additionally, as a characteristic of the learning organisation, knowledge sharing is also needed to develop skills and competencies for an organisation to stay competitive (Birasnav, 2014; Li et al., 2015) and an essential dimension of successful implementation of the learning organisation concept. According to Li et al. (2015), affective organisational commitment is positively correlated to knowledge sharing. The more intrinsically motivated and committed to the organisation, the more the employee is willing to share knowledge and experience with the team (Örtenblad, 2004b).

Other studies, like Dirani (2009), have conducted his research in the Lebanon banking sector. The research has taken the Dimension of Learning Organisation Questionnaires (DLOQ)

model as a theoretical basis. Dirani (2009) has investigated the correlation among learning organisation dimensions, employee job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. The research was quantitative research that used survey questionnaires as data collection methods. The sample was formed of five Lebanese national banks. The response rate was 32% of the responses received from 298 out of 922 participants. The research findings have illustrated a strong positive correlation between learning organisation dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels and organisational commitment. The results of Dirani's (2009)'s research showed that employees are more committed to an organisation where leaders support learning. Employees are also more committed when they are involved in developing, owning, and implementing the organisation's vision and goals. Moreover, connecting to communities, collaboration among teams, and involvement in decision-making processes improve employees' commitment. On the other hand, employees were not as committed to ongoing learning ideas and teamwork to share knowledge.

Similarly, Atak & Ertugut (2010) have studied the correlation between learning organisation and organisational commitment. The research was conducted in Turkey on a business registered in the Aegean Region Chamber of Industry. Their research findings have indicated that organisational commitment is an essential element for an organisation to become a learning organisation. Atak & Ertugut (2010) have argued that for an organisation to become a learning one, it is crucial to keep a low turnover rate by improving the employees' organisational commitment. When employees are committed, they will feel secure sharing knowledge, supporting the learning culture, is committed to the organisation's vision and goals, and connecting the organisation to its environment. More interestingly, Atak & Ertugut's (2010) findings have indicated that affective and continuous commitment is positively influencing learning organisation dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels, while normative commitment has no influence. Without a doubt, the research findings are useful for organisations that aim to become a learning organisation to survive in today's challenging business environment. However, it could be argued that employees should be motivated in order to help their organisations. This type of commitment might be expected from executive members of an organisation or a family-owned business. From this research perspective, it makes more sense to study the correlation between learning organisation impact and employees' commitments. Based on the above review of the empirical studies within the literature that explored the correlation between the learning organisation dimensions and organisational commitment, the hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are composed for this research.

*H1. Affective organisational commitment is positively impacted by learning organisation dimensions at individual level.*

*H2. Affective organisational commitment is positively impacted by learning organisation dimensions at team/group level.*

*H3. Affective organisational commitment is positively impacted by learning organisation dimensions at organisational level.*

### Moderator role of Culture Intelligence

Groysberg, Lee, Price, and Cheng (2018) have defined Culture as ‘...the tacit social order of an organisation: It shapes attitudes and behaviours wide-ranging and durable ways. Cultural norms define what is encouraged, discouraged, accepted, or rejected within a group. When properly aligned with personal values, drives, and needs, culture can unleash tremendous amounts of energy toward a shared purpose and foster an organisation’s capacity to thrive’. Based on this definition, it could be argued that when organisation culture is aligned with employees’ values, drives, and needs, the employees are more energetic and committed to the organisation’s goals and vision.

Additionally, several research types within the literature have illustrated the influence that the Culture has on organisation’s performance and employees' work-related outcomes (Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014). For example, the findings of Retna & Jones' (2013) study have illustrated that the employees’ perception of learning organisation dimensions in Singapore was affected by the local culture and impacted their commitment. Retna & Jones (2013) have conducted their research in two public organisations in Singapore. They have tested the employees’ perception of the learning organisation concept. The findings have indicated that the local culture in Singapore impacts the perception of the learning organisation concept. The research participants did not well perceive open dialogue and inquiry. The findings have illustrated that open dialogue and inquiry are seen as treating bosses and subordinates on equal ground. Also, Singapore's local culture sees learning as voluntary, and time cannot be permitted for learning and skills improvement. Superiority is a central element in Singapore management, so the boss always has the final say and expects all others to follow. Therefore, it could be argued that the Culture is playing a key role in the workplace and business environment.

On the other hand, Joo & Lim (2009) see organisational commitment as a psychological bond between the employee and the organisation. Joo & Lim (2009) have argued that employees are more productive when they are intrinsically motivated, not only by rewards. This argument is on the basis that intrinsic motivation covers personal and contextual characterises. They have assumed that motivational orientation is partially affected by the work environment but stable at the same time. It could be argued that this assumption is not valid in all cases, particularly in the case of the GCC countries, where the cultural factor plays a key role in the business and work environments. Joo & Lim’s (2009) hypothetical model comprises two out of eight hypotheses to investigate the correlation between organisational learning culture as a dimension/factor of the learning organisation, job complexity, and the moderate impact of proactive personality and organisational. Jim & Lim specifically focused on affective organisational commitment. A sample of 500 Korean multinational fortune organisations from different industries was used to collect data through a survey with a response rate of 57%. The findings indicate that an employee is psychologically more attached to the organisation that provides continuous and team learning.

Their findings show 0.95 as median reliability compared to 0.85 in other similar studies (Allen & Meyer, 1996 cited in Joo & Lim, 2009).

Additionally, Shafiq, Zia-ur-Rehman & Rashid (2013) have investigated the impact of learning culture on employees' organisational. The research has argued that there is a positive impact of training and development as part of the learning organisation concept on all types of employees' organisational commitment. The data were collected using self-answered questionnaires. The data analysis has shown that the correlation coefficient shows that training and development are directly correlated to organisational commitment ( $r=+0.64$ ). In contrast, the findings have indicated that the compensation's impact scored less than training and development with a correlation coefficient of  $+0.597$ .

Furthermore, Shafiq, Zia-ur-Rehman & Rashid (2013) have argued that the reason behind their findings is that employees see training and development as an investment to gain more skills that potentially help them with career progression and potential promotions. Moreover, there is a debate within the literature on the applicability of the learning organisation concept across different national boundaries, including the GCC countries (Buck & Watson, 2002; Dirani, 2013; Retna & Jones, 2013; Watkins & Dirani, 2013). The above discussion emphasises the importance of cultural factor impact on the perception and applicability of the learning organisation concept in some countries, including the GCC countries.

Based on the above, it could be argued that cultural factors impact both learning organisation perception and employees' commitment and performance. Scholars like Earley & Ang have developed what is known as cultural intelligence to help organisations to deal with cultural challenges in their workplace. Early & Ang (2003) has defined the cultural intelligence as "a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts and, therefore, refers to a form of situated intelligence where intelligently adaptive behaviours are culturally bound to the values and beliefs of a given society or culture" (Earley & Ang, 2003: p. 59 cited in Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). Several research studies have argued that expatriate employees with high cultural intelligence can adapt and perform in different cultural settings. It is, by turn, impacting those expatriates' commitment, which also impacts their organisations. The main objective of an organisation to hire an expatriate or to send an employee on an international assignment is to maintain the organisation's operations and/or implement the headquarters' policies and strategies across overseas branches (Abul Malek & Budhwar, 2013).

Based on the above review and discussion of the empirical studies within the literature on cultural intelligence, and its impact on both organisations and employees, Hypotheses H1a, H2a, and H3a are composed as follows:

*H1a. The relationship between learning organisation dimensions at the individual level and affective commitment will be stronger among people with higher cultural intelligence.*

*H2a. The relationship between learning organisation dimensions at the group level and affective commitment will be stronger among people with higher cultural intelligence.*

*H3a. The relationship between learning organisation dimensions at the organisational level and affective commitment will be stronger among people with higher cultural intelligence.*

Figure 6 visually presents the hypotheses developed and proposed for this research

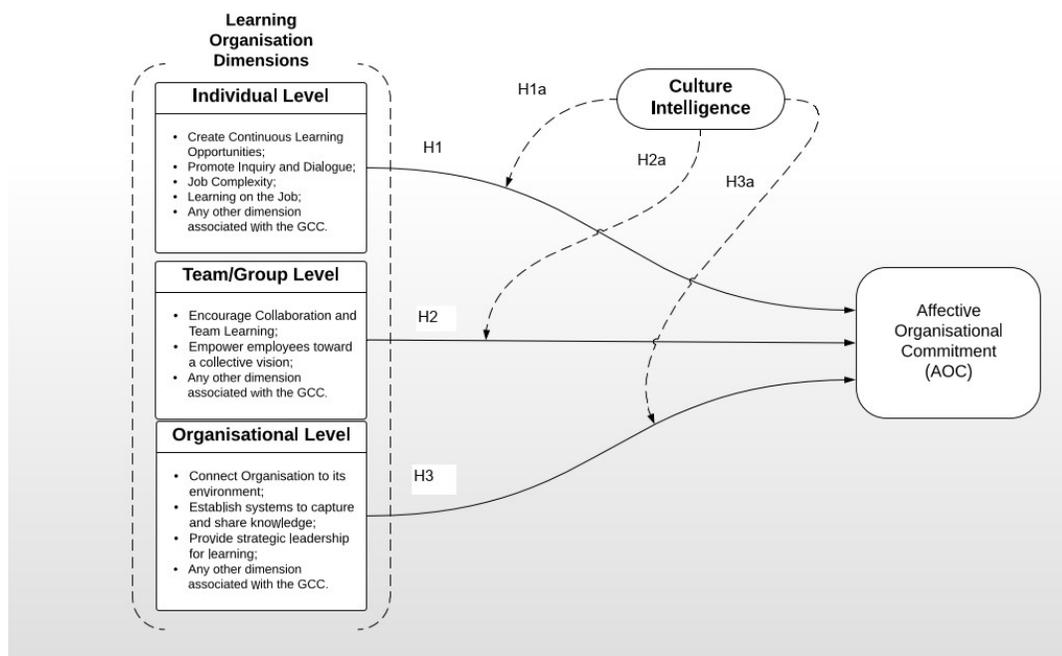


Figure 6 – Hypothetical Model

## CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methodology. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the research philosophy, strategy, sampling design, data collection techniques, analysis methods, and ethical considerations. The second part of this chapter discusses this research's qualitative stage, including the qualitative approach, qualitative technique, qualitative sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods for qualitative data. In contrast, the last part of this chapter discusses this research's quantitative stage, including the quantitative approach, quantitative technique, quantitative sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods for quantitative data. Figure 7, below, provides a summary of the Research Philosophy and Strategy.

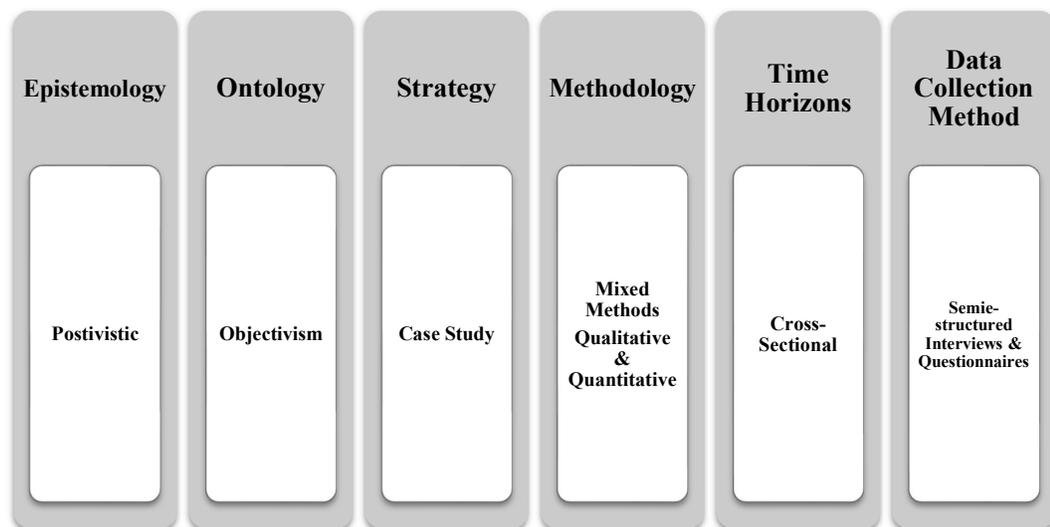


Figure 7 – Summary of Research Philosophy and Strategy

### RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND STRATEGY

As discussed in the previous chapter, this research explores a model to improve expatriates' organisational affective commitment working within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries. For the research to achieve its aim, the research has adopted a positivistic epistemology by adopting various research methodological approaches at different stages. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), positivistic epistemology provides additional knowledge to generate hypotheses that can be tested to generate further knowledge. The positivistic epistemology is in the view that the role of the research is to test theories through hypotheses in order to provide additional knowledge (Silverman, 2017). The positivistic epistemology is also highlighting the view that the role of theory is the generation of hypotheses that can be tested, and that knowledge can only be generated through the collection of facts (Fisher, 2010; Silverman, 2017).

This research investigates the social relationship between the organisation and the expatriates. However, the research is taking into consideration the influence of the cultural factor to provide more significant meaning of the practice in the GCC countries. Hence, it can be argued that this research is positioned within the research is positioned within the positivistic epistemology. It seeks to investigate the psychological relationship between the employee and the organisation. This relationship depends on the implementation of the LO dimensions by the organisation. The organisation is seen as a tangible object that implement the LO principles and also in the relationship with the expatriates. The research has taken the dimensions of learning organisations developed by Marsick & Watkins (2003) as bases to develop the hypotheses discussed in the previous chapter. Those hypotheses have been tested to investigate the correlations among the research variables. The research has applied the natural science methods' systematic character to study social science being the engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries (Gray, 2004; Fisher, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Each stage of the research addresses one of the research questions to achieve the research's overall aim. The first stage of the research has intended to verify and validate the key dimensions of learning organisation relevant to the work environment in the GCC countries with the consideration of the cultural factors. The second stage of the research has intended to investigate the correlation among the research constructs learning organisation framework at the individual, group, and organisational levels, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence.

Additionally, the research's ontology is more objective by considering the learning organisation concept and culture as tangible objects with existence and influence on employees' commitment. The ontology of the research cannot be seen as constructivism. One of the constructivism ontology's main characteristics is that the social phenomena are in constant development due to the social actors (Fisher, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is not the case of this research as the data collection is a cross-section to reflect the employees' commitment at a point in time. Although the dimensions of the social phenomena being the learning organisation concept are implanted within organisations through the action of the social actors being the employees and the management of those organisations, this research sees the organisation as an independent object that learns and adjusts to its environmental changes.

The research is divided into two interdependent stages. The first stage is intended to verify and validate the key dimensions in the GCC countries (Objective 1). Hence, the research inclines to be inductive at this stage, particularly when considering the cultural factor role. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), inductive research analyses data and emerged themes for theory generation. In other words, the inductive stance is more of an exploratory approach to data analysis and generation of theory or model. The second stage of the research has intended to explore the relationship among the verified dimensions, organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence (Objectives 2 & 3), hence the empirical deductive stance of this stage of the research.

The second stage of the research depends on the first stage's output being the learning organisation's verified dimensions. Bryman & Bell (2011) concluded that the deductive research is the one which is based on an existing theory/model and use this theory/model to test hypothesis or findings.

Bryman & Bell (2011) have also argued that the epistemology and ontology relationship impacts the research strategy and data collection methods. Therefore, a mixed research methodology is seen as appropriate for this research. The mixed qualitative and quantitative method has been adopted to achieve the objectives of this research. The mixed-methods approach provides a complementary process as one method overcomes the limitations of the other method (Gray, 2004; Fisher, 2010). The mixed-method has evolved from the continuous debate between qualitative and quantitative approaches within the literature (Terrell, 2012). Several studies within the literature have implemented mixed research methods in various ways, including concurrent and sequential designs (Driscoll et al., 2007). The research is divided into two interconnected stages: qualitative – stage 1 and quantitative – stage 2. The quantitative stage depends on the output of the qualitative stage. In other words, the quantitative stage would only start when the qualitative stage is complete. It is a kind of finish to start relationship. The qualitative stage forms the learning organisation dimensions that will be investigated in the quantitative stage. Hence, this research has implemented a sequential design.

In other words, each of the research strategies/methods was appropriate for one stage of the research. Qualitative research was adopted to the first stage of this research, where the understanding of the learning organisation concept perception was required to verify the key dimensions associated with the work environment. Additionally, understanding the role of cultural factors in the business context and its influencing roles is mandatory to achieve this research's objectives and provide answers to the research questions. Hence, the qualitative research was appropriate for this stage of the research, given its characteristics are concerned more with words than numbers to better understand the social world's reality through talk and interactions. Therefore, the qualitative research strategy will provide the required level of interaction and talking with participants to understand the impact of the culture on their perception of the Learning Organisation. The first stage of the research has adopted a qualitative research strategy to answer the first research question. According to Silverman (2017), the qualitative research strategy is appropriate for inductive/exploratory research types. By definition, qualitative research is implied in business research when quantitative data are not collected or generated (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Seeking to understand people and interaction in natural settings is another characteristic of qualitative research. Furthermore, the epistemological position at this stage focuses on understanding the social world by examining its participants. Several studies within the existing literature explored the learning organisation concept were qualitative research or have

adopted qualitative strategy at some stage of the study (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Retna & Jones, 2013; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013b).

The exploratory nature of this stage requires an understanding of the business environment in the GCC countries and the impact of cultural factors. The interaction with the participants, being the senior management of organisations, is absolute to achieve this goal. The intended understanding will only be achieved through words and not numbers. The participants need to describe their perception of learning organisation in their organisations and the impact of culture on these dimensions, hence adopting the qualitative research method at this stage of the research. There are several methods to collect qualitative data, including focus groups, interviews, observation, and secondary data. To dive into the understanding of the business environment and the perception of learning organisation there is a need to interact with the participants. The interaction with the participants is needed to be in the form of in-depth discussion to collect data related to their understanding of the learning organisation concept and how it may impact the workplace's organisational commitment. Therefore, a semi-structured interview is seen to accommodate these requirements.

The quantitative method was adopted in the second stage of the research; the reason is that the second stage is focused on hypotheses testing to explore the correlations between the constructs of the research. Several empirical deductive studies within the literature, including Dirani (2009), have conducted a quantitative study to investigate the correlations between the learning organisation dimensions, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction within Lebanon's banking sector. Bryman & Bell (2011) have illustrated that the quantitative research methods are more appropriate to test hypotheses in deductive research. The second stage of this research has adopted a quantitative research strategy. This stage aims to provide answers to the second and third research questions. Thus, this stage's positivistic stance has investigated the relationship among the learning organisation dimensions, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. The relationships between variables are investigated through hypotheses testing, which aligns with the quantitative research strategy. Several studies within the kinds of literature which have studied the relationships between the learning organisation dimensions and work-related outcomes, like job satisfaction and commitments, have adopted quantitative research (Jamali et al., 2013; Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011; Díez, Soler, Sureda, & Visauta, 2005; Jamali et al., 2009; Shipton, Zhou, & Mooi, 2013b). These studies have used a variety of quantitative research methods for data collection.

Concerning the data collection time horizon, the data collection is cross-sectional and not longitudinal. In other words, the data are collected to present a specific point of time (cross-sectional) to measure the employees' commitment and not over some time (longitudinal). Moreover, data are collected using semi-structured interviews and self-administrated

questionnaires. These data collection methods are explained in more detail in the next sections of this chapter.

## RESEARCH SAMPLING DESIGN

As stated in the previous section of this chapter, the research has adopted mixed qualitative and quantitative methods. Each method was adopted to achieve one stage of the research objectives and provide answers to the research questions. The research focuses on multinational engineering and construction organisations that operate in the GCC countries. Therefore, this research population comprises the full-time and part-time expatriates working within those organisations in the GCC countries. Scherbaum & Shockley (2015) have detailed two main types of sampling design: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), probability sampling has more advantages over non-probability sampling due to its ability to provide more accurate statistics representing the population parameters. However, the non-probability sampling's significant advantage is the ease of use and that it does not require pre-defined sampling. Scherbaum & Shockley (2015) have explained that both academic and applied research adopt non-probability sampling methods.

On the other hand, there is a debate within the literature about whether the findings of non-probability sampling can be generalised or not. Bryman & Bell (2010) have argued that findings for non-probability sampling cannot be generalised. In comparison, Scherbaum & Shockley (2015) have argued that new technology has enabled the popularisation of the findings. The following sub-sections provide more details on each research method's sampling design for the two stages of this research.

### Qualitative Sample

For the qualitative research method, the participants needed to be aware of their organisations' strategies, culture, and policies. They should be expatriates, so they know the workplace's environment in the region. It was seen that interviewing senior managers within those organisations will provide the required in-depth analysis to verify the key learning organisation dimensions associated with the GCC countries. The sample involved seven participants (executive managers) in understanding current perceptions of the learning organisation concept and the role that culture plays in influencing these perceptions. It was essential to select senior management participants from different disciplines, including human resources, business management, technical, and operations. Moreover, the senior management is expatriate employees working in the region and leading their organisations' regional branches in multiple GCC countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, the State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain. The participants are coming from different backgrounds and nationalities as details in Table 4 below.

Additionally, the diversity of disciplines in the sample provides more insight and understanding of the organisation's perception of learning organisation from different angles. For example, policymakers, like human resources and executives, will have a different perception than technical or operational management personnel. Human resources perceive the concept from a more theoretical or policy perspective, while technical and operations perceive it from a more practical angle. This type of sampling is known as a non-probability technique based on purposeful sampling. According to Palinkas et al. (2013), this type of sampling involves selecting a specific group of individuals due to their knowledge and experience in the research area and their availability and convenience to participate. The author has been working with the industry for more than 17 years. He has some connections with the engineering and construction company's executive in the GCC countries. The author has reached out to some of those connections to recruit them to participate in the research. The above criteria have been considered in the sample selection.

The author has reached out to 15 potential participants. However, only 7 participants could participate in the research. The participants are expatriates working for various organisations in the GCC countries. The participants work as members of the leadership team of their organisations leading their organisations' regional branches in multiple GCC countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, the State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain. The participants have an excessive professional experience gained through working in the engineering and construction industry for 22 to 27 years. The participants are from the executive and senior management positions in the field of engineering and construction, business management, human resources, and program management. Moreover, the senior management is expatriate employees working in the region. It was imperative to select senior management participants from different disciplines, including human resources, business management, technical, and operations. The interviews were conducted during the month of July 2017, with an average duration of 25 minutes.

Table 4 details the demographic analysis of the participated sample in the semi-structured interviews. The names and positions of the participants were concealed in compliance with the granted ethical approval. The below table shows the job field and organisational level instead of the participants' specific name and position to ensure anonymity.

Participant	Job Field	Organisational Level	Nationality	Date of Interview
P1	Transportation and Railways	Executive Management	American	13 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
P2	Programme Management	Senior Management	Egyptian	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
P3	Programme Management	Senior Management	Canadian	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
P4	Human Resources	Executive Management	British	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
P5	Business Management	Executive Management	British	27 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
P6	Engineering	Senior Management	British	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
P7	Human Resources	Executive Management	South Africa	25 <sup>th</sup> July 2017

Table 4 – Qualitative Sample Details

### Quantitative Sample

For the quantitative research method, the research has employed a non-probability technique based on convenience sampling. This technique was adopted due to its ease of use and that it does not require a predefined sampling frame (Scherbaum & Shockley, 2015). The non-probability technique is commonly used within the literature for similar studies and academic theses (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Retna & Jones, 2013; Scherbaum & Shockley, 2015). The research sample comprises all hierarchical levels within the firms. The sample includes expatriate employees from all disciplines within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries, including administration, engineering, professionals, team leaders, middle managers, and senior managers. The average number of expatriate employees working within those organisations range from 50 to 500. The author has connections within the industry and with expatriate employees working within those organisations. The list of contacts comprised 790 expatriate employees that formed the research sample population. Bryman & Bell (2011) have argued that the bigger the sample size, the more accurate and precise the results and findings. Invitational emails were sent to 790 expatriate employees to participate in the survey. Responses were received from more than 100 participants out of 790. The 100 received responses were valid. The response rate and analysis are discussed in detail in the following chapter of this document.

### DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Semi-structured interviews have been adopted as a data collection method for the qualitative stage of the research. One of the main advantages of the semi-structured interview method is that it provides a level of flexibility to introduce new questions for a deeper understanding of the area of study. Moreover, the interviewing technique is the most widely employed data collection method within a qualitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For example, Retna & Jones (2013) have used a similar research methodology in their qualitative interpretive study of the

impact of national culture in Singapore on the perception of learning organisation dimensions in public organisations. The verification of the key dimensions of learning organisation with the consideration of cultural factors is the objective of this research stage. Furthermore, the interpretive/exploratory nature of this stage of the research required an understanding of the participants' perception of the learning organisation concept within their organisations and the influencing role that culture plays in the business context in the GCC countries.

As discussed in the previous section of this document, semi-structured interviews allow the required level of interaction with the participants to understand the impact of the culture and verify those dimensions. The open-ended interview questions are designed to assess each learning organisation's dimension and the influence that culture may have on them. The questions have given the participants the opportunity to provide their perceptions of the dimensions and their validity in the GCC countries context. The interview questions have been initially drafted to explore the participants' perception of the learning organisation dimensions identified by Marsick & Watkins (2003) at individual, group, and organisational levels. The questions have been designed to gauge the participants' understanding of the learning organisation concept, how they perceived it as a management approach, and whether they see it as an approach to increase employees' commitments. For each of the dimensions, the questions also explored whether it is considered a key dimension in the work environment in the GCC countries and the cultural factor role.

The participants were also asked if the dimensions are associated with the work environment business context in the GCC countries, and whether those dimensions impact the organisational commitment if implemented considering the role of culture in this region. The interview questions are detailed in Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions. The interview questions have emerged from the need to understand better how senior management of engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries understand the learning organisation concept and implement it in their organisations.

The first set of questions were drafted and sent to three selected professionals working in the field of engineering and construction. Those professionals were requested to provide their feedback on the draft questions to ensure that the final set of questions will be understandable to the interviewees and allow the collection of the aimed data. The professionals were given five days to provide their feedback. The feedback received proposed to change a couple of terms and to include a diagram to summarise the learning organisation dimensions. Some of the comments were incorporated to form the final set of questions. A "dummy" interview was then conducted with a professional who was not part of the first three who provided the first draft feedback. The purpose of the "dummy" interview was to validate the finalised questions and to identify any other potential questions that may emerge.

As the research stages are interdependent, the mixed research methods were therefore implemented in a sequential design. In other words, the data collection was conducted first for the qualitative data collection that was required to determine the dimensions of the learning organisation associated with the business context in the GCC countries. Then the quantitative data collection was conducted with an aim to explore the relationships among the verified dimensions, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. The data collection has been conducted in accordance with the regulations and ethical governance established at Nottingham Trent University. After approval from the Professional Doctorates Research Ethics Committee (PDREC), the university collected the data collection. In accordance with the granted ethical approval, confidentiality, and anonymity, have been considered to avoid any harm to any of the research participants, including individuals and organisations. Collected data were stored in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998). The author has started with the initial contact with potential participants to express their interest in being interviewed. In compliance with the granted ethical approval, the participants were contacted by e-mail to explain the study's purpose, contact details, estimated duration of the interview, and how the data will be treated and stored. Positive responses were received from seven participants who expressed their interest in being interviewed and participating in the research. In advance of the interview, the list of initial questions along with the consent form and participant information sheet were sent to the participants. At the beginning of each interview, the purpose of the research was again explained, the permission of recording the interview was obtained, and the participant was requested to sign a consent form included in Appendix C: Consent Form. The first stage's output being the verified dimensions of learning organisations formed the primary input to the second stage of the research.

The second stage of this research has adopted a quantitative research strategy. This stage aims to provide answers to the second and third research questions. Thus, this stage's positivistic stance has investigated the relationship between learning organisation dimensions, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. The relationships between variables are investigated through hypotheses testing, which is very well aligned with the quantitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Several studies within the literature that have studied the relationships between learning organisation dimensions and work-related outcomes, like job satisfaction and commitments, have adopted quantitative research (Jamali et al., 2013; Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011; Díez, Soler, Sureda, & Visauta, 2005; Jamali et al., 2009; Shipton, Zhou, & Mooi, 2013b). These studies have used a variety of quantitative research methods for data collection. The quantitative research methods included structured interviews, self-completion questionnaires, structured observations, and secondary data analysis. Each of the research methods has its advantages and disadvantages, making it appropriate for different research designs. Although there are several analytical surveys for quantitative data collection, the Self-Administrated Web-based Survey Questionnaires method is selected for this research. The reason behind this selection is that the Self-Administrated Web-based Survey Questionnaires

is cheaper to design and administer, more convenient for participants who can complete it from anywhere and anytime, and more comfortable to design and administer using online websites (Gray, 2004; Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, it is essential to acknowledge its weakness, which includes the difficulty of controlling who responds and the response rate due to the availability during the time of the research and authority to reply (Gray, 2004). Although more honest responses may be obtained through face-to-face interviews, this technique reduces the bias due to the absence of direct interaction or influence on the participants.

This research has utilised three instruments to measure this stage's three primary constructs: learning organisation dimensions, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. The three instruments utilised to achieve its objectives are Dimension of Learning Organisation Questionnaires developed by Marsick & Watkins (1998) to measure learning organisation, the affective commitment measurement scales developed by Meyer & Allen (1997) to measure affective organisational commitment; and cultural intelligence scales developed by Ang et al. (2007) to measure cultural intelligence.

The survey instrument used for data collection has been divided into four sections: demographic data, learning organisation, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. The survey has been administrated by Qualtrics XM: a web-based survey administration software tool. All the constructs are measured by multi-scale items based on the instruments mentioned above based on a perception and self-reporting type of survey. The survey questionnaires are detailed in Appendix B: Quantitative Survey. Although instruments like Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires were translated from English to different languages, including Arabic (Dirani, 2009), Korean and Chinese (Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013a), this research has employed the scales in their original English version. It is to maintain the scales' validity and reliability previously measured in the literature, as described below. The survey sections are described in more detail under the following headings of this chapter.

Due to the survey questionnaires' limitations, it was difficult to ask the participants questions to clarify or understand any of the questions. It may lead to provide an answer that will negatively impact the results. It was essential to be assured that the survey questionnaires are clear and understandable to participants and mainly that the scales discussed in the previous sections were used in their original forms and terms to do not impact their validity and reliability. Therefore, the draft survey was distributed to a selected sample composed of five professionals in the industry. Those professionals were selected based on their professional experience and knowledge to provide feedback on the draft survey. Per Bryman & Bell (2011), this process is referred to as the "Pilot Test" (Gray, 2004; Fisher, 2010). The pilot test participants were given five days to provide their feedback on the draft survey. The received feedback resulted in refining some of the demographic questions like the range of ages and adding the question related to the

current organisation's title. The purpose of this question was to reconfirm the previous question about the seniority level within the current organisation.

The survey started with a participant information sheet, contact details, and consent form. On the participation information sheet, the purpose and objectives of the research were clarified, and the participants were reminded that the participation is entirely voluntary, the data will be securely protected, and that the findings will be anonymous. Moreover, the participants were given the right to withdraw from the research with no risk or discomfort.

### **Demographic and Work-related Items**

The first section of the survey comprises of demographic and work-related questions. These items are multiple-choice questions intended to collect and measure demographics and work-related data, including gender, primary responsibility, role in the current organisation, job title, hours spent on work-related learning, and years of service with the current employer. This section's questions were designed after an extensive review of the literature for a similar study type. However, the culture in the GCC countries was considered in order to come up with the final set of questions. Several studies argued that culture has to be considered in applying models in different settings, including regions and countries (Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013a).

### **Learning Organisation Instrument**

The research has employed the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires developed by Marsick & Watkins (1998). The scale comprises 43 items that are intended to measure the responders' perceptions of the learning organisation dimensions in their respective organisations and whether a learning culture environment exists at the individual, team, and organisational levels. The scale measures seven dimensions being Individual level: 1) create continuous learning opportunities and promote inquiry, 2) dialogue; Team level: 3) encourage collaboration and team learning, 4) establish systems to capture and share learning; Organisational level: 5) empower people toward a collective vision, 6) connect the organisation to its environment 7) provide strategic leadership for learning at the organisational level.

The responses were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale from (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly Disagree. According to Marsick & Watkins (2003), reliability and validity is an ongoing process. However, the major strength of this tool is that it was scientifically and empirically tested. The tool was used as an instrument in several research studies in multiple countries to measure the correlations between the seven dimensions of learning organisation and work-related outcomes, including job satisfaction, commitment, and originations performance (Moilanen, 2001; Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004; Sahi & Mahajan, 2014; Shipton et al., 2013b; Dirani, 2009; Jamali et al., 2009). The scale was translated from English into several languages, including Chinese, Korean, Arabic,

Dutch, and Spanish (Watkins & Dirani, 2013). Moreover, several studies have been conducted in different countries, including Singapore (Retna & Jones, 2013), the United States of America (Watkins & O’Neil, 2013), Lebanon (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009), India (Malik and Garg, 2017) and among other countries to establish the reliability and validity of the scales. Additionally, Marsick & Watkins (1998) validated the tool by revising and rewording various items based on the feedback received from more than 200 companies until they achieved an acceptable coefficient alpha (above 0.7).

It is worth stating that the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires were selected over other learning organisation models, including Peter Senge’s Fifth Discipline of learning organisation due for several reasons. The instrument was extensively validated and tested in the literature (Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010; Lau et al., 2017). Additionally, the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires has a survey instrument associated with it (Marsick, 2013). The instrument was used in a considerable number of studies, research papers, and academic theses within several countries (Moilanen, 2001; Dirani, 2009; Retna & Jones, 2013; Shipton et al., 2013b; Sahi & Mahajan, 2014).

#### **Organisational Commitment Instrument**

The research employed the three-component model developed by Meyer & Allen (1997) to measure the respondents’ commitment level to their respective organisations. The model argues that the employee experiences commitment through three simultaneous mindsets that include normative, continuous, and affective commitment (Jaros, 2007). According to Meyer et al. (2002), the three-component model predominant organisational commitment research. The scale has taken the Organisational Commitment Questionnaires developed by Mowday et al. (1979) as a base. The three-component scale not only measures Continuance, Affective and Normative commitment, it is also shorter than the Organisational Commitment Questionnaires. Meyer and Allen’s (1996) three-component scales comprise three “sets” of questionnaires. The three “sets” measure the three types of organisational commitments identified by them: Normative, Affective, and Continuance. According to Meyer & Allen (1990), the affective commitment sets have the advantage over the Organisational Commitment Questionnaires (OCQ) that it is shorter thanks to the OCQ, and it only measures the affective orientation without exploring the employee’s behaviour or behavioural intentions. Hence, it can be used to test hypotheses and overcome the concern of overlap in the relationships in the content of commitment and behaviour.

Several studies have been used to measure the Organisational Commitment Questionnaires within organisations and investigate its relationship with turnover behaviour and employee retention. For example, Sahi & Mahajan (2014) have investigated the correlation between the employees’ organisational commitment and actual turnover behaviour within Indian telecom organisations. The affective commitment subscale was employed in this research. The

respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale on the level of their agreement with each of the items ranging from (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly Disagree. Allen and Meyer (1996) argued that each subscale's internal consistencies range from .79 to .82. The continuance subscale ranges from .69 to .79; the normative commitment subscale ranges from .74 to .83. the reliability of the subscales ranged from .60 for continuous commitment to .67 for affective commitment and .65 for normative commitment. Additionally, the scale was used in several studies within the literature and different countries (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014; Li et al., 2015; Lau et al., 2017).

### **Cultural Intelligence Instrument**

The cultural intelligence scale developed by Ang et al. (2007) is employed by the research to measure the respondents' awareness of different cultures and their adoption to the work environment in different settings. According to Ang et al. (2007), cultural intelligence comprises four dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural. Cultural intelligence comprises three intercultural outcomes: cultural judgment and decision-making, cultural adaptation, and task performance in culturally diverse settings. The scale is composed of 20 items that cover the four dimensions. All items are rated using Likert scale ranges from strongly agree to disagree strongly. The higher the score, the higher a person can adapt to a new culture, understand the local practices, and behave appropriately and effectively in other cultural settings. The scale is scientifically tested with Cronbach's alpha reliability of the cultural intelligence is 0.94, and the four dimensions of cultural intelligence in the present study ranged from 0.83 to 0.92 (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011).

Additionally, the scale was used in several studies to measure the correlation between cultural intelligence and performance, for example, Chen & Sawangpattanakul (2011). Another example is Abdul Malek & Budhwar (2013), who used the scale to measure cultural intelligence as a predictor of expatriate adjustment and performance in Malaysia. The cultural intelligence scale formed the fourth section of the survey with a total of eighteen questions to be answered using a five-point Likert-type scale from (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Disagree and (5) Strongly Disagree. The survey questionnaires ended with one open-ended question that allows the participant to provide any comments or information that is beneficial or will help achieve the aim of the research. The contents of the final survey are summarised in Table 5:

Part	Contents	Research identifier	Variable Type	Number of items
<b>Part 1 – Demographic</b>	Demographic questionnaires (1-6)	Gender (Item 1)	Nominal	1
		Primary Responsibility (Item 2)	Nominal	1
		Role (Item 3)	Nominal	1
		Job title (Item 4)	Text	1
		How many hours spent on work-related learning? (Item 5)	Nominal	1
		Length of service (Item 6)	Text	1
<b>Part 2 – Learning organisation</b>	Create continuous learning opportunities	LO Ind.	Interval	7
	Promote inquiry and dialogue	LO Ind.	Interval	6
	Encourage collaboration and team learning	LO Grp.	Interval	6
	Create systems to capture and share learning	LO Grp.	Interval	6
	Empower people toward a collective vision	LO Org	Interval	6
	Connect the organisation to its environment	LO Org	Interval	6
	Provide strategic leadership for learning	LO Org	Interval	6
	<b>Sum of Learning Organisation Dimensions at Individual, Group and Organisational Levels (items 1-43)</b>	<b>LO</b>	<b>Interval</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Part 3 - Organisational Commitment</b>	Organisational Commitment (items 1- 6)	AOC	Interval	6
<b>Part 4 – Cultural Intelligence</b>	Metacognitive (items 1- 4)	CI	Interval	4
	Cognitive (items 5 – 11)	CI	Interval	4
	Motivational (items 12 – 17)	CI	Interval	5
	Behavioural (Items 18 – 23)	CI	Interval	5
	<b>Total Culture Intelligence</b>	<b>CI</b>	<b>Interval</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Open ended Questions</b>	Additional Comments		Text	1
<b>Total</b>				<b>62</b>

Table 5 – Contents of the final survey

The beginning of July 2018 was selected to distribute the survey, and the survey was open for the entirety of July 2018. This month was selected as it is the start of the school holidays in the GCC countries, and families usually go back to their home country for the summer. Moreover, due to some religious practices, the working hours were reduced to six hours. All these factors are seen to free up some of the participants' time to take the survey to increase the response rate. The software was configured to send weekly reminders to non-responders. The following section of this chapter discusses the data analysis and results. Figure 8 summarises the different survey administration steps, data collection, and analysis discussed in this chapter.

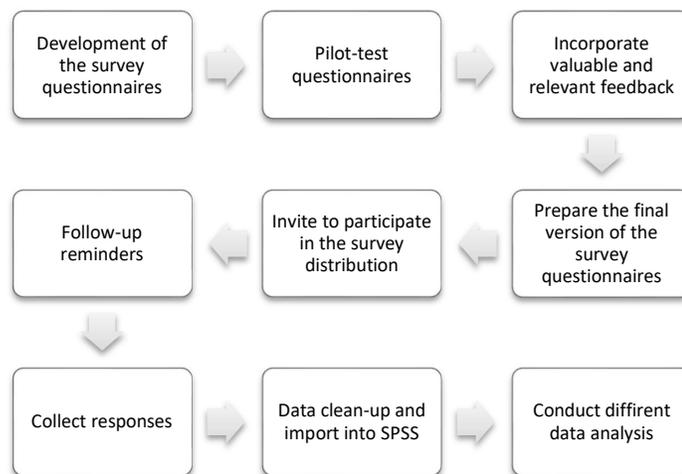


Figure 8 – Data Collection Procedures

## DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

In this research, the focus is to provide answers to the research questions and hypotheses by analysing the collected quantitative and qualitative data. There are multiple analytical techniques, tools, and methods for both qualitative and quantitative data. However, the research philosophy, design, and type of variables impact the analysis techniques selection (Bryman & Bell, 2010). The qualitative data collected is primarily analysed through the thematic analysis technique. Thematic analysis is a common and popular technique to analyse qualitative data in many fields and is widely used in the literature (Wu et al., 2016). The thematic analysis identifies patterns in datasets and clusters them into themes or common areas.

The seven conducted interviews were recorded and then transcribed into electronic files. The research has considered the dimensions of learning organisations developed by Marsick & Watkins (2003) as initial themes for the analysis. As previously stated, the interview questions are designed to assess each dimension of the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires and the impact of the culture on them. The seven dimensions included creating continuous learning opportunities, promoting inquiry and dialogue, encouraging collaboration

and team learning, empowering people toward a collective vision, connecting organisation to its environment, and establishing systems to capture and share learning and provide leadership for learning. The data are coded to the initially identified themes using NVivo for Mac. The data analysis output at this stage is the primary input in the next quantitative stage of the research. The learning organisation dimensions that are verified and determined in this stage form the learning organisation framework that is used to explore the correlations in the quantitative stage.

On the other hand, the quantitative data collected represents various types of variables. These variables include nominal, ordinal, and interval. Gary (2004) defined nominal variables to be represented by a name or value or category with no rank or order like question Q2.3 in the survey questionnaires in 0Appendix B: Quantitative Survey. Moreover, the ordinal variables are represented by ranked or ordered data but with no equal intervals. For example, Likert-scale Strongly Agree, Agree...etc. like the questions in parts 2, 3, and 4 of the survey questionnaires. While interval variables are represented by equal interval, numerical value, but no zero is used for any intervals, for example, questions related to age or years of experience like questions 2.1 and 2.6 in the survey questionnaires.

With the focus on testing the hypotheses to explore the relationships among learning organization dimensions, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence, the research has employed multiple analytical techniques and tests, including Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Cronbach's alphas, Multiple Regression Analysis, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows release 24.0, SPSS Amos 25, and SPC XL 2016 for MS Excel.

Frequency analysis and descriptive analysis that included mean and Standard Deviation were used to describe basic characteristics and frequencies among the variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate the correlation among learning organisations' dimensions at the individual, group, organisational levels, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), Pearson's coefficient examines the strength of linear relationships between variables.

Additionally, the research conducts a CFA to measure the goodness-of-fit of the model to measure the research scales' validity. The validity measures how well the predictor variables represent the dependent variable (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Cronbach's alphas coefficient is computed to measure the validity of the scales used in the research. The validity determines the internal consistency and accuracy of the scales (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Moreover, hierarchical multiple regression analysis is used to test the hypotheses of the research and the interaction between the moderator variable (cultural intelligence) on independent variables (learning organisation dimensions) and dependent variable (affective organisational commitment). Table 6

summarises the analysis techniques used to analyse the data collected to test the hypotheses and provide answers to the research questions.

	<b>Research Question and Hypotheses</b>	<b>Analysis Technique</b>
<b>1</b>	Qualitative Data – Research Question 1	Thematic Analysis
<b>2</b>	Relationship Analysis Research Question: Q2, H1, H2, H3	Correlation Analysis, Hierarchical multiple regression analysis
<b>3</b>	Moderating Analysis Research Question: Q3, H1a, H2a, H3a	Hierarchical multiple regression analysis
<b>4</b>	Scales Reliability and Validity	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Cronbach's alphas

Table 6 – Analysis Techniques Summary

### Research Variables

The survey comprises a set of questionnaires based on multiple scales to measure the research constructs. The constructs include Learning Organisation Dimensions verified at the first stage of the research, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. For the purpose of this research, the participants' perception of the dimensions of the learning organisation dimension in their organisations were considered as independent variables. Those dimensions were consolidated and considered at the individual, team, and organisational levels. The level of affective commitment of the participants to their firms was considered as dependent variables. The participants' cultural intelligence was seen as the moderator variable to the relationship between the learning organisation dimensions and the affective commitment. Additionally, variables like gender, role in the organisation, and years of experience may impact the correlations between the other variables (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). These variables are considered as control variables for the purpose of the data analysis.

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are potential ethical issues associated with this type of research. However, the following actions were taken to overcome those issues (Fisher, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011):

- No harm: confidentiality and anonymity have been considered to avoid any harm to any of the research participants, including individuals and organisations. All responses are coded, and quotes are anonymous;
- Terms of Reference: all terms of reference related to the area (learning organisation and employees' commitments) to be investigated and any possible result of the research has been agreed with the organisations participating;

- Informed consent: all participants are aware of the purpose and the use of the research. Besides, the participants have been given the flexibility to withdraw our request to withdraw any given information at any time in the research process. The participants have been explicitly informed at the beginning of the interviews, and each of the participants has signed the guide of the survey questionnaires or a consent form;
- Non-bias of the research: the author investigated his current employer as part of the sample, so he made sure that his view or opinion does not influence the result of the collected materials. Also, any potential influence of the participant's response or opinion has been avoided. The author has done his best to avoid any bias by not influencing the interviewees' responses. The author, being an employee of one of those organisations and knowing the work environment, did not show any knowledge to influence the responses. Moreover, the author avoided any bias in interpreting the result of the research. However, it is essential to acknowledge that bias may not be altogether avoided;
- Records Permission: permission has been taken from participants who were interviewed when the interview needed to be voice recorded;
- Data usage and storage are following the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998) (Fisher, 2010).

In addition to the ethical issue, there are micro-political issues that needed to be overcome. While investigating the author's current employer's organisation, the author made sure not to get involved in the organisation politics. While interviewing participants from the author's organisations, the author has helped prevent any question that may politically influence the responses. The author has prevented any questions of whether the participants disagree with any of the organisation policies or management style. The questions were exploratory in nature and avoided any opinion or judgement of the organisation management and policies. Additionally, the author has avoided influencing any of the participants' responses during the interviews, even when disagree or has a different view. The author has not shown any knowledge of the areas discussed in the interviews. In some cases, for example the systems, the participants have inaccurately described the capabilities and how they are used. However, the author has prevented in sort of influencing their answers or show any sort of disagreement.

Moreover, the author is not sure why some of the participants were able to open up and discuss the issues within their organisations. The participants openness might be influenced by their connection and work relationship with the author. There is acknowledgement within the literature that work relationships and other social attributes influence the qualitative data collection (Hay, 2014). Additionally, the participants' willingness to open up also reflects the benefit of the semi-structured interview method, which gives the participants the opportunity to elaborate on their perceptions of the issue. Therefore, it is crucial to know that this bias may not be entirely avoided during the interviews or data analysis.

The research is investigating the employees' commitment to the GCC countries, so the author made sure to avoid any political issues related to these countries or their citizens. Ethical approval was obtained from the Professional Doctorates Research Ethics Committee (PDREC) at Nottingham Trent University before data collection. Approval is enclosed in Appendix J: Ethical Approval.

Moreover, cultural factors in the region represented another ethical consideration. To overcome this barrier, the pilot-testing of the scales and interview questions has been used to ensure there are no cultural issues. Additionally, during the semi-structured interview, there are cultural considerations like being on time, not taking more than the estimated time for the interview, not asking questions about confidential work-related matters.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research philosophy, design, research strategies, and methods. Moreover, the chapter discussed research questions and hypotheses tested to achieve the aim of the research. The research is divided into two main qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative stage has employed semi-structured interviews for data collection while the quantitative stage has employed web-based survey questionnaires for data collection. The survey has used three instruments in addition to demographic questions. The instruments include Dimensions of Learning Questionnaires (DLOQ), Organisational Commitment Questionnaires (OCQ), and the Cultural Intelligence (CI) scale. For qualitative research, the sample consisted of seven senior/executive managers in multinational organisations operating in the GCC countries. For quantitative research, the sample consisted of 790 expatriate employees.

The qualitative stage has verified the learning organisation's key dimensions associated with the GCC countries' business context, considering cultural factors. The quantitative stage has investigated the relationships among learning organisation dimensions, affective organisation commitment, and cultural intelligence. The learning organisation dimensions are taken as dependent variables, affective organisational commitment as independent variables, and cultural intelligence as a moderator variable.

## CHAPTER FIVE: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis of the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the data presents the participants' understanding and perception of the learning organisation concept. It presents the dimensions emerged from the workplace practice and the influence of cultural factors in the GCC countries. This chapter is mainly structured around the main themes that emerged from the interview and the data analysis. The chapter presents the data analysis under the learning organisation dimensions at the three levels: individual, group, and organisational. The output of the analysis presented in this chapter formed the learning organisation framework used in exploring the relationship in the second stage of this research.

### FIRST STAGE OF THE RESEARCH (QUALITATIVE STAGE)

This stage aims to verify the key dimensions of learning organisation within the GCC countries' business environment. This chapter's data analysis objective is to answer the first of the research questions: *RQ1: Do engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries implement learning organisation concept? Are there specific learning organisation dimensions associated with the GCC countries?* The following sections present the analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. Participants were full-time, expatriate senior executives who work for multinational engineering firms in the GCC countries.

The data collected were analysed with the aid of NVivo. The data were coded to the main themes being the seven dimensions of learning organisation developed by Marsick & Watkins (2003). The initial main themes included create continuous learning opportunities, promote inquiry and dialogue, encourage collaboration and team learning, create systems to capture and share learning, empower people toward a collective vision, connect the organisation to its environment and provide strategic leadership for learning. The interview transcripts were then reviewed and coded to potential new themes associated with the business context in the GCC countries. Next, the different 'nodes' were unified, re-categories, or removed. The seven semi-structured interviews were transcribed and uploaded into NVivo. Furthermore, each interview was assigned a code, for example, the code "P1" refers to quotes of interviewee 01.

The nodes were categorised based on the interview questions based on the learning organisation dimensions identified by Marsick & Watkins (1998). The dimensions included create continuous learning opportunities, promote inquiry and dialogue, encourage collaboration and team learning, create systems to capture and share learning, empower people toward a collective vision, connect the organisation to its environment and provide strategic leadership for learning. The interview transcripts were then mapped to different nodes as appropriate.

Table 7 summarises the identified themes at the individual, group, and organisational levels. The identified dimensions form the framework of learning organisations that was used as an input to the second stage of the research. This stage's results are to be discussed in more detail in the following chapter of this document.

Level	Dimension	Definition / Understanding
<i>Individual</i>	Create continuous learning opportunities	Learning is designed into work so that employees can learn on the job; opportunities are provided for ongoing training and professional development that are assisted by the organisation.
	Promote inquiry and dialogue	Employees are given the opportunity to give their feedback and to express their views with regard to the assigned tasks and the organisation in general. It is a culture of challenging the status quo and creating a more challenging environment that promotes learning.
<i>Team/Group</i>	Encourage collaboration and team learning	Workplace is designed in a way that encourages employees to work in collaboration and to share knowledge, which leads to team learning.
	Create systems to capture and share learning	A digital system to capture knowledge and lessons learned across the origination; systems are maintained and accessible to employees for future use.
<i>Organisation</i>	Empower people toward a collective vision	Employees are participating in setting and implementing the organisation's vision and goals. Encourage employees to learn to achieve the objectives that they are accountable for.
	Connect the organisation to its environment	Employees are encouraged to scan the business environment to explore how things are done in a better way. Practices can be improved within the organisation to increase its competitive advantage and to be connected to its communities.
	Provide strategic leadership for learning	Leaders model, champion, and support learning; leadership uses learning strategically for business results.
<i>Cultural Factor</i>	Cultural Intelligence	'a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts' and therefore refers to 'a form of situated intelligence where intelligently adaptive behaviours are culturally bound to the values and beliefs of a given society or culture

Table 7 – Learning Organisation Identified Themes

The above dimensions form the learning organisation framework at individual, group, and organisational levels. The learning organisations framework is the primary input to the quantitative stage of the research.

## AT INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

### Create continuous learning opportunities

From the interviews, it was found that within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries, their employees' opportunities to learn on the job and opportunities for ongoing training and professional development were provided. For example, the program's Participant P2 has described that organisations do not always expect their employees to identify training and development needs. Participant P2 sees that employees' mentors identify the training and continuous learning opportunities as part of their career progression plan within their organisation. Moreover, Participant P2 argued that if continuous learning opportunities are not identified and offered by organisations to employees, employees will leave their organisations to search for those opportunities in other organisations. P2 stated in reply to the interview questions:

“Definitely, as I said, I think it’s not always the individual who comes and says this is a gap I need to fill from a training and development point of view, often it is a mentor that can look at that individual and say, to take the next step, what you need is something, say for instance, if we have engineers who are trying to become chartered and all I have done is design, we don’t have the opportunity to get involved in construction by getting them outside. They are not going to get that unless they are leaving and saying the only way I can develop my career is by going to join a different organisation in a different role.”

Additionally, Participant P3 sees that talented and highly skilled employees will leave organisations that do not offer continuous learning opportunities. This view applies to some organisations operating within or outside of the GCC countries. Participant P3’s statement is representative of the sample, arguing that:

“Absolutely. I think the top talents, especially the top performers, are looking for learning. If they stop learning they’ll probably leave you regardless of whether you’re in the Middle East or outside of the Middle East.”

There is an agreement by the Participants that continuous learning and professional development is an area of interest for all expatriates regardless of their level of education. The participants’ perception of this dimension might be influenced by their cultural background and nationalities. The participants are coming from Western Europe and North American countries. These countries are known for their educational advancement and continuous research and development. For example, Participant P1 stated that:

“...Believe in continuous development and I think, again, it’s the culture within the company. People don’t just graduate, there is continuous learning and we want to

really develop that. I think the big emphasis is online manager training, so we have programs that are delivered every four months across the region...”

On the other hand, Participant P1 sees that expatriates are expected to be well trained and skilled to work overseas, and the client can benefit from that. However, those expatriates are also expecting their organisations to pay for their continuous professional development activities. Participant P1 responded that:

“if you are an international company then, yes, you will expect there is always money to educate your staff to get them on a learning ladder so that they can come in and they can go to conferences, do research and if you have to pay to get them there I don't have a problem that.”

The participants, as senior managers and executives have the view that they are hiring highly talented and skilled expatriate individuals to serve clients in the GCC countries. The clients in the GCC countries region are looking to receive world-class services from organisations. Those organisations can only provide world-class services through their talented and highly skilled expatriate employees. Those expatriates are expected to benefit the client from their experiences and skills. However, the participants agree that those expatriates as professionals are still looking for continuous learning and professional development. The participants argue that continuous learning opportunities are necessary for expatriates regardless of their level of education or qualifications. The participants agree that continuous learning is a key dimension in the GCC countries work environment. They propose that continuous learning opportunities will potentially increase expatriates' commitment to their organisations and motivate them to overcome workplace issues.

#### **Promote inquiry and dialogue**

From the interviews, it was found that within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries, employees are provided with opportunities to give their feedback and express their views regarding the assigned tasks and the organisation in general. Some organisations have designed internal programs to hear their employees' feedback and have an open dialogue. For example, Participant P4 argued that their organisation in the GCC countries encourages their employees to challenge the status quo by providing feedback and inquiring about their assigned tasks. Some organisations have designed and implemented systems to have a more structured mechanism to capture and record those discussions and any proposed ideas or lessons learned. Participant P4 responded to the interview questions stating that:

“...so, I think the “Let's talk” idea was very much designed at promoting feedback in the moment and it's been successful on some levels and what's interesting, was that

we learned we did not know exactly how it worked but we knew that we wanted to say that you could feedback to anyone any time.”

Furthermore, Participant P5 had a different way to interpret how organisation practice two-way dialogue with their employees. Participant P5 stated that some organisations allow the employees to provide their feedback as part of their annual appraisal. Participant P5 responded by stating that:

“most companies will do a biannual review of the staff which gives them the opportunity to request specific training and learning and development opportunities but the most important part, I always think, it gives the employee the opportunities to speak that to the line manager that knows about their work, to have that conversation related to their career progression and how that is impacting on the company, so certainly twice a year we have those, and they are documented, and from that, we then have a talent manager; basically you meet with your line manager, your line manager will give you a kind of grading of your potential and from that your potential is taken into the future training, you know, opportunities.”

It could be argued that this is not a very efficient way to promote dialogue and inquiry within organisations. It might be too late to wait for the annual appraisal to hear from employees. Issues might have already negatively impacted their commitment. Moreover, continuous open two-way dialogue between employees and their organisations will increase opportunities for innovation and identification of continuous development needs. For example, Participant P2 stated that:

“...we are not good at that, and I do not know organisations that are good at that. So that feedback is a big power play, you have to sense that, I want to feel that I did a good job and it is important to be heard and I think [inaudible] that if we can build that culture, you will find more time because people love feedback, they love praise actually, but they will not ask for feedback, but they love praise, they love awards, they love recognition, even small not monetary, just verbal or written, there is a lot of motivation from that, and we are not good at it.”

Additionally, Participant P3 sees that two-way communication between an organisation and employees is critical for continuous improvement and innovation. Participant P3 stated in reply to the interview questions:

“I would say, yes, very strongly. I think I’m a big believer in disruptive thinking and that continuous two-way dialogue between corporate and employees. Because if you

do not do this in this time and age, you're probably going to end up with a very slow-paced employee, the opposite of dynamic, basically.”

Therefore, the business environment does not promote open dialogue and inquiry. The business environment encourages employees to perform tasks with no question. However, organisations in the GCC countries promote dialogue and inquiry by their employees. As stated by the participants above, organisations are creating a two-way dialogue environment with their skilled employees. Those employees are expected to have an open dialogue with their organisations for career progression and professional development. The participant agrees that promoting dialogue and inquiry is a key dimension in the GCC countries work environment. Moreover, some of the participants propose that two-way dialogues and promoting inquiry will potentially increase the employees' commitment to their organisations and motivate them to overcome workplace issues in the GCC countries.

## AT GROUP LEVEL

### Encourage collaboration and team learning

From the interviews, it was found that within the management of engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries, the workplace was designed to encourage employees to work in collaboration and share knowledge, which leads to team learning. For example, Participant P5 stated that some organisations in the GCC countries are encouraging team collaboration. Employees work as a team; they brainstorm ideas to get the job done efficiently and achieve the expected outcomes. Participant P5 mentioned:

“Yeah, I think as a team, especially a team that we're managing right now, this has been a very important ingredient of our success, being able to challenge the status quo and allow employees to speak their minds, get the job done, but also bring up good ideas, give them enough room to do that and also give them enough room to execute some of the good ideas.”

Additionally, Participant P6 sees that in order to encourage teamwork and collaboration, organisations have to change how they work. Participant P6 sees that the workplace's design plays a massive role in encouraging team collaboration and knowledge-sharing culture. Participant P6 suggested that an open space workplace encourages teams to communicate and, in turn, collaborate and share knowledge to perform the assigned tasks. The following are quotes from Participant P6's interview:

“I think there are a couple of things we do really visibly in our offices. You would see that our open plan environment is entirely designed for an effective team environment.”

And:

“...I don’t know if you have seen our new guiding principles, but they talk very openly about co-operation and teamwork. Our CEO introduced this program for the top 1000 which is all about proximity, teams and that in the digital space we require a bit of infrastructure work which will probably start in the next year, commit to which is about team spaces. So, while you can see work with teams. I wouldn’t say we are at height of the game but it’s certainly in our mind set, think about how you create teams for different dimensions.”

The participants see that designing the workplace as an “open workplace” encourages communication and collaboration between employees. The creation of a digital collaboration environment is seen as another tool to encourage teamwork and collaboration within organisations. The participants agree that team collaboration and work is a crucial dimension in the GCC countries work environment. Moreover, the participants propose that collaboration and teamwork will motivate employees to share their knowledge and get the job done. For example, Participant P3 stated, “We have to provoke this group work and teamwork and getting people out of their comfort zones, so they get the best result.”

#### **Create systems to capture and share learning**

From the interviews, it was found that within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries, organisations must record their knowledge and learning lessons to be used on different projects. Therefore, a digital system to capture knowledge and lessons learned across the organisation is significant for those organisations. Some of the participants reasoned that their organisations are implementing a system to capture learning lessons and knowledge. For example, participant P1 stated in reply to the interview questions, “I do not think there was a documented system to keep that, but that is a good idea, I will keep that in mind.”

Additionally, Participant P2 agreed that systems are crucial to capture and share knowledge and lessons learned. However, participant P2 argued that although some organisations have implemented systems to capture and share knowledge, they are not efficient. Participant P2 argued that it has to be used and embedded in the organisation process to have adequate systems. Participant P2 stated:

“Again, we have the formal systems in place and try to enhance them. It hasn’t been that effective; we haven’t found the time to encourage people to use it properly, we haven’t used whatever has been placed on the system as effectively as we could, yeah the system is in place, the key, for now, is making sure that the system is properly

used and that we take any learning and development opportunities from it and then embed them in the business.”

While Participant P5 also agreed on the importance of implementing systems to capture and share knowledge, they see that their organisation has adequate systems to record and share lessons learned, which are used by the newcomers to know the history and to be on board with the assigned tasks quickly. Participant P5 said:

“Absolutely. In my team’s debriefing yesterday about lessons learned, my comment to them was very clear. We want the next person coming in to start where we’re ending in terms of knowledge. So absolutely, I think for any organization this will be invaluable.”

Alternatively, the participants claimed that the systems are inefficient as the employees do not effectively use them. The employees are not motivated to share their knowledge and record them on a system. For example, Participant P3 detailed that:

“I think that’s very much a cultural thing because they see knowledge as private and so to share that knowledge weakens their position in their mind and what I always say to staff that show those traits is if, heaven forbid something should happen, you have only been successful if somebody can seamlessly come into your place, if you have the feeling that you are totally indispensable because of the work that you are doing then there is a problem because succession planning is critical, so those type of conversations I will have with key people but I see it as a cultural thing particularly with our agents, staff in this region that whole of that knowledge is something that they can never be released for example.”

The participants agree that the existence of a system that captures knowledge for future sharing is very important for organisations. However, organisations are still working on creating or improving their systems for capturing and sharing knowledge. It is also essential to encourage employees to use these systems. The systems are good as it being used. It could be argued that all participants agree on the need and importance of capturing and sharing knowledge dimensions. However, they also stated that organisations in the GCC countries need to put more work to improve those systems and to embed them within the organisations’ process and culture. For example, participant P2 responded to whether creating systems to capture and share learning is a key dimension in the GCC countries:

“Absolutely. But you know, I also think there is probably more [inaudible] to smaller organisations and organisations like I have seen them and since I have joined them in

the last two and half years they are so big that you think, oh my goodness if we lose the person, how can we manage, they just do.”

Additionally, Participant P3 also stated that:

“You know, it is funny you say that because we just had the workshop last week as part of a series of workshops that started six years ago aiming at capturing lessons learned, databasing it, also having it incentivised, the use of these lessons learned, so becoming a learning organization basically, and also leaving a legacy behind to our client. So, yes, the answer is yes. We do have a system. It is continuously improving. Also, the use of it is continuously beings, which I think is a bigger part of the challenge. And it is both on the technology side and on the behaviour side.”

## AT ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

### Empower people toward a collective vision

From the interviews, it was found that within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries, employees are participating in setting and implementing the organisation’s vision and goals. For example, Participant P3 sees that employees’ contributions in setting the organisations vision and goals are crucial for their success. Participant P3 argues that organisations involve 1% or 2% of their leadership teams in setting up the organisations’ goals and objectives. The employees’ involvement makes the goals and objectives realistic and achievable. Moreover, involvement increases the employees’ commitment to achieving those goals and objectives. According to Participant P3:

“The vision, organisational wide, is set by a group of people, not everybody in the organisation. Maybe, I would say about top 1% or 2%. The actual objectives that are set to allow us to reach this vision is a very collaborative effort between the full team. We gather the leadership team, and their job is to basically decide on the level one objective and prove that these objectives would actually get us to where the vision is directing us.”

Additionally, participant P5 agrees that organisations in the GCC countries involve their employees in setting up their vision and goals. However, the participant described that the goals and setting up are obtaining the employees' feedback and input on the global vision. Then each business unit set up its goals and objectives in alignment with the global vision. Each unit's goals and objectives are then cascaded down to the different teams to be broken down into manageable tasks. Those tasks are used for evaluating the performance of each team. Participant P5 stated:

“Let’s look it at three different levels, you got global level, I think we did a lot of feedback into the global vision and the global brand and what we say about ourselves,

I think that did take a lot of feedback. If I look at individual level, the vision has a lot of dissemination of a design, so regionally it can pretty much determinate the direction as long as it's broadly principles, they can pretty much stay and go this way. Then the business level; they are also pretty much in charge of me too, so I see that, in our organisation particularly, the decider is if it is big enough to having separate business units but it is up to you and that they do have a lot of sales that happen at a business unit level as you get into teams. I have got five teams and I think they can largely determine their own destiny.”

All participants see that their organisations are involving their employees in setting their visions. Additionally, the organisations visions and goals are communicated to the employees to set their goals to deliver those goals and be aligned with the overall organisation vision. However, the interviewees highlighted that the involvement is limited to the leadership team within the organisations. The vision and goals are then cascaded to the rest of the employees through the leadership team for each discipline. The participants agree that employees' empowerment toward a collective vision is a key dimension in the GCC countries work environment. Moreover, the participants propose that when employees contribute to setting goals and objectives aligned with the organisation vision, they feel ownership, which may increase their organisational commitment. For example, P2 stated that:

“Yes, and I would say that it is interesting because I think in other geographies, yes. In the Middle East we are so focused on project specific delivery with teams they are to deliver a project, it's not like in the UK or the States whereby you are an employee of the organisation and you [cross-talk] the sustainability of the work coming is not that we are victims of an erratic pipeline of future work may be, but I would agree with you that if you can get employees brought into that full vision and feeling that their opinions really count, then you will definitely have a better retention and people feeling part of the organisation.”

### **Connect the organisation to its environment**

From the interviews, it was found that within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries, employees are encouraged to scan the business environment to explore how things are done better. Practices can be improved within the organisation to increase its competitive advantage and to be connected to its communities. For example, participant P3 agrees that their organisations encourage employees to scan the best practices' business environment. The participant argued that organisations set up processes for employees to explore innovative and creative ideas on improving the quality and efficiency of the process and desired outputs. However, the participant also argued that not all the proposed ideas are considered. This practice

intends to improve organisation performance and make it ready to respond to business environment changes quickly. According to Participant P3:

“I would say they’re encouraged through the process of asking for better quality and better and higher efficiency. We’re asking them to basically bring whatever is needed to improve processes, to improve performance, to improve the environment we work in, and this entails that they sometimes bring ideas from outside, processes from outside, examples from outside, lessons learned from previous organisations they worked in or articles they’ve read. Because of the busy environment we’re in, I don’t think we’re doing as much as we can because a lot of ideas do pop-up. We don’t take as many as I’d like us to, or the team is providing.”

Additionally, participant P5 agrees that their organisation promotes a culture within the organisation that encourages employees to continuously propose ideas that may improve organisation processes and make it more efficient, which will have a positive impact on overall organisation performance and productivity. However, in agreement with other participants like participant P3, organisations in the GCC countries are not doing enough to evaluate all the employees’ proposed ideas. Per Participant P5:

“I think we do, let me take my own personal examples of the HR team over the last few years; when we had the acquisition by WSP I was really, really strong on this for the team, I said don’t assume that anything is better than the other thing and I set that mindset in the beginning , do not think that WSP did it better or PB did it better, it’s always a third alternative so I particularly built a team culture and set alternatives that said, not even want to try. So nowadays, it’s easy for them to come up with those ideas and I don’t think we do enough, I don’t have people how many times, I told them there is an amazing articles, you should look at it, why are we not doing it? I would do that. And I think our leaders do that. I don’t think it’s a natural behaviour of everyone”.

The participants argue that their organisations encourage the employees to scan the environment and to propose any potential improvements continuously. These improvements aim to keep the organisation aware of the best practices within the marketplace. The participants agree that keeping the organisation connected to its environment is crucial to the organisation to learn and respond to environmental changes, particularly in the GCC countries. Moreover, the participants propose that encouraging employees to propose innovative and creative ideas to improve organisations’ practices and processes will improve the organisations’ performance, but it will also positively influence employees’ commitment to their organisations. However, the participants argue that organisations in the GCC countries need to put more work to improve this area and to consider and evaluate all the proposed ideas. For example, Participant P2 stated that:

“But sometimes, for example, you have people working coming from the UK or the US, saying, in the UK we are doing this, but this doesn’t apply to the GCC context. You are encouraging them and saying, not to forget about it, just keep it in mind, go out, scan the environment, see how things are being done, come back and [inaudible] process and then implement.”

### **Provide strategic leadership for learning**

From the interviews, it was found that within the engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries Leaders model, champion and support learning are supported and promoted. Leadership uses learning strategically for business results. The Participants see the strategic leadership for the learning dimension as a challenging one; not all of them agreed that their organisations are implementing a leadership style that supports learning. For example, participant P2 sees that it is a difficult question to answer, as it is related to multiple factors other than the organisations' leadership style. The participant sees that other factors, including budget constraints and time available, may have an influence. Also, leaders within the organisation are too busy, which is not an excuse to communicate and encourage employees to identify learning opportunities. However, organisations are putting every effort to promote strategic leadership and learning. Participant P2 highlighted:

“I think yes would be my initial answer, as it should be to those who want to benefit from it, I would have to say that’s work in progress and it’s something that we have to put more effort into, as I said laying out opportunities for people as well as to getting them to trust those opportunities, take advantage of what is available to them, it’s difficult. Take for example, the training budget, we all have a training budget but people have never believed that they can access the training that bills that budget and we have not pushed as hard as we should, when we have identified a training need, we have found it difficult sometimes to convert that into practical support to get people to what they need to be, so I think the scenario was all of the opportunities should be there, it’s the implementation of the strategy I think that’s been not as robust as it could be and should be, so I think this the current push we got, trying to get a lot of people to take PMP training is going to be a really good example and a very visible example to people and I think by the time we get into the next review cycle, there will be lot of new people stepping up and saying, well, I wish I had known because I would have stepped up and done that.”

Alternatively, Participant P3 sees that organisations are focused more on delivery, which creates time availability issues for employees to take learning opportunities for continuous professional development. Moreover, the participant argued that there is no sustainable system or process that balances learning and delivery within organisations. Participant P3 illustrated:

“Yes, again, if I limit it to the organisation where I work now, I’d say yes, very strongly. But again, within the limits of what’s available here, the busy time and the culture of deliver, deliver, deliver, and unavailability of a sustainable system that allows for both learning and delivery.”

The Participants see that this is not an accessible dimension to implement and that they are putting in a lot of effort. The difficulty comes from various reasons, including budget constraints, clients’ expectations, and time availability. However, the organisations are working hard to encourage the strategic learning leadership style for their employees' continuous learning and development. The participants agree that strategic leadership for learning is a key dimension in the work environment in the GCC countries. For example, Participant P3 mentioned that:

“Yes, very much so, even an old dog like myself on courses, you can still teach new tricks, so very, very much, and you know we have availability again, it’s time to encourage staff to make yourself available. There are hundreds of training opportunities free online within their intranet system and it’s just been trying to encourage, launch and learn types of scenarios for the staff who really want to make sure they are receiving the appropriate training so that when they finish their three year program, they are ready to become chartered because that’s critical, so that pool around engineering development.”

Moreover, the participants propose that promoting leadership styles that encourage the employees to identify and take learning opportunities within the organisation may positively increase their organisational commitment. The leadership style should eliminate time availability and training budget constraint challenges within the organisation. However, the participants argue that organisations in the GCC countries need to put in more work to set up systems to balance between delivery and learning for their employees.

## **CULTURAL FACTOR**

The data were analysed to provide an answer to the first research question. The data analysis tended to explore the cultural factors influencing the workplace in the GCC countries. Cultural factor is a key player in the workplace and business environment. The data analysis has shown that the cultural factor influences the practice within the workplace. Interestingly, some participants have argued that there is a multi-cultural environment in the workplace in the GCC countries mostly because of the expatriates’ diversity. Nevertheless, they have considered the multi-culture work environment as one of the significant challenges encountering organisations in the GCC countries.

Analysis also offered some interesting data related to cultural barriers and solutions. Participants were referring to specific actions that needed to be actioned to support expatriate employees. To overcome or to minimise the impact of these challenge in a way that does not negatively impact the employees' commitment. From the interviews, it was found that culture plays a key and influential role in the workplace environment within some of the engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries. Therefore, the "Culture Balance," as mentioned by participant P5, is required to maintain workplace efficiency. Participant P5 argues that the "Culture Balance" in the workplace, specifically in the GCC countries, can be achieved by integrating the local employees from these countries with the expatriate employees. The integration will help eliminate some of the cultural challenges in the workplace. The local resources are expected to be in a managerial position, even if they do not have the required experience and qualifications. Therefore, integrating with expatriate employees will help eliminate this challenge and force them to realise the need to learn, exchange knowledge, and collaborate. Participants were insisted that the elimination of those challenges will also have a positive impact on expatriates. The Culture Balance will deal with several workplace challenges caused by cultural diversity and culture shock. The expatriates working in the GCC come from different countries and cultural backgrounds (Al-Malki et al., 2014; Corby, 2014; EIU, 2014), which creates a multi-culture environment in the workplace. Interestingly, participant P5 statement is representative of the sample, argued that:

"It's interesting, because I think in Bahrain, the Bahrainisation policies I think are same in Oman, labour law obliges organisations to have a percentage of nationals on staff. This is hugely beneficial because that helps with the integration and the cultural balance of your teams becomes better, so coming to Qatar from the United Arab Emirates may be not so much work as there are quite a few commonalities, we are in a country where, after graduation the nationals tend to expect an exponential rise to management. I think their understanding of what really drives business rather than, let's be honest cash is king, is better. The culture would be hugely improved, specifically here, if there was a way that we could really work better, in a better integrated fashion or what I called Culture Balance".

This balance or "blend" is by having the right mix of employees' backgrounds which allow a better integration in the workplace. The integration will allow the collaboration and teamwork. This is supported by all participants in the interview. More specifically, participant P3 stated that:

"I had three or four graduate female engineers bar any nationals in my team, and they had studied in the University of Baghdad and so they were keen. I was very interested to see what their career aspirations were compared to graduates who came from the

west. Certainly, there was a bigger drive if you compare them but they were still an integral part of the team and you know, very much appreciated for what they did, so I think looking across the GCC and I think Qatar is probably quite unique perhaps and Egypt and Jordan the same. So, whether or not there is cultural balance within our organisation I don't think it's something that we can necessarily influence, I think it's kind of imposed by the general culture of Qatar.”

Additionally, participant P3 goes further and argued that cultural factors play a key role in the workplace and impact expatriate employees' commitment and performance in the GCC countries. Participant P3 hypothesised:

“You spoke about individual, team, organisation, then related dimensions. I think that if there is a, let me just think of a title. There is a business culture dimension.”

For other participants, like participant P1 have argued that expatriates stay in the GCC countries longer when they can adapt to the culture. In other words, expatriates' cultural intelligence allows them to perform their jobs and progress in the GCC countries. The following is a quote from Participant P1 response offers an insightful analysis on how expatriate senior management perceive cultural intelligence:

“As they come to the region saying I'm going to be here for two to four years, I'm talking about expatriates, in this case, to the GCC. Some of them stay for 20 years. But it's always four years in average, because of many reasons. One of the key ones is not having a vision of where is it that I'm heading. Where is it that the region, in terms of development within the engineering environment, is heading.”

Additionally, Participant P3 has emphasised the role of cultural intelligence in responding to environmental challenges and changes. The participant has referred to cultural intelligence as being agile to changes. This agility allows expatriates to respond quickly to changes and overcome cultural challenges. The following is a quote from Participant P3 response:

“And I think particularly middle east, in my experience with wise people that can be Agile that they can change direction quickly, they can simulate information and we use that reflex on it because the environment changes very rapidly.”

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

The scope of this chapter is to present the findings of the qualitative data analysis. The findings presented the learning organisation framework relevant to the GCC countries work environment. The findings verified the learning organisation at the individual level that included creating continuous learning opportunities and promoting inquiry and dialogue. At the group level, that included encouraging collaboration and team learning and creating systems to capture and share learning. At the organisational level, that included empowering people toward a collective vision, connecting the organisation to its environment, and providing strategic leadership for learning. Moreover, the findings illustrated that culture plays a vital role in the workplace and the business environment in the GCC countries. The findings have emphasised culture intelligence's role that allows expatriates to adapt to changes and overcome cultural challenges. The presented findings in this chapter illustrated that the first stage, or the qualitative stage of the research, has achieved its objective by identifying the key learning organisation framework relevant to the GCC countries.

## CHAPTER SIX: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

### INTRODUCTION

The data analysis findings are presented in three main sections. The first section of this chapter discusses the demographics of the data collected. The second section presents the result of measuring the scales' reliability and validity in the survey. Then, the last section presents the findings of hypotheses testing and correlations among the research variables. The chapter also discusses the demographic statistical analysis in its first sub-section. Then the chapter moves to present the findings of the reliability testing of scales used in data collections. The scales include learning organisation, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence scales. The chapter also presents the correlation measures first between the learning organisation dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels, and then between organisational commitment and culture. The moderation influence of cultural intelligence is also presented in this chapter. The last section of the chapter summaries the presented findings.

### SECOND STAGE OF THE RESEARCH (QUANTITATIVE STAGE)

The second stage of the research, or the quantitative research stage, has aimed to provide answers to the second and third research questions and testing the six hypotheses:

*RQ2: What is the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and the affective organisational commitment in engineering and construction organisation?*

*RQ3: Do cultural factors influence learning organisation dimensions perception or moderate their correlation with the affective organisational commitment in engineering and construction organisations?*

The following sections present the analysis and findings of data received from 100 participants in the survey. The valid responses were 95 out of the 100 received responses. Per Bryman & Bell (2010), the low response rate is an issue only when a sample is randomly selected where it is intended to represent the population. While Mangione (1995) argued that a response rate less than fifty percent (50%) is not acceptable, Bryman & Bell (2010) made the point that several studies with low response rates 18, 21, and 25 percent were published in highly regarded journals like Academy of Management Journal and Strategic Management Journals. Therefore, the low response rate does not represent a significant concern for data analysis and accuracy as it does not generalise the result of the research.

The data analysis was pasted through multiple steps before it was ready for presentation. In order to start the analysis process, the data were downloaded from Qualtrics. Then data has been cleaned and coded. All responses have been checked; incomplete responses were taken out. According to Gray (2004), it is crucial to coding the responses for data analysis. For the Ordinary data, a numerical code used to build the data matrix: 1= Strongly Agree; 2= Agree; 3=Neutral;

4=Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree. For data for other variables, the code 0 is used for missing/no response.

### Demographic Statistical Analysis

The collected demographic data was analysed to identify the participants' characteristics who took part in the research. Below, Table 8 details the descriptive statistics of the demographic data collected. The table details the frequency of the responses and their percentage of the total valid responses for each control variable: gender, primary responsibility, and role within the current organisation.

Variables	Values	Employees (n=95)	
		Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	78	82.98%
	Female	17	17.02%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	Management	46	48.42%
	Operation/Production	6	6.32%
	Administration, Logistics, or Financial/Accounting	5	5.26%
	Human Resources	5	5.26%
	Technical	10	10.53%
	Contracts/Procurement	16	16.84%
	Other Please specify	7	7.37%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Role in the Current Organisation</b>	Senior Management	35	36.84%
	Middle Management	39	41.05%
	Supervisory	6	6.32%
	Non-management Technical/Professional	15	15.79%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8 – Demographic Descriptive Statistics

The above table's displayed data shows that the respondents are 83% male and 17% female. These results are expected as the number of males working in the GCC countries outweighs females (Buttorff Gail, Wellborne, Bozena, & Al-Lawati, 2018). Concerning the primary responsibility, the participants are 48.42% management, 16.84% contracts/procurement, 10.53% technical, 7.37% non-management, and 5.26% for both human resources and administration, logistics, or financial/accounting. With regard to the role in the current organisation, most participants (41.05%) are middle management while the remainder consists of 36.84% senior management, 15.79% technical/professionals, and 16.84% contracts/procurement.

## Reliability and Validity of the Scales

Before testing the hypotheses, it is important to test the scales' reliability using the data collected. Cronbach's alpha is commonly used in business research to measure internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The "rule of thumb" is when the alpha coefficient is 0.80. However, Bryman & Bell (2011) argued that Schwandt & Marquardt (2000) demonstrated that 0.70 is sufficient to be considered as a "rule of thumb." However, Hinton et al. (2014) argued that a range from 0.50 to 0.70 represents moderate reliability. The following paragraphs discuss the validity and reliability of the scales composing the instrument of the research. As discussed in the previous chapter, the instrument (survey questionnaires) comprises the Learning Organisation Dimension Questionnaires, Organisational Commitment Questionnaires, and cultural intelligence scales.

### Reliability of the Learning Organisation Dimension Questionnaires

Marsick & Watkins (1998) have validated the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires (DLOQ) by revising and rewording various items based on the received feedback from more than 200 companies until they have achieved an acceptable coefficient alpha (above 0.7). The computed reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha for the collected data for this research are Learning Organisation Dimensions (LOD) at the individual Level ( $\alpha = .90$ ), LOD at the group level ( $\alpha = .91$ ), and LOD at the organisational level ( $\alpha = .94$ ). The overall Cronbach's alpha for the all 43-item DLOQ used in this research is 0.96, which represents very high reliability (Hinton, McMurray & Brownlow, 2014; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2018).

Additionally, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been performed to measure the scale validity using SPSS Amos 25. The overall fit model was tested through various indices, including comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and normed fit index (NFI), which should be at least 0.90. The analysis has also examined the parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI), which should be larger than 0.5, and root-mean-square error for approximation (RMSEA), which should be less than 0.08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Table 9 displays the index and index values for the learning organisation instrument, which indicates a good fit mode.

<i>Index</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>IFI</i>	<i>NFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>PGFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
<i>Index Value</i>	0.97	0.89	0.97	0.89	0.84	0.56	0.04

Table 9 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Learning Organisation Instrument

### Reliability of Organisational Commitment Questionnaires

The computed reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha for the collected data for this research are 0.55, which represents moderate reliability, according to Hinton et al. (2014). While according to Schwandt & Marquardt (2000), it represents low reliability, which represents a limitation to the research. Table 10 displays the index and index values for organisational commitment instrument, which indicates a good fit for the model.

<i>Index</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>IFI</i>	<i>NFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>PGFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
<i>Index Value</i>	0.99	0.97	0.99	0.96	0.90	0.23	0.05

Table 10 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Organisational Commitment Instrument

### Reliability of cultural intelligence Scale

The overall Cronbach's alpha for the all 18-item CQ used in this research is 0.94, which represents very high reliability (Hinton, McMurray & Brownlow, 2014; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2018). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been performed to measure the scale validity using SPSS Amos 25. The overall fit model was tested through various indices, including comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), incremental fit index (IFI), normed fit index (NFI), which should be at least 0.90. the analysis has also examined the parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI), which should be larger than 0.5, and root-mean-square error for approximation (RMSEA), which should be less than 0.08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Table 11 displays the index and index values for cultural intelligence instruments, which are slightly below the indicated thresholds.

<i>Index</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>IFI</i>	<i>NFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>PGFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
<i>Index Value</i>	0.87	0.77	0.88	0.79	0.69	0.57	0.11

Table 11 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis – cultural intelligence Instrument

In conclusion, the computed Cronbach's alphas for the scales' items indicated very high internal consistency reliability for the learning organisation scale (.96) and cultural intelligence scales (.94) but indicated moderate internal consistency reliability for the organisational commitment scale. On the other hand, the conducted confirmatory factor analysis displayed good fit models for the learning organisation and organisational scales but displayed a slightly below threshold model fit.

### Correlations measures

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate the correlation among learning organisations' dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), Pearson's coefficient examines the strength of linear relationships between variables. The

correlations matrix in Table 12 below illustrates the relationships and reliability coefficient for the research variables. The correlations were found to be significant between learning organisation at the individual, group, and organisational levels, cultural intelligence, and affective organisational commitment ( $0.212 < r < 0.761$ ).

The correlation matrix indicates that there are significant correlations between the variables:

- The role in the current organisation is positively correlated with primary responsibility in the organisation ( $r=0.385, \rho < 0.01$ );
- Learning organisation at the group level is positively correlated with learning organisation at the individual level ( $r=0.732, \rho < 0.01$ );
- Learning organisation at the organisational level is positively correlated with learning organisation at the group level ( $r=0.761, \rho < 0.01$ );
- Learning organisation at the organisational level is positively correlated with learning organisation at the group level ( $r=0.745, \rho < 0.01$ ), providing support to H2: affective organisational commitment is positively impacted by learning organisation dimensions at the group level;
- Affective organisational commitment is positively correlated with the learning organisation at the individual level ( $r=0.212, \rho < 0.05$ ), providing support to H1: affective organisational commitment is positively impacted by learning organisation dimensions at individual level.
- Affective organisational commitment is positively correlated with the learning organisation at the organisational level ( $r=0.227, \rho < 0.05$ ), providing support for H3: affective organisational commitment is positively impacted by learning organisation dimensions at the organisational level.
- Cultural intelligence is positively correlated with primary responsibility ( $r=0.212, \rho < 0.05$ );
- Cultural intelligence is positively correlated with affective organisational commitment ( $r=0.237, \rho < 0.05$ );

Figure 9 displays the correlation measures on the hypothetical model. The correlations are to be discussed in more detail in the following chapter of this document.

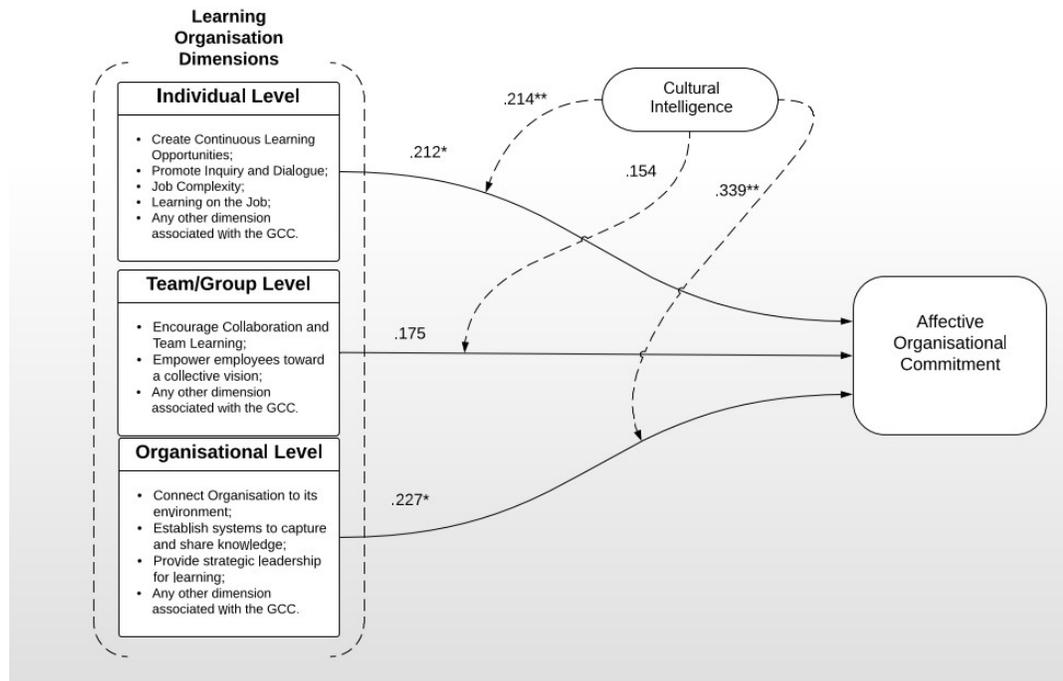


Figure 9 – Hypothetical Model - Correlation Measures

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Gender	Primary responsibility	Role	LO Ind.	LO Grp.	LO Org.	AOC	CI
Gender	1.17	0.38	-							
Primary responsibility	3.08	2.29	0.185	-						
Role	2.01	1.05	0.187	.385**	-					
LO Ind.	2.82	0.82	-0.038	0.077	0.028	(.90)				
LO Grp.	2.91	0.84	0.115	0.150	0.038	.732**	(.91)			
LO Org.	3.11	0.74	0.049	0.078	0.012	.745**	.761**	(.94)		
AOC	3.12	0.44	0.007	-0.020	-0.168	.212*	0.175	.227*	(.55)	
CI	2.62	0.64	0.090	.212*	0.103	0.054	0.040	0.040	.237*	(.94)

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N = 93.

Note: LO Ind.: Learning Organisation at individual level, LO Grp.: Learning Organisation at Group level; LO Org.: Learning Organisation at organisational level  
 CI: Cultural Intelligence; AOC: Affective Organisational Commitment.

Table 12 – Correlations among learning organisation dimensions at individual, group and organisational levels, affective organisational commitment and cultural intelligence.

## Moderation measures

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses of the research and the interaction between the moderator variable (cultural intelligence) on independent variables (learning organisation dimensions) and dependent variable (affective organisational commitment). Table 13 illustrates the results of the multiple regression.

Variable	Affective Organisational commitment		
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
Gender	.116	.011	.047
Role	-.046*	-.204	-.211
Primary Responsibility	.021	.030	.011
$\Delta R^2$	.032	.032	.032
LO at individual level	.192***		
LO at team/group level		.213*	
LO at organisational level			.351***
$\Delta R^2$	.047	.030	.051
CI x LO at individual level	.214**		
CI x LO at group level		.154	
CI x LO at organisational level			.339**
$\Delta R^2$	.085	.022	.098
$R^2$	.164	.084	.181

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

$N = 93$ . Note. Standardised regression coefficients from the final equation (step 3) are shown. LO Ind.: Learning Organisation at the individual level, LO Grp.: Learning Organisation at the group level; LO Ind.: Learning Organisation at organisational level CI: Cultural Intelligence; AOC: Affective Organisational Commitment.

Table 13 – Results of Direct and Moderated Regression (cultural intelligence) for the effects of learning organisation at the individual, team/group, and organisational level.

The three-separate regression analysis reports were run to measure the moderation correlation at the individual, group, and organisational levels.

#### At individual level

In step 1, to control demographic variables, gender, role, and primary responsibility relationship were entered. These control variables accounted for 3.2% of the variance in affective organisational commitment. The role of the current organisation was found to be significant. In step 2, the learning organisation's effect at the individual level explained an additional 4.7% of the variance in affective organisational commitment. It was found that learning organisation at the individual level was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). In the last step, the moderation effect of cultural intelligence on the relationship between learning organisation at the individual level and affective organisational was investigated. The results indicated that there were significant moderation effects for learning organisation at the individual level ( $p < 0.01$ ). In other words, cultural intelligence moderates the relationship between learning organisation at the individual level and

affective organisational commitment, providing support for H1a: The relationship between learning organisation dimensions at the individual level and affective commitment will be stronger among people with higher cultural intelligence.

#### **At group level**

In step 1, to control demographic variables, gender, role, and primary responsibility relationship were entered. These control variables accounted for 3.2% of the variance in affective organisational commitment. None of the variables were found to be significant. In step 2, the learning organisation's effect at the individual level explained an additional 3.0% of the variance in affective organisational commitment. It was found that the learning organisation at the group level was not significant. In the last step, the moderation effect of cultural intelligence on the relationship between learning organisation at group level and affective organisational was investigated. The results indicated that there were no significant moderation effects for learning organisation at the group level. In other words, cultural intelligence does not moderate the relationship between learning organisation at group level and affective organisational commitment, not providing support for H2a: The relationship between learning organisation dimensions at the group level and affective commitment will be stronger among people with higher cultural intelligence.

#### **At organisational level**

In step 1, to control demographic variables, gender, role, and primary responsibility relationship were entered. These control variables accounted for 3.2% of the variance in affective organisational commitment. None of the variables were found to be significant. In step 2, the effect of learning organisation at organisational level explained an additional 5.1% of the variance in affective organisational commitment. It was found that the learning organisation at organisational level is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). In step 3, the moderation effect of cultural intelligence on the relationship between learning organisation at organisational level and affective organisational was investigated. The results indicated that there were significant moderation effects for learning organisation at organisational level ( $p < 0.01$ ). In other words, cultural intelligence moderates the relationship between learning organisation at organisational level and affective organisational commitment, providing support for H1a: The relationship between learning organisation dimensions at the organisational level and affective commitment will be stronger among people with higher cultural intelligence.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the findings of the quantitative data analysis have been presented. The findings showed that the respondents were mostly from middle management rather than senior management. The results of reliability tests of the learning organisation, affective organisational, and cultural intelligence scales showed a good fit for the model for learning organisation and affective organisational commitment. In contrast, the results indicated slightly below the indicated thresholds for cultural intelligence. The findings showed a significant correlation between the learning organisation dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels among themselves. Further to that, affective organisational commitment is positively correlated with the learning organisation at the individual and organisational levels. However, the correlation between organisational commitment and learning organisation at the group level was not significant. Furthermore, cultural intelligence is positively correlated with primary responsibility and organisational commitment. However, there was no significance in the correlation between learning organisation at all three levels and cultural intelligence. The findings also indicated that there were significant moderation effects for learning organisation at individual and organisational levels ( $p < 0.01$ ). In other words, cultural intelligence moderates the relationship between a learning organisation at organisational level and affective organisational commitment. In contrast, the findings indicated that there were no significant moderation effects for learning organisations at the group level. In other words, cultural intelligence does not moderate the relationship between a learning organisation at group level and affective organisational commitment.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses and evaluates the research findings. It is divided into three sections. The first section of this chapter summarises the research. The second section summarises and discusses the qualitative and quantitative findings. The second section is divided into two sub-sections: one to discuss and evaluate the qualitative stage findings; the second to discuss and evaluate the quantitative stage findings. The third section discusses the limitations of the research and the recommendations for future research.

### RESULTS SUMMARY

In recent years, advanced technology, digital revolution, and globalisation have created turbulent, agile, and challenging business environments globally. As a result, organisations have responded to those business environment changes by exploring solutions to overcome those challenges and to maintain their competitive advantage. Therefore, interest around the learning organisation concept has been growing over the last three decades (Xiaojun & Mingfei, 2008; Diriani, 2009; Joo & Shim, 2010; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013). The learning organisation concept is seen as a potential solution that would help organisations stay connected to their environment to acquire and transform knowledge. The acquisition and transformation of knowledge allow organisations to respond and to adapt to the continuous environmental changes. However, the engines to acquire the required learning are the employees working within those organisations.

In order for organisations to acquire and retain their most valuable assets (the employees), they should overcome additional challenges while operating out of their home countries. These challenges include the multi-cultural environment in the workplace. Some of the expatriate employees encounter difficulties adjusting in new or multi-cultural setups, which has an impact on their performance. Therefore, this research attempted to address this knowledge gap and explored the validity of learning organisation dimensions in the GCC countries work environment. The research has focused on construction and engineering organisations operating within those countries.

Additionally, the research has considered the cultural intelligence to overcome the culture shock challenge encountered by expatriates working within those organisations. The main goal is to provide those organisations with a potential solution to improve their expatriate employees' commitment. Those employees are the learning engines that would help organisations adapt to environmental changes and maintain their competitive advantage. The research has found that the learning organisation concept is a potential mechanism that could be used by organisations in the GCC countries to improve the affective commitment of their expatriate employees. The findings show that the level of cultural intelligence of expatriates working for engineering and construction

organisations in the GCC countries, strengthening their level of affective commitment when organisations implemented the learning organisation's dimensions.

The research findings have shown that the dimensions of learning organisation at individual, group, and organisational levels are valid in the GCC countries business environment. These dimensions included create continuous learning opportunities and promote inquiry and dialogue at the individual level, encourage collaboration and team learning and create systems to capture and share learning at the group level, empower people toward a collective vision, connect the organisation to its environment and provide strategic leadership for learning at organisational level. Additionally, the findings have found that cultural factors are a key player in the business environment in the GCC countries. Cultural intelligence was found to be a potential solution that could help organisations overcome workplace challenges. Although cultural intelligence is not a new concept and it was claimed by several scholars (Huff, Song & Gresch, 2014) to have positive impacts on work environment and expatriate employees productivity, it could be argued that this is the first piece of work that has explored the relationship between the cultural intelligence and the learning organisation in the GCC countries context.

The results have illustrated that learning organisation dimensions are positively correlated among themselves. It also illustrated that learning organisation dimensions at individual, group, and organisational levels positively influence expatriate employees' affective organisational commitment in the GCC countries. Most interestingly, cultural intelligence moderates the correlation between the learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment at individual and organisational levels. It was found that the cultural intelligence does not have an influence on the correlation between the learning organisation dimensions at group level and affective organisational commitment.

*RQ1: Do engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries implement learning organisation concepts? Are there specific learning organisation dimensions associated with the GCC countries?*

The first stage of the qualitative stage of the research was conducted to verify the key dimensions of learning organisations with taken into consideration the influence of cultural factors in the GCC countries. The research findings have illustrated that the initial dimensions used by Marsick & Watkins' (2003) Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaires model are perceived as key implementable dimensions in the GCC countries. However, the findings have shown that not all organisations are effectively implementing those dimensions. For example, implement systems to capture and share knowledge dimensions. Cultural factors had a role in the work environment, resulting in the emergence of new dimensions related to the GCC countries. The findings are based on the interview participants' perception of the learning organisation dimensions within the GCC countries context. Hence, the qualitative stage's main objective was to answer the first research question. The following sections in this chapter discuss the perception of senior

management expatriates working within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries. Based on the interview participants' perception at different levels, the research has found that the cultural factor influences dimensions at different levels in the GCC countries. The research found that learning dimensions include the creation of continuous learning opportunities, promoting inquiry and dialogue, encouraging collaboration and team learning, creating systems to capture and share learning, empowering employees towards a collective vision, connecting the organisation to its environment, and providing strategic leadership for learning.

### **Individual level**

The creation of continuous learning opportunities is found to be a key dimension that has been implemented by some organisations in the GCC countries. Interestingly, continuous learning opportunities has been perceived as a key dimension of learning organisations that influence expatriate employees' performance and commitment. Interviewees argued that continuous learning is essential for skilled expatriates to sustain and support career progression. Several studies within the existing literature confirms this as they have identified a strong positive correlation between continuous learning and work-related outcomes like commitment and job satisfaction. For example, Retna & Jones (2013) have found in their study conducted in Singapore that continuous learning and training are key learning organisations influenced by the national culture. Their study's findings also indicated that Singapore employees are more motivated to share knowledge and work in collaboration when their organisations offer them opportunities for training and learning. The expatriate employees see that the learning opportunities are part of their career progression, which increases their commitment to their organisations. Therefore, knowledge sharing, and employees' commitment would potentially positively impact the organisations' overall performance.

Additionally, Dirani (2007) studied the learning organisations concept and its impact on work-related outcomes, including organisational commitment and job satisfaction in the Lebanese banking industry. Dirani's study's findings indicated that employees' continuous learning opportunities in the Lebanese banking industry equate to more commitment to banks that implement strategies for continuous learning and offer their employees continuous training to develop their skills. Like employees in Singapore (Retna & Jones, 2013) and in the GCC countries, the employees of those banks see that newly acquired skills will help them progress and make them ready for their next steps in their careers. Therefore, the results of this research are in general agreement with the results of those studies indicating that a formal approach to manage expatriate level of commitment is essential. However, this research has illustrated that continuous learning opportunities practices is an essential dimension to support these formal strategies and motivate expatriates to overcome cultural influence challenges in the GCC countries work environment.

Promoting inquiry and dialogue is found to be another key dimension at the individual level that has been implemented by organisations in the GCC countries. This dimension is perceived as a key dimension in the business environment in the GCC countries. Findings strongly support the argument that expatriates working for their organisations are highly skilled and talented professionals; hence they are expected to understand and to question the expected outputs of the tasks assigned to them. The promotion of inquiry and dialogue influences the ability to innovate and to perform. However, the findings also indicated that organisations need to put more effort into promoting two-way communication and implementing systems to facilitate communication between employees and their superiors.

Moreover, the culture and nature of the work environment in the GCC countries is somehow resistant to two-way communication due to its rapid pace and superiority culture. In other words, the clients in the GCC countries expect the expatriates to implement all their instructions without any inquiry or resistance (Naithani & Jha, 2010). This research agrees with the results of several studies within the existing literature relating to the learning organisations that have indicated similar findings in other territories of the world. For example, the findings of Retna & Jones' (2013) study in Singapore indicated that Singapore employees see two-way communication and dialogue as important and required. However, Singapore's culture does not promote dialogue within organisations due to the time limitations and rapid pace of the work environment. Moreover, Retna & Jones's study's findings indicated that the dialogue is perceived as a type of escalation or complaint to the higher authority rather than an opportunity for improvement and problem-solving.

Similarly, the findings of Dirani's (2007) study in the Lebanese banking industry showed that promoting inquiry and dialogue scored the lowest among the other dimensions of the learning organisation. Dirani (2007) argued that the findings are due to the nature of the work and the workplace culture in Lebanese banks. The research results have illustrated the importance of promoting inquiry and dialogue culture in the work environment to improve the employees' organisational commitment and productivity.

### **Group level**

Encouraging collaboration and team learning as a learning organisation dimension plays an influential role in the business environment in the GCC countries. Some Organisations in the GCC countries have encouraged team collaboration by designing their workplaces as "open spaces" with no assigned seats to encourage communication, interaction, and collaboration between the teams. Findings strongly support the argument that team collaboration and learning is perceived as a key dimension of learning organisation in the GCC countries. Particularly with the multi-cultural environment in the workplace in the GCC countries, findings have shown that organisations are encouraging teamwork and collaboration to eliminate the challenges associated

with this environment. However, the clients in the GCC countries sometimes create fear or blame culture, which, in turn, creates an issue of job security for the expatriates (Naithani & Jha, 2010). The job security issue is an obstacle in encouraging expatriates to collaborate and share their knowledge. These results illustrated this dimension's commonalities in other regions in the world and different cultural settings. The results of this research are in general agreement with the results of other studies within the literature. The expatriates working in the GCC countries are coming from Western and North American countries, which may be a reason for the results' commonality. For example, scholars like Dirani (2007) have found in his study of the Lebanese banking industry that employees are not as committed to the idea of working in collaboration and to share knowledge with other team members. Dirani (2007) argued that this non-commitment by the employees is due to the educational systems in Lebanon that expect students to collaborate or work in a group to discuss or for further exploration of their studies. Therefore, the culture of working “individually” is built into the employees’ culture since they were students.

Moreover, employees have the perception that their value is related to their knowledge and the information they know. Therefore, they do not share any knowledge as a kind of job security (Dirani, 2007; Naithani & Jha, 2010; Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014; Haak-saheem, Darwish & Al-Nasser, 2016). Additionally, Elshafie (2015) has studied the perception of the learning organisation concept at King Saud University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study aimed to identify the key dimensions of learning organisations in the university and the university's possibility to become a learning organisation. The findings of Elshafie’s (2015) study indicated that although the dimension of team learning and collaboration is a key dimension that is aligned with the university vision, the dimension was not seen to be central to human resources due to the culture of individualism in the workplace (Elshafie, 2015). Therefore, there is an agreement across various studies, including this research, in different countries, the dimension is a key one and is required to improve organisations’ performance and capabilities to learn. However, the challenge is to promote a team learning and collaborative culture within the organisations and encourage them to buy into it. The findings of this research showed that organisations in the GCC countries have policies and strategies to promote team collaboration and knowledge sharing. The results are anticipated, as discussed above due to the importance of knowledge sharing, particularly in this region that is characteristic with high staff turnover (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Hvidt, 2013; The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014).

To capture and transfer knowledge, the interview participant has argued that some organisations in the GCC countries have implemented systems to record lessons learned and knowledge to be used on projects in the future. Knowledge transfer is an essential factor in today’s business environment. Knowledge management helps organisations respond to uncertainties in the business environment (Liao, Chuang & To, 2011). The creation of systems to capture and share learning is perceived as a key dimension of learning organisations in the GCC countries.

However, the result of this research shows that some organisation does not implement it in the GCC countries. It could be argued that this result of not effective systems is associated with the GCC countries. Although organisations in the GCC countries recognise the importance of capture and sharing knowledge for a sustainable work environment, their systems, if any, are not efficient. Knowledge transfer is also crucial for organisations, particularly in the GCC countries, due to the high uncertainty in the business environment (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Hvidt, 2013; The Economist and Intelligence Unit, 2014). Several studies within the existing literature around the learning organisation concept and its implementation have found that organisations need to be systems orientated to be able to learn by systematically capturing and sharing knowledge (Dirani, 2007; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Retna & Jones, 2013; Elshafie, 2015). For example, Elshafie (2015) has explored the key dimensions of learning organisations and the possibility of the concept implementation in King Saud University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The findings resulted from the interviewees' data analysis indicated that the creation of systems to capture and transfer knowledge is a key dimension for the university to become a learning organisation. The findings of Elshafie's study indicated that there is an agreement by the university that to be system orientated will make lessons learned available to all employees, permit the university to identify the performance gaps to correct them, and to measure training's time and resources (Elshafie, 2015). This is supported Retna & Jones (2013) and Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009) studies that the implementation of systems to capture and share knowledge is essential to improve organisation performance. This attitude towards knowledge capture is essential for organisation performance and competitive advantage. Nevertheless, the current study shows that to be more efficient and sustainable in the GCC countries business environment, organisations need to put in more effort to implement effective systems and to embed their usage in their internal policies and process. They need to encourage their employees to use those systems.

### **Organisational level**

It was agreed among interview participants that people empowerment towards a collective vision is a key dimension of learning organisations in the GCC countries that have been implemented by their organisations. Some organisations in the GCC countries involve their "leadership team" in setting the company goals and objectives to be aligned with the overall company vision. The interviewees argued that the empowerment towards collective goals, objections, and overall vision, improve the commitment. Employees feel more attached and accountable for achieving those objectives. Most interestingly, it is a feeling of ownership. Several scholars who investigated the learning organisation concept and its applicability in different countries have argued that it is crucial to empower employees to set their goals and objectives that are aligned to the organisations vision (Dirani, 2009; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; ALDamoe, Sharif & Hamid, 2013; Retna & Jones, 2013; Elshafie, 2015). The employees' contribution in settings those goals and objectives makes them feel a sense of ownership and become more committed to their

organisations (Pedler et al., 2013). For example, Elshafie (2015) argued that employees' empowerment toward the King Saud vision is key to its achievement. Elshafie (2015) argued that the employees' empowerment enhances the employees' level of organisational commitment. It gives the organisations more control over the required resources to accomplish the set goals and objectives, and it supports the organisations in calculating their risks. Additionally, Dirani (2009) argued that employees are more committed when they contribute to setting the organisations vision and the organisations senior management. Therefore, employees are willing to contribute to the decision-making process within their organisations.

Findings have also demonstrated that employees would like to feel the ownership and responsibility of delivering their goals and objectives in line with their goals and vision. The sense of ownership motivates employees to learn toward what they have committed to and are accountable for doing, which, in turn, increases their level of commitment to their organisations. The increase in employees' level of commitment positively impacts organisations' overall performance and competitive advantage in the marketplace (Alas & Zernand-Vilson, 2004; Malik & Garg, 2017). The results of this research have also confirmed these arguments. Moreover, Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009), argued that employees' contribution in the decision-making process improves their commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction. However, organisations in Lebanon, are bureaucratic, and the head leaders set all visions and strategies at the organisations' headquarters with no involvement from the staff. Then the goals and objectives are cascaded down to the unit managers for implementation. The low rating on this dimension is one of the factors that is preventing the banking organisations in Lebanon from learning and adopting environmental changes (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009). Therefore, this research has indicated that it is crucial for organisations to involve their employees in the decision-making process and set their objectives and goals so they will become more productive and committed to their organisations. When that is achieved, the organisation capability to learn and respond to environmental changes quickly will increase. These dimensions will let the employees feel that it is their organisations and want to succeed.

In the GCC countries, organisations must stay connected to their business environment according to the research participants' responses. The continuous connection with the business environment allows organisations to continuously scan the marketplace for changes and quickly respond to those changes (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013; Pedler & Hsu, 2019). The capability to quickly respond to the agile business environment is crucial for organisations' survival and competitiveness in the GCC region. Participants agreed that connecting the organisation to its environment is a key dimension of learning organisations in the GCC countries. They also argued that their organisations encourage their employees to scan the business environment and propose any innovative ideas to improve the organisations' processes and performance. The results of this research are in general agreement with several studies within

the existing literature around the learning organisation concept; its applicability and implementation have argued that for organisations to survive and to advance in their marketplaces, they need to stay connected to their communities and environment (Dirani, 2009; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Retna & Jones, 2013; Elshafie, 2015). For example, Elshafie (2015) have found that King Saud's university as an organisation that encourages their employees to think critically from a global perspective, work with the community to achieve mutual needs, and explore ideas to improve the process and for problem-solving. Retna & Jones (2013) argued that organisations' effectiveness depends on encouraging the idea of experimentation. Retna & Jones argued that organisations in Singapore encourage their employees to experiment and show their thinking and talents for problem-solving and improve the organisation process. However, the finding of Retna & Jones' study also showed that Singapore employees are concerned about exposing their weaknesses.

Additionally, Dirani (2009) found that employees are more committed when banks are connected and linked to the communities in studying the banking sector in Lebanon. He also argued that to be competitive, banks need to accommodate the community's needs and explore new services and ideas to improve their processes and make them more efficient. Hence, the need for organisations to adopt and to quickly respond to the customers' needs, innovation and new technology in the environment. In the absence of this type of connection, organisations will not be able to survive or to maintain their competitive advantages (Schrage, 2011; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013; Lau et al., 2017).

Additionally, the interview participants agree that providing strategic leadership for learning is another key dimension of learning organisation in the GCC countries. The participants argue that the employees are more committed to organisations where leaders are promoting learning culture. Those leaders are the learning champions and the learning drivers within the organisation. However, the participants see that it is not a dimension that can be easily implemented in the GCC countries. Organisations encounter difficulties in implementing this dimension, including budget constraints, clients' expectations, and time availability. Several studies within the existing literature around the learning organisation concept, its applicability, and implementation in various countries have shown similar results (Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013; Pedler & Hsu, 2019). For example, Elshafie's (2015) study at King Saud University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabi has found that providing strategic leadership for learning is a key dimension for the university to become a learning organisation. The participants in Elshafie's study agreed that for organisations to learn and be more effective, their leaders have to mentor whom they lead, continually look for opportunities to learn, and ensure that their actions are consistent with their values.

Moreover, Retna & Jones (2013) have found that leaders are required to transform from the traditional leadership style to be job designers, mentors, and stewards in the organisations. They argued that this type of strategic leadership style motivates employees to be more productive and learn, which will improve the overall performance of the organisation. This is supported by Dirani (2009) who added that employees are more committed to organisations when leaders support and use learning strategically to improve the organisation's productivity and performance. Therefore, providing strategic leadership for learning dimensions is essential part to promote effective learning organisation culture. In the Lebanese banking and information technology context, Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009) argued that the employees strongly perceive the strategic leadership dimension. Those scholars argued that this area's strength is associated with the authority and power culture between supervisors and subordinates existing in the Lebanese working culture. Hence, promoting the learning leadership style is key to enhancing organisations' capabilities to quickly learn and respond to environmental changes. However, organisations need to put in more effort by providing the needed time and budgets for the required training. The scholars' arguments confirm this research; expatriates' contributions in setting up their objectives in alignment with the organisation vision increase their sense of accountability and affective commitment.

**RQ2: What is the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and the affective organisational commitment in engineering and construction organisation?**

The qualitative stage's output being the dimensions verified by the result of the qualitative stage discussed above have formed the learning organisation framework. The framework comprises the dimensions at three primary levels; individual, group, and organisational levels. This section discusses the quantitative stage result, which explored the correlation among the learning organisation framework, affective organisational commitment, and cultural intelligence. The results discussion aims to provide answers to the second and third research questions.

**Individual level**

At the individual level, the results have shown that employees' organisational commitment is significant. Expatriate employees are more committed to organisations that create continuous learning opportunities and promote inquiry and dialogue. The correlation between the variables was strongly positively correlated ( $r=0.212$ ,  $\rho < 0.05$ ). Several research studies within the literature have also found that the learning organisation influences employees' commitment at the individual level. For example, Lau et al. (2017) have found that employees' commitment is high in Malaysia when organisations focus on promoting learning culture through continuous learning opportunities and respect their employees by promoting two-way dialogue.

On the other hand, Jamali, Sidani & Zouein (2009) have found the same result in Lebanon's banking and information technology industries. They found that employees are more

committed when their organisations offer continuous training opportunities, which are considered prepared for the next step in their careers. Expatriate employees are more committed and motivated towards achieving the organisation's goals when they are heard, and their organisations consider their ideas for potential improvement. However, organisations need to work on implementing structured processes and systems to capture the employee feedback and to work on resolving any issues raised for a better work environment. Clients organisations in the GCC countries expect expatriate employees to be highly educated and talented with no need for continuous learning or professional development (Naithani & Jha, 2010). While expatriate employees come from different backgrounds and cultures, they are looking for continuous learning opportunities for their career progression. It is proven from the results of other more localised research studies. Hence, when organisations operating the GCC countries are not offering such a learning environment, expatriate employees become less committed.

### Group level

At the group level, the results have shown a significant positive correlation between learning organisation dimensions and employees' affective organisational commitment ( $r=0.227$ ,  $\rho < 0.05$ ). It means that expatriate employees are more committed when organisations encourage collaboration between teams. When expatriate employees are more committed and work in collaboration with other colleagues within their teams and other teams within their organisations, they are more motivated to use the systems created by organisations to capture and share knowledge. Although some organisations in the GCC countries are not implementing efficient systems to capture and share knowledge, expatriate employees are still committed and motivated towards the use of those systems and to share their knowledge to get the job done as a team. Studies within the literature have shown similar results in other contexts and countries like Malaysia, United Kingdom, India, Lebanon, and the United States of America (Dirani, 2007; Jamali, Sidani & Zouein, 2009; Liao, Chuang & To, 2011; Retna & Jones, 2013; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). For example, Lau et al. (2017) have found that employees' commitment is high in Malaysia when organisations create systems to capture learning ( $r=0.40$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$ ) and promote team learning and collaboration ( $r=0.44$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$ ). While Retna & Jones (2013) have found that Singapore employees have a lower level of commitment but are still committed to organisation, they promote team collaboration and knowledge sharing. Retna & Jones (2013) argued that the lower level of commitment is due to the trust issue existing in Singapore's work environment. It shows that organisations should review and assess learning practices to address group cultural related needs. Several other studies, including Shipton, Zhou & Mooi (2003), have illustrated a strong correlation between learning organisation dimensions at the group level and employees' organisational commitment. However, other factors may include knowledge sharing, even when the employees are committed (AlDamoe, Sharif, and Hamid, 2013; Li, Yuan, Ning & Li-Ying,

2015). For example, employees' ignorance has a critical role in impacting knowledge sharing (Israilidiset al., 2015).

### Organisational level

At the organisational level, the results have shown a significant positive correlation between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment at organisational level ( $r=0.745$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$ ). It means that the employees' affective commitment is high when organisations empower their employees towards a collective vision, provide strategic leadership that promotes learning, and is more connected to the business environment. Expatriate employees in the GCC countries being talented professionals are competitive, goal orientated, and leaders. By turn, those expatriates anticipate a leadership style within their organisations that promotes and encourages them for learning. They are committed to their organisations when they are given the opportunity to propose innovative ideas on how to improve their organisation processes and performance. However, the ideas have to be seriously considered by the organisations for those expatriates to feel valued to be more committed.

Additionally, expatriate employees are more committed when they feel valued through their contribution to the organisation goals. When those goals are aligned with the organisations' vision, employees are more attached to organisations' values when they have contributed to setting them up. Several studies within the exiting literation related to the learning organisations concept and its correlation with work-related outcomes have shown similar results in other contexts and countries like Malaysia, the United Kingdom, India, Lebanon, and the United States of America (Liao, Chuang & To, 2011; AlDamoe, Sharif and Hamid, 2013; Retna & Jones, 2013; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). For example, Lau et al. (2017) have found that the employees' commitment is high in Malaysia when organisations empower their employees towards a collective vision and allow them to contribute to setting the organisation's goals and objectives ( $r=0.45$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$ ), when the organisation is connected to its environment and encourage the employees to propose new ideas to improve the organisation's performance ( $r=0.41$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$ ) and when leaders mentor employees, continuously learn, and use their learning strategically to improve the organisation's performance ( $r=0.42$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$ ). In contrast, Atak & Erturgut (2010) have illustrated a different perspective to study this correlation. They have argued that the commitment of employees is leading organisations to becoming a learning organisation. The committed employees feel accountable and responsible for achieving organisational vision and goals, contributing to their setting.

Additionally, the results have shown that learning organisation dimensions are significantly positively correlated among themselves at the three levels; individual, group, and organisational. While cultural intelligence was not significant to any of the learning organisation dimensions, the results illustrate that the expatriate employees working within construction and

engineering organisations in the GCC countries are more committed when their organisations are implementing a learning organisation model. Organisations in the GCC countries assign those expatriates as talented, skilled, and experienced professionals to work in these countries. The main goal of those organisations is to deliver high-quality service to their clients and provide them with the experience and expertise required. However, those expatriates are also looking for career progression through continuous learning and to gain more experience. There are commonalities between the results of this research and other existing researches within the learning organisation literature. This research is added to the body of the literature by studying the learning organisation concept in the GCC countries region and illustrating that the learning organisation concept can be used to improve the expatriate employees' affective commitment. Those expatriates are crucial to maintaining their competitiveness in the marketplace (Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014; Corby, 2014).

**RQ3: Do cultural factors influence learning organisation dimensions perception or moderate their correlation with the affective organisational commitment in engineering and construction organisations?**

Although the learning organisation dimensions are positively correlated among themselves and to affective organisational commitment, there is a role that cultural intelligence played on the strength of those correlations. Cultural intelligence moderated ( $p < 0.01$ ) the correlation between learning organisation dimensions at the individual level and affective organisational commitment. In other words, cultural intelligence strengthened the correlation between the learning organisation at the individual level and employees' affective organisational commitment. Employees with a high level of cultural intelligence are motivated to achieve their objectives and goals (Ang et al., 2007). Those employees seek to perform in multicultural work environments using their ability to adjust and understand the other cultures' economic, legal, and social aspects (Huff, Song & Gresch, 2014). Therefore, it is expected that those employees are continuously looking for learning opportunities within their organisations to enhance their skills and talents further.

Additionally, their organisations are looking to be heard by their organisations to propose ideas on how to overcome issues and enhance performance using their knowledge and skills of understanding the assumptions of different cultures. Therefore, those employees become more committed to organisations that provide continuous learning opportunities and promote two-way dialogue. Hence, the expatriates with high cultural intelligence are more expected to adopt different cultural contexts and absorb the culture shock in the GCC countries business environment (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). It thus increases the expatriates' commitment to organisations that implement the learning organisation dimensions at the individual level. In other words, cultural intelligence strengthens the correlation between learning organisation dimensions at the individual level and affective organisational commitment.

On the other hand, the moderation effect of cultural intelligence on the correlation between learning organisation dimensions at group level and affective organisational commitment is not significant. In other words, cultural intelligence does not strengthen the correlation between the learning organisation at the group level and employees' affective organisation commitment. Several studies within the literature have found that learning organisation dimensions at the group level, including collaboration and team learning and creating systems to capture and share knowledge, are the lowest score among the other dimensions (Joo & Lim, 2009; Atak & Erturgut, 2010; Elshafie, 2015). Those studies argued that it is because employees are inclined to work individually, issues of job security in some cultures, and trust issues (Retna & Jones, 2013). Similarly, this research's findings illustrated that organisations are not implementing effective systems to capture and share knowledge in the GCC countries. Employees with high levels of cultural intelligence have the ability to adjust to multi-cultural work environments. However, job security and trust issues still exist, which may impact their interest in collaborating with other teams or sharing their knowledge. Employees with high levels of cultural intelligence can adjust and perform in new cultural settings and overcome the culture shock issue (Ang et al., 2007; Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011), but not necessarily in teams. Therefore, they are not more committed when organisations encourage team collaboration and learning or implement knowledge-sharing systems. It is a significant finding as it illustrates the need for organisations to great the 'right' learning environment needed to foster collaboration and reduce learning barriers.

Cultural intelligence moderates the correlation between the learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment at the organisational level. Cultural intelligence strengthens the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment. Various studies within the learning organisation literature and its correlation with work-related outcomes, including affective organisational commitment, argued that learning organisation dimensions at the organisational level are the highest score among the other dimensions (Atak & Erturgut, 2010). Employees with high levels of cultural intelligence are motivated to achieve the organisation goals and objectives to enhance the organisation's performance (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011; Huff, Song & Gresch, 2014). Therefore, those employees become more committed when their organisations involve them in setting up the organisation objectives and goals to achieve their vision (Malik & Garg, 2017). Employees with high levels of cultural intelligence can also adjust to new cultural settings using their ability to understand the assumptions of other cultures and their knowledge of other cultures' legal and economic aspects (Ang et al., 2007; Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011; Huff, Song & Gresch, 2014). Therefore, those employees will be interested in continuously scanning the business environment to enhance their capabilities and capture new knowledge that will help them improve their future performance. Hence, the affective organisational commitment of employees with high cultural intelligence will become more committed to organisations that involve their employees

towards a collective vision, encourage their employees to stay connected to the business environment and to acquire new knowledge, and encourage strategic leadership for learning.

The learning organisation concept is not a new concept that evolved due to today's business environment. Dozens of studies have explored the concept and attempted to implement it in several areas of the world. All the dimensions identified in this research are not new dimensions to the learning organisation concept (Xiaojun & Mingfei, 2008; Diriani, 2009; Joo & Shim, 2010; Shipton, Zhou & Mooi, 2013). Additionally, the positive correlation between the learning organisation dimensions and work-related outcomes like Organisational commitment is not new finding. However, this research has explored the concept from different angles by first exploring the applicability of the dimensions in the GCC countries context. Several studies like Retna and Jones (2013) have attempted to implement the concept without validating its dimensions in the culture setup. Moreover, the cultural role was considered and has proven that it plays a key role in the business environment. The data findings have proven the role cultural intelligence plays in the relationships between the learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment in the GCC countries.

The data findings have provided answers to the research questions and addressed the research objectives and aim. The data findings have proven that the learning organisation concept is still alive and useful. The findings of this research have shown that some of the learning organisations dimensions positively influence expatriates' commitment in the GCC countries. The expatriates' perception of those dimensions is greater than the culture shock and other challenges they encounter in the GCC countries. Therefore, they are more committed to their organisations.

Additionally, the findings have shown that the role of cultural intelligence to allow expatriates to overcome cultural challenges. Cultural intelligence strengthens the correlation between some of the learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment. In other words, it improves the expatriates' commitment when the learning organisation dimensions are implemented.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the research results of its qualitative and quantitative stages. The purpose of the research stages and data analysis was to provide answers to the research questions. The research has found that the learning organisation concept is a potential mechanism that can be used by organisations in the GCC countries to improve the affective commitment of their expatriate employees. Moreover, the research has found that the level of cultural intelligence of expatriate employees working within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries strengthens their level of affective commitment when organisations implement the learning organisation dimensions. In responding to the research first question, this research has

illustrated that some organisations in the GCC countries are implementing the dimensions of the learning organisation. There are learning organisation dimensions associated with the GCC countries business environment at the individual level. These dimensions included creating continuous learning opportunities and promoting inquiry and dialogue at the individual level; encouraging collaboration and team learning and creating systems to capture and share learning at the group level; empowering people toward a collective vision, connecting the organisation to its environment, providing strategic leadership for learning at organisational level. Additionally, the findings have found that cultural factors are a key player in the business environment in the GCC countries. Additionally, cultural intelligence was a potential solution that could help organisations overcome workplace challenges.

In response to the second research question, the research results have shown a positive correlation between the learning organisation dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels and employees' affective organisational commitment in the GCC countries. The research results are supported by studies within the existing literature around the learning organisation concept and its correlation with work-related outcomes, including organisational commitment.

For the third research question, the research results have illustrated that cultural intelligence has influenced the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and employees' affective organisational commitment at individual and organisational levels. In other words, expatriate employees with high levels of cultural intelligence are more committed when organisations implement learning organisation dimensions at individual and organisational levels. On the other hand, it was found that there is no influence by cultural intelligence on the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment at the group level. It is argued that the absence of the influence is potential because issues of job security and trust still exist, which may impact their interest in collaborating with other teams or sharing their knowledge. Employees with high levels of cultural intelligence have the ability to adjust and to perform in new cultural settings and to overcome the culture shock issue, but not necessarily in teams. Therefore, the level of commitment is not influenced when organisations encourage team collaboration and learning or implement systems for knowledge sharing. Therefore, the research found that a learning organisation is a potential mechanism that organisations in the GCC countries to improve their expatriates' affective commitment. Moreover, the research found that the level of cultural intelligence of expatriate employees working within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries strengthens their level of affective commitment when organisations implement the learning organisation dimensions identified in this research.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the research and discusses the implications of the research findings and results. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section discusses the research implications and conclusion, the second section discusses the research limitation and recommendation for future research, and the third section provides a chapter summary.

### RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The GCC countries business environment, similar to the rest of the world, is encountering transformational changes (International Monetary Fund, 2019). Organisations in the GCC countries are still encountering the challenges caused by these countries' governments' spending cuts strategies. The continuous drop in oil and gas prices continue to weaken the main source of income of the GCC countries. The economic impact of low crude prices was accompanied by significant cuts in spending and subsidy reforms (Platt, 2017). Thus, for organisations to maintain their competitiveness and to survive in the GCC countries markets, organisations have to retain and attract talented expatriates. In the past, financial rewards have been used as the primary mechanism to retain and to attract talented and experienced expatriates in the GCC countries (Naithani & Jha, 2010). In the future, organisations have an urgent need to find an alternative mechanism to respond to those changes quickly and improve their expatriate employees' commitment. The study has demonstrated that expatriate employees' retention will reduce the organisations' cost of recruiting, demobilising, and mobilising new employees. Additionally, there is an intangible cost of knowledge loss that accompanies turnover with no proper transition and replacement plans. The GCC countries business environment is an attractive one due to the investment value and economic transformations (International Monetary Fund, 2018, 2019). Therefore, such changes will encourage organisations to continue operating successfully in this part of the world.

Hence, this research contributes by providing a model to support organisations to improve their expatriate employees' organisational commitment in the GCC countries. The research aimed to transform the issue from practice to theoretical study then put it into a practical implementation plan. The research has intended to address its aim by exploring the learning organisation concept as an approach for organisations to increase its capacity to respond to its environmental changes. The research proposed an approach intended to provide organisations with an alternative mechanism to assess learning needs and provide the foundation to make more effective decisions to retain employees (especially expatriate employees) by increasing and sustaining levels of organisational commitment. The research has developed a conceptual framework to improve the employees' affective organisational commitment potentially. It was deemed crucial for the

research to be practically implementable to consider cultural factors and their role in the workplace in the GCC countries. Findings strong demonstrated that expatriate employees' affective organisational commitment could improve by implementing the learning organisations dimensions and improving their cultural intelligence levels. This could be an essential dimension for any future decisions related to learning, performance and organisational development.

Therefore, the research has developed a theory-based conceptual framework based on Peter Senge's Fifth Discipline and Marsick & Watkins's (2003) Dimensions of Learning Organisations Questionnaires (DLOQ) models. The research's objectives have been addressed through two main stages. The first stage verified the learning organisations dimensions related to the work environment in the GCC countries. The output of the research first stage formed the learning organisation framework. The framework included dimensions at individual, group, and organisational levels: creating continuous learning opportunities and promoting inquiry and dialogue at the individual level; encouraging collaboration and team learning and creating systems to capture and share learning at the group level; empower people toward a collective vision, connect the organisation to its environment, providing strategic leadership for learning at organisational level. Hence, the learning organisation concept is still alive and being implemented by some organisations. Additionally, the research has identified the cultural intelligence as a potential solution to overcome some of the challenges encounter the expatriates in the GCC countries. The cultural intelligence enhances the expatriates' capabilities to adjust and perform in the GCC countries cultural set up.

Additionally, the findings have found that cultural factors are a key player in the business environment in the GCC countries. The cultural intelligence has been selected as a moderator to the correlations between the learning organisation dimensions and affective organisational commitment. The second stage then investigated the correlation among those dimensions, affective organisational commitment and cultural intelligence.

The research findings have illustrated that expatriate employees' affective organisational commitment is potentially improved when organisations create continuous learning opportunities, promote dialogue and inquiry, encourage collaboration and teamwork, create systems to capture and share knowledge, empower their employees towards a collective vision, and stay connected to its environment. It was found that cultural factors in the GCC countries are a key component in the work environment that influences the expatriate employees' commitment and performance. Cultural intelligence has helped expatriate employees adapt to diverse cultural settings and absorb the culture shock. Additionally, it has been found that expatriate employees with high levels of cultural intelligence are more committed due to the implementation of learning dimensions at individual and organisational levels. Expatriate employees with high levels of cultural intelligence have more awareness of different cultures, have the mental ability to accept different cultures, and

are motivated to perform, which allows them to adapt to overcome the cultural challenges in the GCC countries. Then when the learning organisation dimensions are implemented, they become more psychologically attached to their organisations. These factors would have an impact on policies and leadership style within organisations. Organisations in the GCC countries would need implement policies that enhance the cultural intelligence of their expatriates through trainings and strategic leadership style that promote this type of intelligence and continuous learning.

The research topic was initially influenced by the author's employment in the engineering and construction industry in the GCC countries. Moreover, the author is an expatriate employee working within engineering and construction organisations in the GCC countries. However, it became apparent during the scoping stage that the research is an opportunity to fill gaps in both academic and professional areas. Moreover, the research is a motivating opportunity for future research in the region and other industries. Additionally, the research provides expatriates in the GCC countries with cultural intelligence as a tool to overcome some of the challenges in the region. On the other hand, the research could be considered as a playbook for the engineering and construction industry in the GCC countries on how to improve the affective commitment of their expatriate employees.

#### **Academic contributions and implications**

The research contributes to academic knowledge in the field of HRD and business management of engineering and construction organisations. The findings have an impact on both boundaries, academics, and practicing. The research intended to fill several academic gaps and to add to the body of knowledge. The research attempted to fill the current literature gap around the learning organisations concept, particularly in developing countries like the GCC countries and Middle Eastern countries. The learning organisation literature is highly focused on Western European countries, Far Eastern countries, and North American countries (Abu Khadra & Rawabdeh, 2006; Xiaojun & Mingfei, 2008; Joo & Shim, 2010). Firstly, the research has filled this gap first by expanding and exploring the learning organisation concept in developing countries like the GCC countries. Second, the research has illustrated that the learning organisation concept could potentially improve expatriate employees' affective organisational commitment in the GCC countries work environment.

The research has also filled another gap by considering cultural factors and their influence in the GCC countries work environment. The research findings have illustrated that cultural factors have a role in the relationship between learning organisation dimensions at the individual, group, and organisational levels and affective organisational commitment. The research has explored cultural intelligence and its moderation impact on the correlation between learning organisation dimensions at different levels and affective organisational commitment. Cultural intelligence was considered due to its significant impact on employees' performance in diverse

cultural settings like the GCC countries work environment (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). It is seen as an academic addition as existing research has studied the correlation between learning organisation dimensions and work-related outcomes like job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Abu Khadra & Rawabdeh, 2006; Xiaojun & Mingfei, 2008; Weldy & Gillis, 2010; Conway & Briner, 2012). However, those research studies have not explored other constructs that may help strengthen those relationships, like cultural intelligence (Chen & Sawangpattanakul, 2011).

The research will also impact different stakeholders, including the organisations leaders and employees, by providing advice on how to improve the work environment for better business practice. Engineering and construction organisations and possibly other organisations will benefit from the research findings in increasing their competitive advantage to be able to respond and survive in today's challenging business environment in the GCC countries. The majority of the researches and reports have investigated the business environment in the GCC countries and its challenges and issues without providing recommendations or solutions. This research has illustrated that the learning organisation concept is a potential approach for organisations to improve their expatriate employees' commitment in the GCC countries. The research is an academic guide to organisations on how to survive by responding to the GCC countries business environment's current challenges.

Furthermore, the findings of this research can be the foundation of further research in the future. Future research may explore the model in different industries. Moreover, future research may explore the impact on other work-related outcomes like job satisfaction or employee retention. Additionally, the research scope can be expanded to measure the impact of implementing the learning organisation concept over a period of time on work-related outcomes and on the organisation's performance. Future research can explore other new dimensions of learning organisations that may emerge from testing the model in different industries. Scholars can further explore the impacts of cultural intelligence and its impact on other work-related outcomes. Moreover, future research could explore new dimensions to the learning organisation model. The research has partially filled the literature gap by studying the learning organisation concept in the GCC countries. However, there is still need for more research in these developing countries and also in the North African countries like Egypt and Algeria.

### **Professional implications**

Certainly, the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme, in general, and this research specifically, is an unbeatable experience and journey. The professional doctorate focuses on knowledge and skills advancement (Miller, 2019). Additionally, the programme facilitated the research skills development with the main focus on problem-solving by applying knowledge into practice to solve industry problems (Wellington & Sikes, 2006).

The DBA programme's impacts are recognised at each stage of the journey. Identifying and selecting the topic during the research's scoping stage was based on the author's practical experience. However, it was learned how to transform and frame the problem from practice and link it to theory. It was also learning how to critically review the existing literature to identify potential theoretical solutions to the framed problem. Methodical and analytical work is another area of learning. The academic writing of this thesis and how to present the research findings is another added experience. Lastly, the implementation of the research solution and its conversation from theory back into practice.

Throughout the journey, the author has learned to expand upon the existing knowledge around problems in the field to uncover new findings to solve those problems. By turn, the result may have significant organisational and economic impacts. Additionally, the journey was an opportunity for the author to interact with competitive professionals within the industry and academics in conferences and universities. The interaction level had a significant benefit in exchanging knowledge, expertise, and experiences within the industry. Furthermore, the expanded network has opened various career paths to the authors and resulted in other industries' opportunities.

Nevertheless, the author sees that the most important skills learned in this journey are selecting a specific path or method and defending the decision. Throughout the journey, the author had to make a decision regarding the research design, methodology, and analysis methods. For each of those items, there were various selections. It was a logical process of analysing that resulted in selecting what is best to solve the research problem from the author's perspective. Hence, the DBA programme has added substantial analytical and problem-solving experience, knowledge, and skills to the author. The acquired skills are anticipated to be beneficial in the author's current and future organisational position. Moreover, this process has taught the author to think critically and holistically of all the available options before making a selection to tackle a problem.

Additionally, the acquired knowledge had impacts on the author's career progression, skills, and problem-solving capabilities. Moreover, the DBA qualification potentially opens up career opportunities for the author (Wellington & Sikes, 2006; Miller, 2019). The author is coming from an engineering background, and throughout the program, he had exposure to the different theories, academic writing, research process, and problem-solving experience that will improve the author's skills and knowledge. The acquired set of skills and knowledge combined with the work experience have increased the author's confidence level to be involved in more complicated tasks within the organisation and the industry. Another area that the author has enhanced during this journey is presentation skills. The opportunity to present the research in conferences and other academics was undoubtedly a substantial value-added benefit to the author.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, some GCC countries have revised their policies to reconsider their local national to expatriates workforce balance (Amnesty International, 2020). These new policies that resulted in the departure of a lot of expatriates (Ivanov, 2020). However, organisations will be looking to rehire highly skilled expatriates. The author believes that the Doctor of Business Administration is a privileged degree that will open a lot of opportunities in the market.

Furthermore, professionals may work in academia in the future to further explore a new dimension of learning organisation in the region. The coordination between professionals and academia may generate data that can be used to use the learning organisations model further to improve the organisation's practices in the region and help organisations improve their competitive advantages. The model will be used to assess future learning needs within organisations.

### **Practitioners contributions and implications**

Government authorities and private and public organisations in the GCC countries have started massive exercises to streamline their process and organisational structure to adapt to the current environment changes and requirements. Organisations in the GCC started to downsize as part of what is known in the region as “business efficiency review” (Doha News, 2016). Management Consultancy firms such as McKenzie, PWC and Ernst & Young are closely working with government authorities and public and private organisations in the GCC countries to have a smooth and efficient restructure and downsizing. Also, part of this is to retain talented and qualified employees and increase their commitments for organisations' survival. Therefore, the research model is expected to provide practitioners with some guidelines on how to improve the affective commitment of their employees. The research is expected to benefit from improving the organisation's practices and strategies to retain skilled expatriates. It will also help organisations comply with the current budget constraint policies and spending cut strategies in the GCC countries. The research also provides an overview of the business environment that challenges encountering organisations and expatriates operating in the GCC countries. Therefore, the research can be used as a guide by those willing to penetrate the marketplaces and those expatriates who want to work in this region. It includes reviewing current learning and development practices, introducing new methods to assess learning needs, and, most notably, changing management perception on the meaning of learning organisations.

Upon completion of the research, it is planned to participate in conferences in and out of the region to present the research findings and, if possible, to publish in journals. The author's employer, who has sponsored and partially financed the author's studies, is looking for implementations' research findings. The engineering and construction organisations that participated in the research are also looking for the research findings to evaluate how potentially

they can improve their internal organisational practices and strategies. The research participants have requested to receive a copy of the findings after the completion of the research.

Moreover, the findings of this research may have an impact on public policies. The impact may result from the communication of the findings to public sectors in the region. Local resources dominate the public sector in the GCC countries. Moreover, the work environment in public organisations in the GCC countries does not motivate local resources to learn and progress in their career. Therefore, the GCC countries is heavily dependent on expatriates due to the lack of local skilled resources. Hence, this research model's implementation may have a potentially positive impact on these public organisations and their resources' performance. Furthermore, the research has explored one type of organisation in the private sector. However, it will be beneficial to explore the applicability of the public sector model and its impact on local employees to give the GCC countries local work environment characteristics.

### **Organisational contributions and implications**

Organisations can implement the model developed by this research through a detailed process at the three levels: individual, group, and organisational. At the individual level, organisations need to create learning opportunities by designing their jobs around continuous learning. For example, organisations may design rotation opportunities between departments or disciplines. So, employees in the design department can spend a week every few months within the construction department. This rotation will allow the design employees to learn construction experience. So, when the project progresses from the design phase to the construction phase, design employees will have opportunities. Moreover, this type of learning may benefit the employee in their future assignments and career progressions. Moreover, organisations need to improve their policies and process to promote inquiry and open dialogue with employees. Organisations need to implement systems to organise and to record employees' feedback for future improvement.

At the group level, organisations must implement systems to capture knowledge and lessons learned. Those systems should be easy to use and be embedded in the process, so it will not be looked at as additional work by the employees. The findings of the research illustrated that organisations are not implementing effective systems to capture and share knowledge. Therefore, extra effort must first explore effective systems that suit the type of lessons learned and the knowledge to be captured. Teamwork and collaboration are another process that needs to be taken into account by organisations. Their workplaces and internal policies and process have to be designed around team collaboration and knowledge sharing. Organisations need to implement an incentive scheme that motivates employees to share knowledge and collaborate to get the job done.

At organisational level, the organisations' leaders have to be trained to follow a leadership style that encourages employees to continuously learn. Leaders and managers will have to develop

a plan for professional development for their employees. Organisations will have to secure the budget required to fund those training and development plans. The plan can be agreed with employees during the yearly appraisal review. Moreover, organisations have to encourage their employees to propose innovative ideas to improve organisational processes and performance. A performance incentive scheme may be designed by organisations to reward employees for successfully implementing their ideas and proposals.

Organisations have to test their hired expatriates' cultural intelligence as part of the hiring or inter-transfer process. Moreover, cultural intelligence training needs to be provided to the talented employees who are expected to have assignments in the GCC countries or a multi-cultural work environment. Cultural intelligence training will increase the expatriates' ability to adapt to new cultural settings and absorb any culture shock. The higher the expatriates' cultural intelligence level, the better their performance and productivity and, in turn, the organisations' performance. Moreover, this training will be seen as a continuous learning opportunity by expatriates and part of their professional development. The implementation of the research model will potentially impact the organisation's overall performance and reduce the cost spent on replacing their resources. Moreover, the research will help organisations work on their weaknesses represented in their systems, processes, and practices.

It is crucial to acknowledge the impact of the current pandemic due to COVID-19 on the labour markets. The pandemic significantly impacts the GCC countries markets. The pandemic, combined with the decline in oil prices, has brought significant uncertainty to organisations in the GCC countries (Ivanov, 2020). Tens of thousands of expatriates have left the GCC countries since the start of this pandemic (Amnesty International, 2020). Therefore, organisations will need to work hard to backfill these job losses to ensure they maintain their competitiveness in the markets (Ivanov, 2020). According to Ivanov (2020: p.2), "Firms must do all they can to appear attractive to prospective employees, to bring expatriate workers back to GCC countries and to tempt nationals over to the private sector". Hence, organisations will benefit from this research is so important to guide organisations during these uncertain circumstances. The research would help organisations to attract expatriates with a focus on their cultural intelligence. the high level of cultural intelligence would help these expatriates to adjust and perform in these countries. Additionally, the research would help organisations in adjusting their policies to respond to the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The research would help organisations in the GCC countries to improve the affective commitment of their expatriates to survive in the current situation given the additional pressure added on them due to the pandemic.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has shed light on an essential topic in the GCC countries which is the organisations' competitive advantage in today's turbulent and agile business environment. This research explored the learning organisation concept as a mechanism to improve the affective organisational commitment of the expatriates in this region. The cultural intelligence influence was also considered as culture plays a key role in the GCC region's business environment. The model developed by this research is found to have a potentially positive influence on the expatriate organisation commitment in engineering and construction organisations operating in the GCC countries.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that there are several limitations to the research. First, the research focuses only on engineering organisations in the GCC countries, which therefore reflects the perspective of only one type of employee and organisation in a specific sector, region, and industry. Moreover, the results may be different if the research is conducted in a different sector or industry, even in the same region. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct similar research to study the model in different industries and companies.

The second limitation is the sample. The research sample was purposeful sampling based on the list of contacts and connections within these organisations. Therefore, the findings of the research may not be generalised. Therefore, future research is recommended to target bigger sample sizes and maybe a different sampling type for potential generalisation and the possibility of more accurate findings.

The third limitation is related to the scale used to compose the instrument of the research. The scales were developed in different setups and regions. They are mostly developed in western countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Moreover, there is evidence within the literature regarding the validity of the scales. For example, the organisational commitment questionnaires displayed low internal consistency according to the "rule of thumb" set by Schwandt & Marquardt (2000). Additionally, the cultural intelligence scales below thresholds model fit indices. Therefore, this research model has been implemented with caution, particularly if implemented in a different region or industry.

Forth, the sampling used in this research was cross-sectional at a specific point of time to measure the perception of the learning organisation dimensions and the level of organisational commitment. However, it will be beneficial to study the impact of the implementation of the model on the employees' organisational commitment over a period of time by using a longitudinal sampling. Moreover, it will be useful to expand the study's scope in the future to explore the impact of the implementation of the model on organisations' overall performance.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

The transformation of the business environment globally caused by advancing technology and globalisation has created various organizations' challenges. The GCC countries is similar to the rest of the world and is encountering changes in its business environment. However, the challenges and changes in the GCC countries are also caused by the fluctuation of its primary source of income – oil and gas. The drop in the oil and gas prices over the last five years to below USD\$50 per barrel (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Platt, 2017) has a significant negative impact on the economy of those countries. The negative economic impacts have forced those countries to explore sources of income by diversifying their sources. However, this economic reform has been accompanied by significant spending cuts, which has, in turn, been disseminated to organisations.

Organisations in the GCC countries are heavily dependent on expatriates' operations due to the lack of local skilled and qualified resources with the necessary experiences and knowledge (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Hvidt, 2013; Al-Malki, Scott-Jackson & Campbell, 2014). Those organisations have been using the monetary driver as their main mechanism to attract skilled and talented expatriates in the past. Due to the business practices' changes in recent years, the monetary mechanism is not considered the best option for organisations due to budget constraints. Hence, there is a crucial need for an alternative mechanism to support those organisations to survive and maintain their competitiveness. This research scope was to explore a mechanism for organisations to improve their employees' commitment in the GCC countries. The research has proposed a learning organisation as a solution. However, the research has focused on engineering consultancy organisations operating in the GCC countries.

The research has developed a model comprising the learning organisation dimensions associated with the business environment in the GCC countries. The research has considered cultural factors as a key player in the work environment in the GCC countries. The model comprised dimensions at three main levels: individual, group, and organisational. The model was found to have a significant positive impact on affective organisational commitment. Moreover, cultural intelligence moderation influence was explored. Cultural intelligence was found to have significant moderation influence at individual and organisational levels. In the absence of similar research in the developing countries, including the GCC region, this research has partially contributed to fill this gap in the literature. There are opportunities for future research to explore more in different industries, countries, and types of organisations.

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## APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### ■ Interview Details:

No.	Items	Answers
1	Interview Reference No.:	
2	Interviewee Name:	
3	Date and Time of interview:	
4	Interview Type and Location:	
5	Interview Time:	

### ■ Initial set of questions to be expanded based on the interview progresses:

How do you describe the Learning Organisation concept? Are you familiar with the different dimensions of Learning Organisations? How do you see it as a management approach? Do you see it as an alternative approach to increase employees' commitments?

#### a) Individual Level:

- Creating continuous learning opportunities
  - Are you implementing any strategy for continuous learning in your organisation? How is that?
  - Do you think that providing learning opportunities is a key dimension associated within the work environment in the GCC countries?
  - Why do you think so?
- Promoting inquiry and dialogue
  - Are you implementing any strategy that promotes employees' inquiry and dialogue within your organisation? How is that?
  - Do you think that the creation of a culture of questioning, providing feedback and enquiring is a key dimension associated within the work environment in the GCC countries?
  - Why do you think so?

#### b) Group/Team Level

- Encouraging collaboration and team learning
  - Are you implementing any strategy that encourages teams to collaborate and work together in a productive way within your organisation? How is that?
  - Do you think that the design of work to use groups to access different modes of thinking and team learning is a key dimension associated within the work environment in the GCC countries?  
Why do you think so?
- Creating systems to capture and share learning
  - Are you implementing any system for capturing and sharing knowledge and lesson learning within your organisation? How is that?

- Do you think that knowledge sharing through a well-maintained system that is accessible to employees is a key dimension associated within the work environment in the GCC countries?
- Why do you think so?

c) Organisational Level

- Empowering people towards a collective vision
  - Within your organisation, are your employees involved in setting, owning, and implementing a joint vision? How is that?
  - Do you think that the distribution of the responsibility close to decision-making is motivating employees to learn and to be accountable?
  - Why do you think so?
- Connecting the organisation to its environment
  - Within your organisation, is there a strategy that helps employees to recognise the result of their work and to scan the environment to improve the practice? How is that?
  - Do you think that connecting the organisation to its environment is a key dimension associated within the work environment in the GCC countries?
  - Why do you think so?
- Providing strategic leadership for learning
  - Within your organisation, are you following a leadership style that supports learning? How is that?
  - Do you think that providing strategic leadership for learning is a key dimension associated within the work environment in the GCC countries?
  - Why do you think so?

Do think that any other dimensions are associated with the work environment in the Gulf Co-operation Council Countries? Are there any other dimensions that can improve the employees' organisational commitment?



(Source of information: adapted from Marsick, & Watkins 2003)

## APPENDIX B: QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

# Learning Organisation, Affective Commitment and the Role of Cultural Intelligence

## Survey Flow

Standard: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (2 Questions)

Block: PART 1: DEMOGRAPHICS, EDUCATION AND BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS (6 Questions)

Standard: PART 2: LEARNING ORGANISATION (43 Questions)

Standard: PART 3: ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT (6 Questions)

Standard: PART 4: CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE (18 Questions)

Standard: PART 5: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS (1 Question)

---

Page Break

Start of Block: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Q1.1

**INTRODUCTION**

Dear participants, I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to read this information and considering your participation in this study. This is a research study that fulfils part of my Doctor of Business Administration at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, UK.

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTIGATION?**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the contribution of a Learning Organisation approach towards employees' affective commitment and the moderator role of Cultural Intelligence. It aims to explore and advance the understanding of how the Learning Organisation approach may be a potential mechanism to improve employees' commitments. The research focuses on the engineering and construction organisations operating in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries.

**DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?**

You are not obliged to participate in this study. You may withdraw your participation at any time without reason and without consequence. However, I would be grateful to you if you could spend some time in completing this short questionnaire as your input would offer insightful data for my research project. Moreover, there is no risk or discomfort involved in this study apart from your valuable time. Your anonymity will be ensured in any reporting of findings.

**WHAT WILL YOU DO IN THE PROJECT?**

As participants, you will be asked a few demographic questions (e.g. age, education ... etc.), followed by questions evaluating the Learning Organisation dimensions at individual, team and organisational levels, organisational commitment and Cultural Intelligence. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is highly valued for the completion of my research.

**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION IN THE PROJECT?**

Since this is an anonymised questionnaire, all information will be kept strictly confidential. The findings will be used in the final thesis that will be submitted to Nottingham Business School. Finally, all data will be stored in a secured passworded hard drive and will be destroyed after completion and acceptance of the research.

**RESEARCH ETHICS**

This investigation was granted ethical approval by Nottingham Trent University and its respective ethics committee.

Thank you for reading this information.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Researcher – Waleed Aboukhadra (waleed.aboukhadra2014@my.ntu.ac.uk)  
Director of the research - Dr Stefanos Nachmias (stefanos.nachmias@ntu.ac.uk)

**Q1.2 CONSENT FORM**

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this research. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason and without any consequences. I understand that any information obtained from this questionnaire will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.

I consent my participation in this research (4)

End of Block: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

---

Start of Block: PART 1: DEMOGRAPHICS, EDUCATION AND BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

Q2.1 What is Your Gender?

Male (1)

Female (2)

-----

Q2.2 What is your primary responsibility?

▼ Management (1) ... Other Please specify (7)

-----

Q2.3 What is your role?

▼ Senior Management (1) ... Non-management Technical/Professional (4)

-----

Q2.4 What is your current job title with your organisation?

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

Q2.5 How many hours per month of your own time do you spend on work-related learning?

▼ 0 hours (1) ... 36+ hours (5)

-----

Q2.6 How long have you been working for your organisation?

---

End of Block: PART 1: DEMOGRAPHICS, EDUCATION AND BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

---

Start of Block: PART 2: LEARNING ORGANISATION

Q3.1 In my organisation, people openly discuss mistakes in order to learn from them.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.2 In my organisation, people identify skills they need for future work tasks.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.3 In my organisation, people help each other to learn.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.4 In my organisation, people can get money and other resources to support their learning.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.5 In my organisation, people are given time to support learning.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.6 In my organisation, people view problems in their work as an opportunity to learn.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.7 In my organisation, people are rewarded for learning.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.8 In my organisation, people give open and honest feedback to each other.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.9 In my organisation, people listen to others' views before speaking.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Page Break

---

Q3.10 In my organisation, people are encouraged to ask “Why” regardless of rank.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.11 In my organisation, whenever people state their view they also ask what others think.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.12 In my organisation, people treat each other with respect.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.13 In my organisation, people spend time building trust with each other.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.14 In my organisation, teams/groups are confident that the organisation will act on their recommendations.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.15 In my organisation, teams/groups are rewarded for their achievements as a team/group.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.16 In my organisation, teams/groups focus both on the group’s task and on how well the group is working.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.17 In my organisation, teams/groups have the freedom to adapt their goals as needed.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.18 In my organisation, teams/groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussions or information collected.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.19 In my organisation, teams/groups treat members as equals, regardless of rank, culture or other differences.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Page Break

---

Q3.20 In my organisation, leaders continually look for opportunity to learn.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.21 In my organisation, leaders empower others to help carry out the organisation's vision.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.22 In my organisation, leaders ensure that the organisation's actions are consistent with its value.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.23 In my organisation, leaders generally support requests for learning opportunities and training.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.24 In my organisation, leaders mentor and coach those they lead.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.25 In my organisation, leaders share up-to-date information with employees about competitors, industry trends and organisational directions.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.26 My organisation builds alignment of visions across different levels and work groups.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.27 My organisation considers the impact of decisions on employee morale.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.28 My organisation creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.29 My organisation enables people to get required information at any time quickly and easily.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Page Break

---

Q3.30 My organisation encourages everyone to bring the customer's views into the decision-making process.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.31 My organisation encourages people to get answers from across the organisation when solving problems.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.32 My organisation encourages people to think from a global perspective.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.33 My organisation gives people choices in their work assignments.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.34 My organisation gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish their work.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.35 My organisation helps employees balance work and family.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.36 My organisation invites people to contribute to the organisation's vision.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.37 My organisation maintains an up-to-date database of employee skills.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.38 My organisation makes its lesson learned available to all employees.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.39 My organisation measures the results of the time and resources spent on training.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Page Break

---

Q3.40 My organisation recognises people for taking initiative.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.41 My organisation supports employees who take calculated risks.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.42 My organisation uses two-way communication on a regular basis, such as suggestion systems, electronic bulletin boards or town hall/open meetings.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3.43 My organisation works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

End of Block: PART 2: LEARNING ORGANISATION

---

Start of Block: PART 3: ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Q4.1 I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q4.2 I'm planning on working for another company within a period of three years.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q4.3 If I could start over again, I would choose to work for another company.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q4.4 If I received an attractive job offer from another company, I would take the job.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q4.5 If I wanted to do another job or function, I would look first at the possibilities within this company.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q4.6 If it were up to me, I will definitely be working for this company for the next five years.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

End of Block: PART 3: ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

---

Start of Block: PART 4: CULTURE INTELLIGENCE

Q5.1 I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.2 I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.3 I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.4 I am confident that I can socialise with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.5 I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.6 I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural background.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.7 I am sure I can deal with stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.8 I change my nonverbal behaviour when a cross-cultural situation requires it.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.9 I change my verbal behaviour (e.g. accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Page Break

---

Q5.10 I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.11 I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.12 I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.13 I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.14 I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.15 I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.16 I know the marriage systems of other cultures.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.17 I know the rules (e.g. vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.

▼ Strongly agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5.18 I know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviours in other cultures.

▼ Strongly Agree (1) ... Strongly disagree (5)

End of Block: PART 4: CULTURE INTENLIGENCE

---

Start of Block: PART 5: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Q6.1 Any additional comments that will help in achieving the aim of this research will be appreciated.

---

---

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---

---

End of Block: PART 5: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

---

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM SAMPLE

### F1\_ CONSENT FORM\_INTERVIEW

**Title:** Can Learning Organisation and Affective Commitment Contribute towards Employee Retention within Engineering and Construction Organisations in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries

**Name of researcher:** Waleed Aboukhadra

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

This study aims to investigate the impact of Learning Organisations and to investigate the effect the Learning Organisation approach may have on the employees' affective commitment and employees' retention. A Learning Organisation has been seen as a potential approach in the GCC. The research focuses on Engineering and Construction organisations operating the region.

You have been chosen because you are working for an engineering and construction organisation that operates in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you withdraw, the information collected before that point cannot be erased and may still be used in the research analysis. The findings will be used in the final thesis that will be submitted to Nottingham Business School. All data will be kept strictly confidential and protected.

Moreover, there is no risk or discomfort involved in this study apart from your valuable time. Any reporting of findings will ensure your personal anonymity.

If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. The interview will relate to the dimensions of the learning organisation. Each interview is likely to last around 30 minutes.

Thank you for reading this information sheet, and for considering taking part in this study. If you decide you would like to take part in the research, please sign the following consent form. You will be given a copy of that consent form to keep.

**Please read and confirm your consent to being interviewed for this research by initialling the appropriate box(es) and signing and dating this form**

1. I confirm that the purpose of the project has been explained to me, that I have been given information about it in writing and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research.
  
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any implications to my legal rights.
  
3. I give permission for the interview to be tape-recorded by research staff on the understanding that the tape will be destroyed at the end of the research.
  
4. I give consent for direct quotations from my interview(s) to be used in written outputs during the research. I understand that any quotations will be anonymously used in a non-attributable way in the research.
  
5. I agree to take part in this research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of interviewee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of researcher taking consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## APPENDIX D : PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(Sample)

### **Participant Information Sheet**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

This study aims to investigate the impact of Learning Organisations to investigate the effect the Learning Organisation approach may have on the employees' affective commitment and employees' retention. A Learning Organisation has been seen as a potential approach in the GCC. The research focuses on Engineering and Construction organisations operating the region.

You have been chosen because of you are working for engineering and construction organisation that operates in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you withdraw, the information collected before that point cannot be erased and may still be used in the research analysis. The findings will be used in the final thesis that will be submitted to Nottingham Business School. All data will be kept strictly confidential and protected.

Moreover, there is no risk or discomfort involved in this study apart from your valuable time. Any reporting of findings will ensure your personal anonymity.

If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in an online Web-based Self-Administrated survey. The Survey is likely to take around XX – XX minutes to complete. The survey comprises XX pages; please monitor the progress bar at the top of each page to make sure all questions are answered. Please answer the questions by choosing one single answer. There are no right or wrong answers. Therefore, avoid spending too much time on a single question as your first thoughts are usually your best.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researcher, who will do his best to answer your questions. Please contact Mr. Waleed Aboukhadra for any additional questions (email: waleed.aboukhadra2014@my.ntu.ac.uk, phone +974-6609 9724).

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this study. If you decide you would like to take part in the research, please go ahead and proceed with the survey using the link below. By clicking the below link, you confirm that you accept the study benefits and risks. Thank you very much for your time and support.

[LINK TO THE SURVEY WEBSITE](#)

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW LETTER SAMPLE

(Sample)

### F2\_LETTER TO ORGANISATION\_INTERVIEW

DD MM YYYY

**Organisation Name,**

Dear *HR Manager,*

I am a student on the Doctor of Business Administration at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, UK. As part of my course, I am conducting a research study titled: Can Learning Organisation and Affective Commitment Contribute towards employee retention within engineering and construction organisations in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC).

The research aims to investigate the effect the Learning Organisation approach may have on the employees' affective commitment and employees' retention. The Learning Organisation has been seen as a potential approach in the GCC. The research focuses on engineering organisations operating within the region.

There is no risk or discomfort involved in this study apart from your employees' valuable time. Any reporting of findings will ensure your personal or organisational anonymity.

For those that they are willing to take part in the research, they will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. The interview will relate to the dimensions of Learning Organisational and each interview is likely to last around 30 minutes. I am aiming to invite approximately seven to ten employees across the GCC Region.

I can assure you that I will make every effort to ensure the study does not disrupt the working environment in anyway. I am applying ethical approval for the research from Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, UK.

If you have any concerns about my research, please contact my Director of Studies Dr Stefanos Nachmias, +44 (0) 115 848 2795 and/or [stefanos.nachmias@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:stefanos.nachmias@ntu.ac.uk)

Yours sincerely

Waleed Aboukhadra  
Cost, Planning and Business Support Manager  
Mobile: +974-6609-9724  
Email: [waleed.aboukhadra2014@my.ntu.ac.uk](mailto:waleed.aboukhadra2014@my.ntu.ac.uk)

## APPENDIX F: SURVEY LETTER SAMPLE

(Sample)

### F3\_LETTER TO ORGANISATION\_SURVEY

DD MM YYYY

**Organisation Name,**

Dear *HR Manager*,

I am a student on the Doctor of Business Administration at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, UK. As part of my course, I am conducting a research titled: Can Learning Organisation and Affective Commitment Contribute towards employee retention within engineering and construction organisations in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC).

The research aims to investigate the effect the Learning Organisation approach may have on the employees' affective commitment and employees' retention. The Learning Organisation has been seen as a potential approach in the GCC. The research focuses on the engineering and construction organisations operating within the region.

There is no risk or discomfort involved in this research apart from your employees' valuable time. Any reporting of findings will ensure your personal or organisational anonymity.

I need your agreement/consent to approach the employees currently working for your organisation. The target is for employees to complete an online Self-Administered Web-based survey. I am aiming to invite approximately from XXX to XXX employees across the GCC Region.

I can assure you that I will make every effort to ensure the study does not disrupt the working environment in anyway. I am applying ethical approval for the research from Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, UK.

If you have any concerns about my research, please contact my Director of Studies Dr Stefanos Nachmias, +44 (0) 115 848 2795 and/or [stefanos.nachmias@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:stefanos.nachmias@ntu.ac.uk)

Yours sincerely

Waleed Aboukhadra  
Cost, Planning and Business Support Manager  
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## APPENDIX J: ETHICAL APPROVAL

RE: Ethical Approval Submission

- Flag for following up. Start by 24/04/2017. Due by 24/04/2017.
- You replied on Thu 20/04/2017 16:49

DA

DBA Admin  
Thu 20/04/2017 14:50  
To: Aboukhadra, Waleed 2014 (PGR)  
Cc: Nachmias, Stefanos; Chen, Gwen; Kirk, Susan



Dear Waleed,

Thank you for submitting an **ethical approval** application for DBA Document 4. I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has been approved.

Your submission deadline for Document 4 is **23 May 2019**.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Angela

**Angela Wallas**  
Research Administrator  
Nottingham Trent University Doctoral School  
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