Lifelong Learning through Workplace Learning:
A University Perspective

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1. Introduction

An inquiry into workplace learning began in the 1950s (Weber, 1955) and it has become one of the most frequently mentioned research topics among scholars in various contexts. The concept has received much attention in sectors including psychology, economics, organizational development, human resources management, sociology (Fuller & Unwin, 2011), and education (Boud & Garrick, 1999; Fuller & Unwin, 2011). Several communities of practice recognize workplace learning as a mechanism for self-development. According to OECD (2000), the perspectives of learning in workplaces have become globally important because skills and workplace competence are a priority for every government, business, and individual for skill development, (as cited in Billett et al., 2008). Similarly, due to the rapid changes and the challenging situations in the current world of work, several businesses require the ability to adapt and learn for innovative practices and updated knowledge (Haris & Afdaliah, 2013; Vaughan, 2008), as Illeris (2003) wrote, "human competence is becoming an increasingly decisive resource and parameter of competition" (p.167). Fuller and Unwin (2011) added that more work on workplace learning has been carried out due to its potential, including workplaces as learning places, workplaces as catalysts for learning, and workplaces associated with governmental policies to increase competitiveness in international markets.

As mentioned earlier, the learning frameworks at work respond to development needs in various areas. Some scholars noted that the principles of workplace learning are important for practices in human resources management and can enhance learning activities in the field (Brandi & Iannone, 2021; Crouse et al., 2011; Jacobs & Park, 2009; Kowalski & Russell, 2020). They serve as a guide for managing learning, improving structures and values, as well as for developing an effective system of learning in workplaces (Brandi & Iannone, 2021). More specifically, the educational sector also views workplace learning as a necessary component in providing skills for individuals and preparing them for the world of work (Billett et al., 2008). Billett and colleagues (2008) further pointed out that workplace learning in a university context has been integrated into programs to prepare students for their future career readiness. Generally, workplace learning is necessary for every individual who works in any type of workplace because employees need to

develop and update their knowledge and skills (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005). Elkjaer and Wahlgren (2005) also claimed that "Workplace learning has its roots in adult education with a clear focus on the individual as the learner." (p.16). Billett and colleagues (2008) added a similar idea, noting that learning at work is conceptually linked to the process of adult learning as it discusses what to offer for learning and/or how to support learning. Moreover, the respective literature confirms that workplace learning is an integral part of vocational and professional training and education (Weber, 2013).

Furthermore, an inquiry into workplace learning has appeared in the field of education. According to the literature reviewed, there have been two research scopes on workplace learning: a large portion of the first generation of workplace learning focused on figuring out how job experiences may enhance learning processes in educational institutions (schools, colleges, and universities), while the second generation of studies looked into the characteristics of work and workplaces as learning sites (Billett et al., 2008). However, past literature pointed out that enhancing the implementation of workplace learning in higher education contexts is still struggling. It could be a barrier for universities to integrate approaches to workplace learning that lead to having to employ less traditional teaching and learning methods (Johnson, 2001). A study by Abbasi and colleagues (2015) found that the faculty members sampled were unwilling to change due to individual attitudes and perceptions, such as inflexibility, a lack of lessons learned, and a weak culture of learning. This observation aligns with the statement by Boud and Garrick (1999) that learning at work has to be formalized and/or included. These tendencies indicate that workplace learning is not effectively integrated into the current educational framework.

Although there has been significant investigation into workplace learning, most studies focus on the relationship between job experiences and the learning process, as well as the nature of workplaces as learning environments (Billett et al., 2008). However, there is limited knowledge about how workplace learning is integrated into the actual jobs of university personnel, including the conditions under which workplace learning is implemented. Specifically, there is a lack of understanding about the predictors and necessary contributors for facilitating learning at work in higher education. As Fuller and Unwin (2011) recommend, to understand the detailed situations of workplace learning, further research into individuals' learning engagement in workplaces should be conducted. Likewise, qualitative data, through interviews, should be employed in further inquiries to clearly understand individuals' self-reporting on their learning situations. Carrying out

a qualitative research design helps researchers comprehend the sample's general points of view, specific issues, as well as related behaviors (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Dawson, 2002). In this paper, the author will review her recently published articles and reflect on the overview of workplace learning implementation in higher education, specific key points, some possible barriers that could prevent faculty members from learning in their environments, as well as predictors of the realization of workplace learning.

2.   Theoretical framework

2.1   Understanding workplace learning conceptualizations

Hitherto literature pointed out that the conceptualization of "workplace learning" has been analyzed by various authors. According to Boud and Garrick (1999), there are two key terms: work and learning. These terms belonged to different categories; work was related to production, while learning was allocated to education. Due to the changing world, these two categories have been combined and cannot be separated because learning is necessary throughout one's lifetime, including the time before employment status (Boud & Garrick, 1999). Cairns and Malloch (2011, as cited in Zhao & Ko, 2018) suggest that the concept of workplace learning consists of three key terms: work, place, and learning. "Work" refers to the process of engaging people in activities, "place" is associated with the physical space where people work, and "learning" covers any work-related activities as sources of knowledge. There is still more evidence that the concepts of work and learning are interconnected (Barnett, 1999; Cacciattolo, 2015; Zhao & Ko, 2018), for instance, work can be part of learning, and learning can be part of work (Barnett, 1999). Workplaces act as learning environments where individuals acquire knowledge and upgrade their skills (Cacciattolo, 2015).

Analyzing the core concept of workplace learning is necessary among communities of practice. It is useful for all workplaces to clearly understand the concept of learning at work to implement it effectively. Some scholars (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005; Haris & Afdaliah, 2013; Zhao & Ko, 2018) have mentioned that workplace learning is considered a very complex concept to understand since the theory cannot be clarified in just one element (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005), and it is associated with other concepts and models (Haris & Afdaliah, 2013). For instance, the frameworks of learning in workplaces are also linked to human resources development perspectives (Billett, 2001; Jacobs & Park, 2009; Kowalski & Russell, 2020; etc.) and theories of

learning (Illeris, 2011; Jacobs & Park, 2009). Therefore, defining the term 'workplace learning' inherently reflects the broader concept of learning. Several scholars have proposed different definitions of learning. Boud and Garrick (1999) describe learning as encompassing thinking and acting in our daily lives, including activities around the workplace. According to Billett (2001), learning happens everywhere and is not restricted to a training room or classroom. As he puts it, "It is ongoing in our everyday experiences. If we are thinking and acting, we are learning" (p.6). Generally, there is a misunderstanding among people that learning never happens as we work (Billett, 2001; Tynjälä, 2008) because the workplace is perceived solely as a place for offering services and production (Billett, 2001).

Fundamentally, learning processes consist of two integrated aspects: the cognitive, expertise, and knowledge aspect, and the emotional, attitudes, and motivational aspect (Illeris, 2003). A similar statement was made by Elkjaer and Wahlgren (2005), explaining that learning is directly related to a person's every action, both in living and working, because learning is considered to be ubiquitous and cannot be excluded as a human existence. Therefore, the definition of workplace learning may be best described by Marsick (1988), who states that learning in workplaces covers the transfer of knowledge and skills required for addressing problems and performing tasks in a community of practice, using training and educational approaches. Consistently, Jacobs and Park (2009) write that workplace learning refers to "the process used by individuals when engaged in training programs, education and development courses, or some type of experiential learning activity to acquire the competence necessary to meet current and future work requirements" (p.134). According to Bauer & Gruber (2007), learning at work refers to making changes in the so-called "scripts and routines," which are modifications of individuals' actions and work practices, as well as adaptations of the workplace as a whole. Learning at work has a broader sense than training and education (Crouse et al., 2011). Additionally, more authors accept that this type of learning constitutes a process of transaction and participation in and around the workplace (Brandi & Iannone, 2021; Crouse et al., 2011; Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005).

More theoretically, workplace learning has two key components: agents, which refer to actors including individuals, groups, and workplaces, and objects, which are learning processes (Scherf-Braune, 2000, as cited in Haris & Afdaliah, 2013). This means learning at work will take place if the workplace considers providing these elements. Vaughan (2008) notes that the framework of learning at work tends to be aligned with practical rather than theoretical approaches.

This reflects the observation that most learning at work is socially and informally characterized, such as knowledge learned through consultations, both within and outside working groups (Eraut et al., 2000, as cited in Eraut, 2007; Hirsh, 2010). According to Billett and colleagues (2008), the provision of learning in workplaces differs from that in educational settings; the teacher plays a key role in guiding learners to learn in the institutions, while in work environments, the senior employee is the key person who guides and assists less experienced colleagues. Billett and colleagues further note that, unlike educational settings, workplace learning involves acquiring knowledge from errors at work, work reflection, guided learning, and experiential learning. Furthermore, learning at work brings two major outcomes: increased competencies, skills, and self-perceived confidence at an individual level, and increased work effectiveness at an organizational level.

2.2 Workplace as a learning environment

It is evident from different perspectives that workplaces serve as learning sites (Billett, 2001, 2002; Fuller & Unwin, 2011; Hager, 2004; O'connor, 2004; etc.). According to Billett (2001), workplaces are more than spaces that provide services and/or productions; they can be additional sites for learning work-related knowledge and experiences. Similarly, Fuller and Unwin (2011) point out that the concept of the workplace has changed from merely a place to work to a place where people perform their tasks and learn. A study by Billett (2002) found that employees accepted the relevance and applicability of learning experience at work, claiming that they were able to combine new knowledge and their initial experiences for better practices. In a work environment, individuals can obtain a full understanding of how to work (O'connor, 2004), encounter learning opportunities for professional development (Hager, 2004), and receive direct assistance from senior colleagues (Billett, 2001). Since learning at work involves sharing practices, situations, and guidance from others, this is how learning and knowledge acquisition are developed (Billett, 2002). Elkjaer and Wahlgren (2005) also explain that workplaces serve as places where individuals transfer what they have learned from school into their work. Moreover, several scholars have agreed with this perspective. For instance, Hoyrup and Elkjaer (2006) write, "In a workplace, the most important sources of learning are the challenges of work itself, the organization of work, and the social interactions at work" (p. 29). Through socialization at work, individuals can learn (Billett, 2004; Cairns & Malloch, 2011, as cited in Zhao & Ko, 2018). Billett and colleagues (2008)

state that workplaces offer sources of learning about work and through work, in which one participates, observes, and engages in tasks independently.

2.3 How and what people learn at work

As described above, learning takes place as we work. Several researchers have explored what individuals learn at work and how the acquired knowledge is developed. According to the literature reviewed (Billett, 1996; Illeris, 2011; Jacobs & Park, 2009; Kowalski & Russell, 2020; Hager, 1998; etc.), learning in workplaces occurs in various ways and the knowledge acquired varies. One focus of learning at work is the concept of "making judgments"; individual learners are introduced to how to judge things and situations in workplace environments (Hager,1998). Similarly, what people learn can be categorized using Eraut and his colleagues' model (2004, as cited in Tynjälä, 2008), which divides learning outcomes at work into several categories, including:

1. **Task performance**: Refers to activeness, fluency, and the skills necessary for performing tasks.

2. **Awareness and Understanding**: Refers to the ability to understand situations, co-workers, issues, risks, etc. in and around the workplace.

3. **Personal Development**: Refers to the ability to evaluate oneself, manage one's own emotions, develop relationships and networks, and learn from past practices.

4. **Teamwork:** Refers to working with others, planning, and managing problems with colleagues.

5. **Role performance**: Refers to leadership in management, task supervision, handling crises, etc.

6. **Academic Knowledge and Skills:** Refers to the ability to use learned knowledge and skills, systematic thinking, and practices.

7. **Decision-Making and Problem-Solving:** Refers to the ability to deal with challenges, make decisions, and work under pressure.

8. **Judgement:** Refers to the ability to prioritize tasks, estimate outcomes, and analyze issues.

Indeed, the aim of workplace learning focuses on individuals' upskilling and developing competencies responsive to the goal of work and the needs of the workplace (Jacobs & Park, 2009). When it comes to how individuals learn at work, there are several recommended practices, according to the literature previously referred to. Billett (1996, 2004) suggests that learning can

happen through experts' guidance; sharing by experts can help individuals overcome challenges in tasks. Furthermore, less experienced people can observe and imitate the best practices of their seniors because interaction with more experienced colleagues is a key component of knowledge construction (Billett el al., 2008). This aligns with the core concept of adult education, as most adults are likely to learn best through practices, observations, and listening to others (Billett, 1996), and adults perform as learners (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005). Consistently, Billett (2001a) proposes key predictors of learning in workplaces, including:

1. Daily task engagement;
2. Direct guidance by colleagues; and
3. Indirect guidance by others in the workplace.

According to Slotte and Tynjälä (2005), individuals will learn even more if they interact and network with others; individuals who network and share knowledge with others will advance beyond their counterparts who do not. Through a review of a wide array of literature, Tynjälä (2008) notes that people learn through six primary methods, including learning from the job itself, sharing knowledge with colleagues, working with stakeholders, facing challenges, formal training, and learning through "extra-work contexts."

Moreover, knowledge can be developed through learning from errors (Billett et al., 2008). This method allows individuals to acquire knowledge by reflecting on task performance. Naturally, learning occurs around and in workplaces as people have reflections on their everyday actions at work and share their failures and successes (Cacciattolo, 2015; Fuller & Unwin, 2011; Hirsh, 2010; Kowalski & Russell, 2020). Kowalski and Russell (2020) recognize the significance of reflection, acknowledging it as fundamental to learning in communities of practice. The idea of reflection supports individuals' learning in various professions, such as teaching faculty members, researchers, manufacturers, human resources development specialists, government actors, etc. (Schön, 1983, as cited in Kowalski & Russell, 2020). McLagan (2017) suggests that reflection can be facilitated by self-questioning (as cited in Kowalski & Russell, 2020), which is called "self-directed learning," one of the learning activities in workplace learning (Brandi & Iannone, 2021). Another method of learning at work involves adaptations, which entail making changes from traditional to new practices. According to Bauer and Gruber (2007), learning refers to changes in so-called "scripts and routines." Bauer and Gruber further explain that learning will occur if

individuals' actions and work practices are modified, and changes in routines may require negotiations and decisions by colleagues if group learning is expected to take place.

2.4   Human resources development vs workplace learning concepts

The frameworks of workplace learning and human resources development are claimed to be linked to each other (Akdere & Conceição, 2006; Billett, 2001; Crouse et al., 2011; Jacobs & Park, 2009; etc.). Both of them concern what workplaces offer individuals to learn, how they are facilitated for learning, and how they interact with the affordances provided by the workplaces. The combination of the concepts of HRD and adult education is helpful with respect to the realization of workplace learning implementation and can limit competence gaps in workplaces (Akdere & Conceição, 2006). Additionally, providing a learning opportunity at work may require a human resource management approach to avoid conflicts among employees, as contestation can bring inequality in learning opportunities at work (Billett, 2001). Billett further explains that workplaces are considered "contested terrain" where contestation happens among employees themselves, employees and management, and units and the human resource management division. The link between the two concepts exists because they have common purposes and characteristics (Akdere & Conceição, 2006). Both fields share similar dimensions, including skills advancement, incentive arrangements, and work design (Brandi & Iannone, 2021; Jacobs & Park, 2009).

The tendency may be true. Jacobs and Park (2009) mention that the affairs of human resource management focus on enhancing individuals' competencies and values as well as strengthening the workplace, and these initiatives are considered learning. Consistently, human resources management benefits from workplace learning frameworks in its professional development, especially, in areas of change management, technology, and other competencies (Crouse et al., 2011). It seems that Kowalski and Russell (2020) support the interconnectedness between the frameworks of human resources development and workplace learning. It is reported that the roles of the practitioners in the field of human resources management are to sharpen knowledge, upskill employees, and prepare them for work practices through on-the-job training, guiding recruits, and increasing their abilities to confront the challenges at work. For all these missions, the concept of workplace learning has become a necessary tool for human resources management professionals (Kowalski & Russell, 2020). Kowalski and Russell further add that to facilitate learning at work

effectively, individuals should be provided with tools, procedures, and methods that are well supported by human resources management.

2.5   Management of workplace learning

A scholarly community in the field of workplace learning has great interest in finding out how learning at work can be managed effectively. There is no single approach to learning in workplaces as the conditions and contexts differ (Billett, 2001; Illeris, 2003; Tynjälä, 2008; Vaughan, 2008). Tynjälä (2008) writes, "Workplaces in different fields have different working cultures and learners in the workplace come from different age groups, different educational and professional backgrounds and different positions in organization" (p.132). This means that a set of best practices in promoting workplace learning in one environment may not be workable in another one because learning activities at one workplace reflect the culture and traditions, the characteristics of needs, opportunities, situations, and challenges of the respective context (Vaughan, 2008). However, the literature reviewed (Billett, 2001; Fuller & Unwin, 2011) points out that there is a clear relationship between the workplace and its associated employees. Billett (2001) mentions that the affordance of the workplace is a strong predictor of the implementation of workplace learning. A workplace is influenced by the people working in it, and in turn, the employees' actions are also affected by the workplace. Several scholars have proposed ideas as practical guides when implementing learning activities in workplaces. For instance, every community of practice should consider developing itself as a learning environment so that individuals can, not only work but also learn, share their knowledge, and participate in all social activities provided by the workplace (Vaughan, 2008). However, individuals' time spent on learning and working must be balanced, otherwise the workplace will not gain benefits (Marsick, 1988). Marsick adds that the workplace should prioritize the professional development of its employees, for instance, by encouraging them to self-reflection.

Conceptually, workplace learning is rooted in adult education (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005), and there is a link between learning at work and the learning of adults (Billett et al., 2008). Similarly, it is suggested that most adults are likely to learn best through practice, observation, and listening to others (Billett, 1996). Learning management, therefore, should be in line with the needs of adult learning. O'connor (2004) stresses the significance of meeting learners' needs and suggests that practitioners in the field of workplace learning should be aware that the learning

needs of individuals are not the same. More accordingly, it is confirmed that knowing individuals' backgrounds is crucial for the workplace in providing learning opportunities; without knowing the learners' depositions and attitudes about learning, the provided learning sources are pointless (Vaughan, 2008). Developing a variety of learning environments and all forms of learning, such as informal and formal settings, is another important option (Eraut, 2007; O'connor, 2004; Vaughan, 2008). According to Eraut (2007), formal learning activities are more important for recruits in providing them with learning experiences; however, a combination of both formal and informal learning methods is encouraged.

As mentioned earlier, the workplace influences its employees' learning. It is a good idea that the workplace inspires individuals to learn (Eraut, 2007; Hart, 2019, as cited in Kowalski & Russell, 2020); through this way, individuals should be given opportunities, for instance, to participate in the decision-making process (Marsick, 1988). It is, however, a challenge for workplaces to translate what they desire to do into actual implementations (Marsick, 1988). Having analyzed the concept of learning at work, Illeris (2011) proposes predictors of workplace learning, indicating that whether individuals learn at work or not in a social learning situation concerns three key aspects: 1) the "content dimension," which includes individuals' knowledge, skills, senses and attitudes about learning and the content; 2) the "incentive dimension," which covers individuals' sensations, emotions, and motivations for learning; and 3) the "interaction dimension," which consists of individuals' contact, communication, and sharing in the learning process. These three dimensions contribute to knowledge construction at an individual level.

The implementation of workplace learning should not be a one-way process; interaction between the workplace and the employees who are learners in the context is key to creating the workplace as a learning environment. The differences in perspectives between employers and employees can affect the learning process. For instance, employees will not be motivated to learn and will not learn anything if their choices and perspectives are ignored (Vaughan, 2008). Even worse, the matter described may lower their confidence in work performance. Eraut (2007) mentions that confidence stands as a key component for individuals' learning at work; by having confidence, they can do things and be proactive in searching for new knowledge. Eraut further explains that individuals' confidence is developed through achieving challenges in tasks and is predicted by the extent to which they are supported by colleagues and the workplace. A recent study by Eraut and colleagues (2000) finds that there is a clear relationship between confidence,

support, and challenge (as cited in Eraut, 2007). Simply put, trust and/or relationship between employer and employee is a key factor. Fuller and Unwin (2011) recognize the importance of relations and harmony within the workplace; in any workplace with conflictual conditions, learning in those contexts is questionable. The relationship at work can be strengthened through monitoring by the employer.

2.6 Difficulties in enhancing learning at work

Difficulties or limitations inevitably appear when enhancing workplace learning. Several difficulties are raised in the scholarly community. Stephen Billett, a prominent researcher in the field of workplace learning, investigated obstacles that impede the occurrence of learning at work. In his initial work, it was revealed that possible limitations of enhancing workplace learning were: 1) inappropriate knowledge constructions; 2) limited access to authentic learning; 3) a lack of experts; 4) a lack of expertise; 5) a lack of in-depth understanding of some knowledge; and 6) limited access to educational media (Billett, 1995). Later, a more updated investigation introduced five limitations: 1) learning inappropriate practices; 2) competitive environments at work that hinder access to learning and guidance; 3) "difficulties in learning knowledge not readily accessible in the workplace;" 4) a lack of expertise and experience needed for work practices; and 5) demotivation for learning participation among employees (Billett, 2001a, as cited in Billett, 2002). The latter points out that competitive environments at work matter because they are associated with learning opportunities for individuals. As Billett (2001) notes, workplaces are considered "contested terrain" where contestation occurs among employees, between employees and management, and between units and the human resource management division. Billett observes that this contestation brings inequality in learning opportunities at work. Simply put, competitiveness does not only affect access to learning sources but also the motivation for learning among individuals.

More recent works (Crouse et al., 2011; Zhao & Ko, 2018) have found a similar tendency. Some barriers to workplace learning implementation include a lack of time, budget, expertise, trainers, and facilitators who guide job-related tasks, referred to as "resource constraints" (Crouse et al., 2011). Zhao and Ko (2018) acknowledge that difficulties exist and further add that it is common for workplaces to encounter issues in developing positive environments for employees. Their learning progress is affected due to a lack of psychological and professional development support, leading to decreased job satisfaction. This matter requires significant attention and quality

management support by the workplace. According to several researchers (Billett, 1996; Newman, 1985), the culture of the workplace, which includes the tradition of learning management, seems to be a factor influencing individuals' learning progress. Similarly, workplace cultures contribute to the development of capacities of both individuals and the workplace (Schuller, 2021). Newman (1985) supports the view that the politics of the workplace can hinder the implementation of workplace learning if it does not foster a positive learning environment, for instance, if there is a lack of knowledge sharing. Negative learning management may include offering learning content that does not meet the learners' needs. Marsick (1988) points out that employees are not likely to fully participate in sharing ideas and decision-making processes. Billett (1996), however, further explains that the restriction of learning management in the workplace may be addressed by developing a structured learning pathway that assures full engagement in goal-directed activities by all employees. More consistently, available spaces should be organized by the workplace so that all the learning needs of the learners/employees are met (Billett, 2001).

Another tendency that appears in scholarly discussion is that learning by individuals needs to be authentic and applicable. Billett (1995) mentions that not every learning opportunity supports work performance; individuals can acquire inappropriate knowledge and develop a negative mindset. Illeris (2003) confirms that individual learning is likely not to be a relevant source unless the individual follows the approach of the workplace. Moreover, Eraut (2007) raises another possible limitation: the appraisal system, which can impede the implementation of learning in workplaces. If the system does not function well, it can lower motivation and engagement in learning among employees.

3.   Methodology

Among several other works, a research approach involving a literature review has been employed to investigate the conceptualizations of workplace learning. According to the literature reviewed, past authors have provided rich data and knowledge of learning at work in general, such as what people learn as they work, how learning in workplaces occurs, required conditions of workplace learning, and an overview of the frameworks. However, it requires empirical evidence to understand more about learning environments in different workplaces and contexts. Moreover, previous research has revealed little understanding of the nature of learning at work in universities and colleges. Therefore, further empirical studies are encouraged.

In this paper, the author will discuss the situation of workplace learning in higher education by reflecting on her three published papers. One was conducted with an "integrative review of literature" and the other two were carried out using an interview method, collecting qualitative data from interviewing faculty members working at a Lao university. These two methods correspond to the needs and objectives of the author's current research. According to the literature (Newman & Gough, 2020; Tavares de Souza et al., 2010; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005), an integrative review of literature analyzes perspectives from both empirical and non-empirical papers to provide an overview of the problems regarding a specific topic (Tavares de Souza et al., 2010). This method is recognized as a systematic review approach that combines secondary and primary data to interpret findings in response to a research question (Newman & Gough, 2020).

Practically, the current author followed steps, as recommended by Whittemore and Knafl (2005). Initially, guiding questions were set. Next, the process of identifying and evaluating the literature was carried out, based on set criteria to ensure the relevance of the sources. Then the sources were analyzed and the findings were captured according to the research questions before being reported systematically. With this method, the current author found seven key predictors of the realization of learning at work in the context of higher education. The predictors include "individual learning", "team learning", "the organizational culture of learning", "leadership", "partnership", "the employer-employee relationship", and "the national policy system" (Vannasy & Sengsouliya, 2022). The paper points out that enhancing workplace learning in a university context requires the consideration of such important factors. Even though the paper synthesizes a wide array of literature and related articles, the findings obtained only showed the theoretical tendency of the topic studied. The findings lack empirical evidence and clear discussions on some particular points of view, such as what workplace learning means to individuals, how they perceive learning as they work, and what they consider to be their obstacles and contributors to learning in workplaces. This means, other points require further clarification through context-based inquiry.

As mentioned earlier, the other two papers analyzed qualitative data collected from face-to-face interviews with sampled faculty members working at a university in Laos. The research method aimed at offering the participants spaces to share their thoughts, perceived attitudes, and experiences on a particular topic (Boyce & Neale, 2006). In these two papers, the author employed a "deductive category assignment" for her analyses. Following Schreier's methodological concepts (2014), the author carried out steps starting from establishing a coding framework,

including category names and definitions, anchor examples, and coding guidelines. Then the coded data was assigned to the developed categories, and to ensure reliability, a summative check was carried out (Mayring, 2000). According to the papers, the findings presented the required conditions and possible barriers to implementing workplace learning. It was indicated that three key conditions should be considered when facilitating learning at work in higher education, including "individual-related", "organizational-related" and "environmental-related components." Regarding the barriers, it was revealed that learning at work by faculty members tended to be more associated with individual and organizational factors. Even though the interviews reflected the actual situations of learning in workplaces, the findings were from one case study which cannot represent other higher education institutions. It is, therefore, recommended to use the findings with careful attention. Another limitation was the fact that the tendency was based on a small number of informants. Moreover, the papers did not compare the differences among the participants concerning the demographic groups due to the nature of the qualitative research design. Further research should consider maximizing the size of cases and/or combining both quantitative and qualitative data because quantitative data can be used to explain the numeric trends and the relationships between variables (Creswell, 2012).

4.   Overview of the published papers

In this section, the introduction of the previously published papers on workplace learning by the current author is presented, starting from Sub-study One "A Systematic Review of Workplace Learning in Higher Education," Sub-study Two "The Conditions for Workplace Learning Implementation in Laotian Higher education," and Sub-study Three "The Barriers to Workplace Learning Implementation in a Laotian University Context." Each sub-study is briefly introduced, explaining its essential contributions to the current reflection paper. Detailed descriptions are as follows.

4.1 Sub-study 1: "Key predictors of the implementation of workplace learning in higher education"

This article was successfully published in *Studies in Adult Education and Learning (SAEL)* in 2023. The summary of the article is as follows:

Literature indicates that frameworks for workplace learning are highly valuable for different organizations, including higher education institutions. It is even more significant for

institutions to integrate these concepts into their practices, as such organizations develop people's knowledge, skills, and experiences. Workplace learning conceptualizations have appeared widely in a vast array of literature. However, little is known about the implementation of workplace learning in higher education. The current author, therefore, aimed to develop an understanding of this topic. She conducted research using a systematic review of the literature to identify papers and related documents specifically in the context of higher education. The method of systematic review is extensively employed by educational researchers due to its reliability, inclusivity, and reduced bias. Two research questions were set for the article: 1) What are the theoretical perspectives of workplace learning? and 2) Which key elements serve for the implementation of workplace learning in higher education?

After searching various databases (ASC, SCOPUS, Web of Sciences, etc.), a total of 227 articles were found. Following the methodological concept, the author screened all the papers and analyzed their relevance based on the set criteria: the topic being investigated (including key terms such as workplace learning, organizational learning, learning on the job, etc.), published papers, in English only, and in a university context. She ultimately selected the most 38 relevant papers. Upon analyzing the selected works, the findings identify several key components crucial to the implementation of workplace learning in higher education, including individual learning (readiness for learning, interaction, etc.), team learning (teamwork, collective changes, etc.), learning culture in workplaces (positive learning environment, reflection, etc.), leadership (support for learning, equal opportunities, etc.), partnerships (exchanging and learning from partners, etc.), the relationship between the employer and the employee, and support from national policy.

The article contributes to the existing body of workplace learning literature. It shows that learning at work involves different patterns of learning and can be facilitated and/or strengthened by the workplace itself. Furthermore, the article theoretically recommends that certain specific components should be taken into account when promoting the implementation of workplace learning in higher education institutions. The following section introduces the publication of the article in *SAEL*, which can be accessed/downloaded at:

https://journals.uni-lj.si/AndragoskaSpoznanja/article/view/10447

Vannasy, V., & Sengsouliya, S. (2023). Key predictors of the implementation of workplace learning in higher education. *Andragoška spoznanja*, *29*(1), 81-97.

Key predictors of the implementation of workplace learning in higher education

ABSTRACT

This paper employed an integrative review approach to identify the key predictors of the implementation of workplace learning in higher education. The conceptual framework for this review stems mainly from the theoretical and empirical literature on workplace learning. Using the methods of integrative review, the authors of the present paper synthesized and integrated the findings from 38 included papers. The review suggests that there are seven key predictors that make workplace learning in higher education realistic, including individual learning, team learning, the organisational culture of learning, leadership, partnership, the employer-employee relationship, and the national policy system. Future inquiries would benefit from conducting a comparative study of theoretical perspectives and gathering empirical data within a particular context.

Keywords: *higher education, predictors of workplace learning, workplace learning*

KLJUČNI KAZALNIKI PRI IZVAJANJU UČENJA NA DELOVNEM MESTU V VISOKOŠOLSKEM IZOBRAŽEVANJU – POVZETEK

Članek uporabi metodo integrativnega pregleda, s katerim opredeli ključne napovedovalne kazalnike pri izvajanju učenja na delovnem mestu v visokošolskem izobraževanju. Konceptualni okvir pregleda izhaja predvsem iz teoretične in empirične literature o učenju na delovnem mestu. Na podlagi analize 38-ih člankov je bilo identificiranih sedem ključnih kazalnikov, zaradi katerih je učenje na delovnem mestu v visokošolskem izobraževanju realistično: individualno učenje, skupinsko učenje, organizacijska kultura učenja, vodstvo, partnerstvo, odnos med delodajalcem in zaposlenim, ter nacionalna sistemska politika. Članek se zaključi s priporočili za izvajanje primerjalne raziskave teoretičnih perspektiv in empiričnih podatkov v prihodnje.

Ključne besede: visokošolsko izobraževanje, kazalniki učenja na delovnem mestu, učenje na delovnem mestu

INTRODUCTION

In the competitive world, it is necessary for every workplace to develop in line with learning organisation concepts. In doing so, the workplace needs to increase its roles, responsibilities, and commitment (Jenner, 2020; Ovesni, 2020). However, workplace learning is a complicated area that consists of several dimensions. This paper reviews a wide range of literature, looking into theoretical perspectives on workplace learning such as definitions, activities, goals, as well as factors that influence the realisation of workplace learning. The present paper aims to investigate the key predictors of the implementation of workplace learning in the higher education context.

Investigations of workplace learning have been of great interest among educational researchers (e.g., Kerka, 1997; Lester & Costley, 2010; Maxwell, 2014; Mills & Whittaker, 2001). In previous literature, different terms are used interchangeably for "workplace learning", including learning on the job, learning at work, learning through work, work-based learning, organisational learning or learning within organisations. This begs the question: what is the full definition of the term "workplace learning"? According to Arygris (1964, as cited in Jones & Hendry, 1994), workplace learning is related to the characteristics of the learning of individuals. For Jones and Hendry (1994), "workplace learning" refers to training focusing on sharing knowledge and discussing the present conditions of work. Learning can be flexible and depends on its modes of conduct and assessment. Seagraves et al. (1996, as cited in Keeling et al., 1998) stated that workplace learning is "learning linked to the requirements of peoples' jobs… learning for work… learning at work… learning through work" (p. 6). Workplace learning practitioners define the term as a process of changing organisations as a collective by jointly creating knowledge for innovation and extending this pursuit to organisational routines (Fenwick, 2010), as well as a process of change within organisations at multiple levels, through social, psychological, and knowledge transfer aspects (Souza & Takahashi, 2019). In short, workplace learning discusses individuals' activities of learning about a job that prepare them and their organisation for the changing world.

The concept of workplace learning appeared in the 1980s. This type of learning has become very popular among studies of management, leadership, and business as a basis of better understanding how organisations can learn and initiate transformations in response to environmental factors (Wang & Ahmed, 2003, as cited in Cebrian et al., 2013). Shaffer (1992) wrote that "[t]he concept of organizational learning includes expectational learning and experiential learning. Organizations use expectations about future outcomes to select current

alternatives, borrow ideas from other organizations, introduce incremental changes based on environmental feedback, and introduce original innovative variations" (p. 24). Furthermore, Shaffer (1992) reviewed and agreed with other studies (e.g., Duncan, 1992, as cited in Shaffer, 1992; Hedberg, 1981, as cited in Shaffer, 1992) that organisational learning constitutes a continuous process driven by the organisation's interactions with external networks. Several scholars see learning as a key driving force for growth and innovation in every organisation.

Workplace learning has some unique characteristics that might be different from traditional learning in school. Lester and Costley (2010) explained that workplace learning constitutes activities enhancing the employees' skills through professional development and problem-solving tactics in order to improve their work performance. Lester and Costley (2010) stated that workplace learning is sometimes referred to as informal or non-formal learning. Workplace learning can consist of low and high levels of academic knowledge, thus enabling multi-tiered learning. For Juceviciene and Edintaite (2012), workplace learning is most likely to occur in informal rather than formal environments; especially in a university context, faculty members are likely to learn and exchange ideas about work with colleagues in their own unit/department only. That means they are not likely to interact for learning with others in different units. Effective workplace learning has to be integrated with knowledge of pedagogical science which involves understanding how to educate adults as well as grasping students' learning realities and their existing experience (Costley, 2011). Costley (2011) further noted that workplace learning does not exclusively occur within a university campus but can also be conducted in other workplaces beside universities.

Recent studies (Jenner, 2020; Ovesni, 2020) have found that learning within the workplace is to occur if the workplace increases its roles, responsibilities, and commitment. According to Jenner (2020), developments in the workplace can be achieved as long as the workplace structure is supportive. Jenner further argued that learning within the workplace is influenced not only by active employees but also the workplace's qualified structures. Similarly, it is a key task for every workplace to establish an organisational climate that fosters positive perceptions and behaviours regarding continuous education/learning among employees (Ovesni, 2020). According to the existing literature, the development of organisational learning is linked to two learning patterns called "single loop learning" and "double loop learning" (Jones & Hendry, 1994). Explaining these concepts, Bateson (1972, as cited in Jones & Hendry, 1994) argued that "single loop learning" is

about searching for errors and correcting them. "Double loop learning" is the process of identifying the causality and/or the consequences of a problem prior to solving the problem itself. In this way, "double loop learning" refers to learning that brings changes to an organisation's values which may cause "conflicts" and "power struggles". The concept of workplace learning is connected to the concept of adult learning. The learning mode of adults, as opposed to children, tends to be oriented towards autonomous learning, experiential learning, and learning in relation to different aspects of their work lives (Jones & Hendry, 1994). Jones and Hendry also referred to the works of authors such as Knowles (1980, as cited in Jones & Hendry, 1994), who argued that adults favour self-regulated learning, learning by doing, or actively participating in activities in the learning process. Kerka (1997) pointed out that what is taking place in workplace learning is constructivist. From the literature reviewed, workplace learning actually shares similar concepts with adult learning, in which adults prefer to learn about work and/or learn how to address some particular problems concerning their work.

Crossan et al. (1999, as cited in Chuen Huang & Shih, 2011) coined the 4I Model of organisational learning which identifies the four stages of implementing organisational learning: (1) Intuiting: learning or transfer of knowledge and experiences between individuals; (2) Interpreting: learners process ideas, actions, etc. stemming from interacting or discussing with other people. At this stage, learners develop their own cognitive map; (3) Integrating: learners translate these ideas from communication into practice; (4) Institution: the final stage refers to the process of shaping organisational learning in more structured, institutional, and strategic ways.

Mills and Whittaker (2001) wrote that workplace learning, in the context of higher education institutions, has three overall roles. Firstly, it fulfils the needs of employers and industries to upskill their respective workforces. Secondly, it analyses problems regarding work performance within organisations and strengthens the connection between industries and educational institutions. Thirdly, workplace learning meets the needs of individuals for personal growth and professional development. According to Andersen and Morch (2005, as cited in Gustafsson & Thang, 2017), "work-based learning", "work-integrated learning", or "problem-based learning" are called new learning processes that meet the demands of people's modern working lives, and they can be both self-regulated learners and problem solvers. Costley (2007) added that the aims of workplace learning are to enable employees to attain high levels of knowledge and to have the opportunity to participate in professional development activities, with businesses aiming to utilise this knowledge

and these skills to the benefit of their organisations. Workplace learning is beneficial to workplace growth and productivity in many ways: it improves human capital, helps to reduce skills gaps, and increases employees' motivation (Basit et al., 2015). Guta (2018) agreed that workplace learning improves organisational performance as the aim of learning within an organisation is to increase the capacity of the organisation's employees. To underline this notion, Guta referred to two well-known theorists (Crossan et al., 1995, as cited in Guta, 2018; Fiol & Lyles, 1985, as cited in Guta, 2018), who proposed the assumption that learning influences, enhances, and leads to changes in performances.

Workplace learning is found to have a positive impact on teaching performance through improving lecturers' teaching skills (Hartono et al., 2017). Workplace learning serves as a framework that enhances young learners' abilities for employment; it also enables adult learners to be exposed to continuous learning opportunities for autonomous professional development (Garnett, 2016). Garnett further noted that workplace learning is crucial for all workplaces as its activities aim to improve overall performance. In the words of Durrant et al. (2009, as cited in Garnett, 2016), "Work-Based Learning programmes are designed to promote professional and personal development and intend to benefit both learners and the workplace" (p. 2).

The review of literature suggests that there are two key elements to workplace learning, namely individual learning and organisational learning; together, these two modes of learning lead to change (Rowley, 1998). Any organisational growth cannot be realistic without learning. Jones and Hendry (1994) noted that organisations usually depend on "acceptable learning" that promotes the direction of the organisation and perpetuates how the employees ought to act. The organisation's ability to learn is recognised as a key characteristic of the "efficacious organization" (Cepic & Krstovic, 2011). Furthermore, Garnett (2016) argued that "individual knowledge" is even more important as it serves as a basis of communication with others in the workplace. In the same vein, Basit et al. (2015) stated that the success of workplace learning programs in higher education depends on how actively learners participate and how much learners take away from them. Most importantly, all of the relevant people, from executives to deans, should collaborate closely within these institutions, including putting efforts into and having positive attitudes towards the implementation of workplace learning. Moreover, it is necessary to have a good connection with employers. Close collaboration with employers is key for determining the learners', i.e., the employees', training needs, and for designing training content accordingly.

A model proposed by Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996, as cited in Cepic & Krstovic, 2011), the "integrative model of learning organisations", aims to capture the development process and transformational revolution of organisations. Several organisations have utilised the model to turn themselves into learning organisations. This model focuses on the two main parts of an organisation, people and structure. It encompasses seven dimensions of making the learning process within organisations more realistic at each level (individual, team, organisation-wide). The seven dimensions include: (1) Providing opportunities for continuous learning; (2) Promoting research and dialogue; (3) Promoting collaboration and team learning; (4) Establishing a collective learning system; (5) Supporting a shared vision; (6) Linking the organisation to its partners; and (7) Enhancing strategic leadership for learning. Garnett et al. (2008, as cited in Garnett, 2016) proposed the key features of the structural capital of higher education institutions which make workplace learning more realistic: (1) Structures, regulations and procedures should enhance partnerships with other stakeholders; (2) Structures and procedures should encourage learning at work rather than classroom-based learning on campus; (3) Regulations and procedures should facilitate individual learning and trainings; (4) A system for evaluating learning outcomes should be established; and (5) The administrative system should be supportive of and flexible for learners who work full-time. What is mentioned above can be a useful model for developing a learning organisation, especially Watkins and Marsick's (1993, 1996) integrative model, as it serves as a framework for workplace learning practitioners and/or adult educators to further strengthen the activities of workplace learning in their own work environments.

Several scholars (e.g., Aminbeidokhti et al., 2016; Basit et al., 2015; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016) agree that learning at work is important to many organisations, including higher education institutions. Simply put, workplace learning is recognised as a very valuable concept because its institutions serve as role models in developing and increasing knowledge and skills for human resources. Higher education organisations need to develop to become learning organisations and be committed to the world of learning within the workplace to prepare its employees for the challenges of the 21st century (Cepic & Krstovic, 2011). Yet the literature reviewed pointed out that the higher education sector, especially universities, are not effectively engaged in workplace learning (Bauman, 2005). Universities face significant barriers to embrace workplace learning, e.g., in regard to many universities' more traditional learning modes which are different from the workplace learning approach (Johnson, 2001). Many faculties are also rather

reluctant to change (Abbasi et al., 2015). The issue of workplace learning in higher education institutions is of great interest to educators yet few works have explored which factors influence or predict its likelihood. This paper, therefore, examines the theoretical perspectives of workplace learning in order to identify predictors for making workplace learning more realistic in higher education. The guiding research question for the present paper is: "What are the key predictors of the implementation of workplace learning in higher education?"

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This paper is an integrative review of literature. According to Tavares de Souza et al. (2010), this type of research design involves analysing both theoretical and empirical studies and has several purposes, one of which is discussing a wide range of problems of a particular topic. There are five steps in the process of an integrative review. First, key guiding questions are established. Second, relevant literature is identified and in the third step evaluated according to a set of criteria. Fourth, the data is analysed in response to the research question. Finally, the findings are presented in a structured way (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). This paper follows the five-step method to ensure a systematic, integrative review of the proposed topic, whilst also incorporating the approach of systematic review. Newman and Gough (2020) noted that the systematic review approach analyses secondary research together with the results of primary research to respond to a set research question.

Figure 1

Search terms for the integrative review

Search string 1: "workplace learning" OR "work-based learning" OR "organisational learning" OR "organizational learning" OR "on the job learning" OR "learning organization"

AND

Search string 2: "adult education" OR "adult learning" OR "lifelong learning" OR "lifelong education" OR "continuing education" OR "continuing study" OR "higher education" OR "further study" OR "vocational education"

The papers included in the review were downloaded from different electronic databases, such as ASC, ERIC, SCOPUS, SocINDEX, and Web of Sciences. According to the nature of systematic review, we developed the search terms (keywords) "workplace learning" and "adult education",

then developed two search strings from the determined keywords using the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR". That means this review searched for papers/studies from the databases with a combination of the two search strings. This is a type of keyword search. It functions well with searching and broadening results on the web and in databases because the search looks for items of studies in every record if the words used are present in article titles, abstracts or keywords tagged to the text (see Fig. 1 for details).

Figure 2

Flow diagram of the search process according to the integrative review method
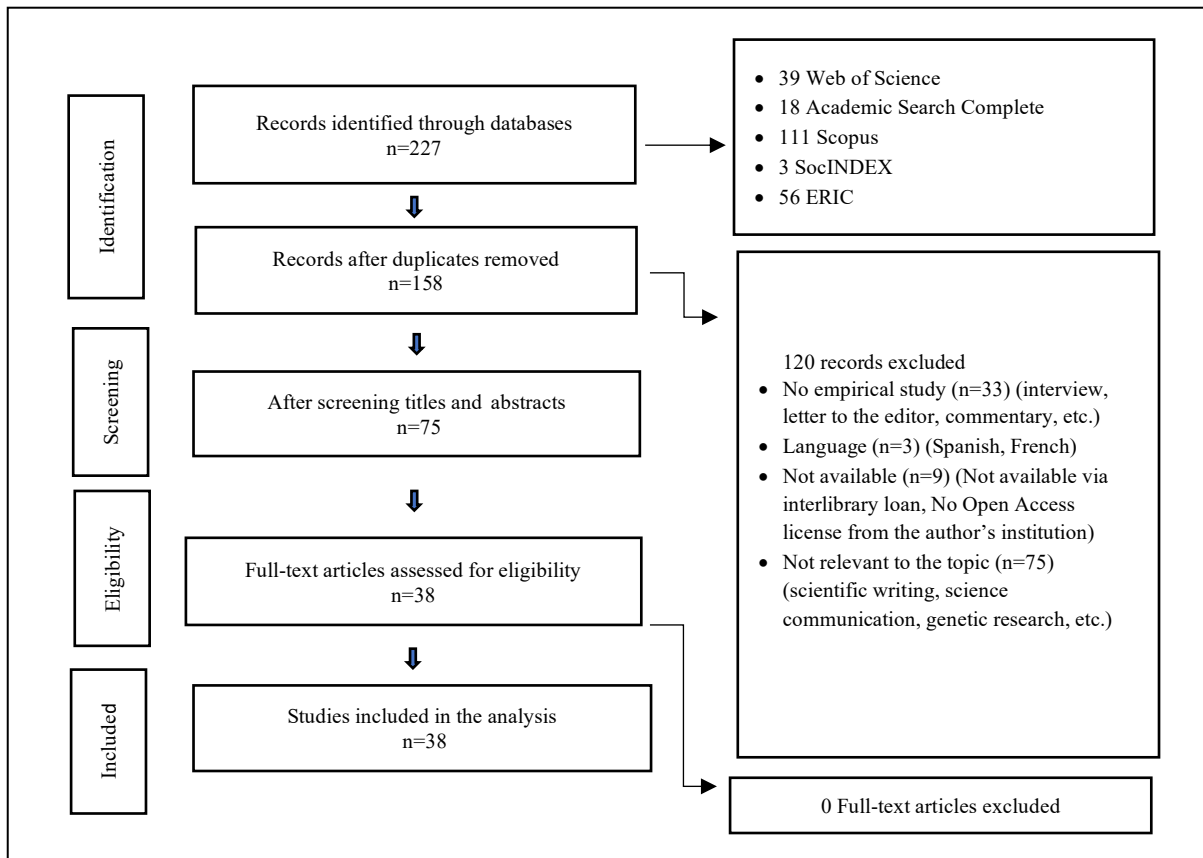
Applying this strategy, 227 papers were initially identified. However, the criteria employed for including qualified papers in the review were: (a) relevant to the research topic, i.e., including keywords such as workplace learning, organisational learning, learning organisation, learning on the job, and continuing education; (b) empirical research on workplace learning; (c) theoretical literature on concepts of workplace learning; (d) papers published in English only; papers relevant to the university context; and (f) papers downloadable or accessible as a PDF file. In the present review, 38 papers met the set criteria and were used in the review. The remaining articles were

excluded based on the following reasons: 33 were not empirical studies (e.g., reports, conference speeches), 3 were written in other languages, such as Spanish and French, 9 were non-downloadable/accessible, and 75 were not relevant to the topic (see Fig. 2 for details). Regarding the synthesis process, we listed all the findings from the individual papers that were included with the goal of integrating all the information to produce a better response to the research question. Likewise, coding and making categories were also conducted in order to present the findings in a structured way, in particular regarding the key predictors of workplace learning.

RESULTS

The review suggests that the implementation of workplace learning is predicted by seven factors (see Table 1): (1) Individual learning, which refers to the learning processes of individuals. Simply put, individuals are key drivers for workplace changes because individuals are the starting point of learning. Through workplace learning, they can further support workplace goals, be role models, and promote the interaction of work and learning. Individuals' readiness for change is a prerequisite for workplace change; (2) Team learning, which discusses the learning of and within the team. This factor is another powerful predictor for workplace learning to occur. Team learning constitutes an open space in which to exchange ideas and to learn together as workplace members. The literature review indicated that teams empower change, teams determine the quality of teamwork, and teams develop a culture of learning. In other words, people cannot learn without sharing; (3) Organisational culture of learning, which concerns learning behaviours within the workplace. To make learning at work possible, there needs to be a culture of learning within the organisation. The presence of such a culture can take shape in the form of systematic working methods, learning management systems, as well as the presence of working strategies; (4) Leadership, which refers to the abilities such as motivating all members at work to participate in learning activities, arranging or providing learning opportunities, planning and understanding benefits of workplace learning, as well as the leadership's active participation in and commitment to knowledge acquisition; (5) Partnership, which refers to the care for collaboration with others in promoting learning at work. Developing effective workplace learning is strongly associated with clearly understanding the context in which the learning process is to be established. This involves having good partners promoting the relevance of learning which also increases organisations' understanding of social trends; (6) Employer-employee relationship, which discusses the

relationship between employer and employee. This factor has been found to be another influential predictor of workplace learning. Several organisations put great emphasis on strengthening the relationship between employer and employee as the congruency of their respective needs contributes to the betterment of workplace learning opportunities; and (7) National policy system, which describes the governmental support in policy. A guiding, central policy framework could be a starting point for workplace learning practitioners to consider when developing positive learning environments. Simply put, acknowledgement and comprehensive support for workplace learning from the government is necessary.

Table 1

Key predictors of workplace learning

Individual Learning:	
- Individuals with interest in and readiness for learning	Argyris and Schon (1978, as cited in Cebrian et al., 2013); Cepic and Krstovic (2011); Čierna et al. (2016), Garnett (2016); Gustafsson and Thang (2013); Keeling et al. (1998); Maxwell (2014); Shaffer (1992); Simon (1991, as cited in Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016); Hartono et al. (2017)
- Individuals supporting workplace goals	Hartono et al. (2017)
- Individuals as role models	Farmer et al. (1992, as cited in Kerka, 1997)
- Individuals as key for team interaction	Johnson and Thomas (1994, as cited in Kerka, 1997); Juceviciene and Edintaite (2012)
- Individuals having readiness for change	Reuter and Backer (2015)
Team Learning:	
- Teams empowering and driving change at the workplace	Hartono et al. (2017); Khasawneh (2011); Toma (2012)
- Teams as incubators of teamwork	Bauman (2005); Jones and Hendry (1994); Khasawneh (2011); Sessa et al. (2011, as cited in Hartono et al., 2011)
- Teams developing cultures of learning	Bui and Baruch (2012); Fenwick (2010); Juceviciene and Edintaite (2012); Maxwell (2014)

Organisational Culture of Learning:	
- Creating working values and practices	Cepic and Krstovic (2011); Čierna et al. (2016); Maxwell (2014); Rowley (1998); Ponnuswamy and Manohar (2016)
- Giving roles and rights	Chueng Huang and Shih (2011); Maxwell (2014); Shaffer (1992)
- Encouraging further learning	Aminbeidokhti et al. (2016); Voolaid and Ehrlich (2017)
- Fostering self-reflection and learn to learn	Čierna et al. (2016); Costley (2007); Fenwick (2010); Jones and Hendry (1994); Habtoor et al. (2019); Rowley (1998); Salaman and Butler (1994, as cited in Rowley, 1998); Schmidt and Gibbs (2009); Souza and Takahashi (2019)
Leadership:	
- Facilitating learning opportunities	Basit et al. (2015); Keeling et al. (1998); Jones and Hendry (1994), Shaffer (1992)
- Developing structures and cultures of learning	Amenbeidokhti et al. (2016); Francis (2014); Knight and Trowler (2000, as cited in Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016); Popper and Lipshitz (2000, as cited in Khalifa & Ayoubi, 2015); Voolaid and Ehrlich (2017)
- Caring for security, stability, and responding to the needs of employees	Reuter and Backer (2015)
- Enhancing learning outcomes	Hartono et al. (2017)
- Enhancing equity	Hartono et al. (2017)
Partnership:	
- Promoting relevance in learning processes	Garnett (2016)
- Understanding social trends	Schmidt and Gibbs (2009)
Employer-Employee Relationship:	
- Fulfilling shared needs of learning	Keeling et al. (1998)
- Facilitating interaction and reflection	Dernova and Perevozniuk (2017); Voolaid and Ehrlich (2017)
National Policy System:	
- Receiving policy support	Cepic and Krstovic (2011); Costley (2007); Lauer and Wilkesmann (2017, as cited in Souza & Takahashi, 2019); Mills and Whittaker (2001)

The detailed descriptions of key predictors of workplace learning are reported below.

Individual Learning

Individuals' learning is a key driver for workplace changes. This notion is supported by the literature reviewed (Cepic & Krstovic, 2011; Costley, 2011; Garnett, 2016; Hartono et al., 2017; Juceviciene & Edintaite, 2012; Maxwell, 2014). According to Cepic and Krstovic (2011), the core concept of a learning organisation is founded in the transformation of individual learning to workplace learning that is not merely concerned with every individual's learning process, but rather with the notion of collective learning. The learning processes of individuals are necessary for organisational change and development. An organisation, therefore, needs to develop learning experiences among its employees by providing a space for learning together, in which a substantial number of employees can participate, rather than only the managers (Cepic & Krstovic, 2011). Reuter and Backer (2015) stated that a main barrier for organisational change is individuals' resistance to change. These authors analysed theories of organisational change and pointed out that organisational change is firmly linked to the individualism of organisational members. Reuter and Backer (2015) noted that individuals' "readiness for change", i.e., their readiness to adapt their beliefs and attitudes, is a prerequisite for any organisational change. In addition, such readiness also includes the employees' understanding and acceptance of different cultures in the workplace, "motivation for change", "opportunity to change", and the "capacity to change" (Reuter & Backer, 2015), which are key for driving change within the workplace. A previous study on the capabilities of workplace learning in higher education confirmed that the faculty's acceptance and their attitudes towards workplace learning influence the transformation in the workplace (Abbasi et al., 2015). Moreover, individuals' readiness for learning new things matters. This may involve the individuals' ability to learn as well as their existing knowledge. As Garnett (2016) put it, "individual knowledge" is important as it serves as a basis for the ability to communicate with others in the workplace. A study by Juceviciene and Edintaite (2012) pointed out that individual faculty members are more likely to exchange and share their experiences on work performance with their colleagues. This represents a form of learning which individuals typically conduct in the workplace. Furthermore, individual learning is influenced by individual characteristics such as learning experience, confidence levels, self-esteem, job intentions, and job position (Maxwell, 2014), self-perceived needs for achievement and existing professional knowledge (Hartono et al., 2017), as well as interests and benefits perceived by individuals and the organisation (Costley, 2011).

Team Learning

Team learning matters. Several authors support this view (Dennis, 2007, as cited in Francis, 2014; Juceviciene & Edintaite, 2012; Khasawneh, 2011; Maxwell, 2012; Sessa et al., 2011, as cited in Hartono et al., 2017; Toma, 2012). As Khasawneh (2011) noted, in working as a team, its members can develop open spaces where dialogue and discussion are welcomed by individual members. The sustainability of learning within the workplace involves team learning and empowerment (Toma, 2012). A piece of work conducted by Khasawneh (2011) showed that two of Senge's (1990, as cited in Khasawneh, 2011) five aspects of a learning organisation are particularly crucial for team learning and having a shared vision. Khasawneh (2011) explored Jordanian faculty members' perceptions of Senge's (1990) five aspects and found that faculty members were more likely to be committed to a shared vision of the institution as they feel welcomed to share ideas with other colleagues in the university. In the same vein, Hartono et al. (2017) agreed with Sessa et al. (2011, as cited in Hartono et al. 2017) that organisational learning is strongly associated with the quality of teamwork. The culture at group level or at departmental level can also predict learners' experiences and their learning (Maxwell, 2014). Wenger (2000, as cited in Fenwick, 2010) argued that learning is facilitated by participation and structured actions of groups of practitioners where group members share aligned identities and tasks. Fenwick further saw such team learning to be concerned with real phenomena occurring at work, and it reflects the employees' daily communication at work.

Organisational Culture of Learning

This paper suggests that for learning at work to be possible, there needs to be a culture of learning within the organisation. Several authors (Maxwell, 2014; Rowley, 1998; Shaffer, 1992; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017) agree with this argument. According to Rowley (1998), in developing a learning organisation there is no one correct model or recipe for success; every organisation needs to create its own values, practices, and systems in which to synthesize learning and working across the organisation. Rowley further noted that an organisation must be able to continuously learn from its own learning processes. If the organisation fails to do so, it may miss its chance to adapt and follow through with its transformation. Agreeing with this, Megginson and Pedler (1992, as cited in Rowley, 1998) argued that an organisational learning strategy embodies the ways in which an organisation develops its learning processes. Recent studies pointed out that to sustain the practice of workplace learning, a culture of learning needs to be developed first (e.g., Habtoor et

al., 2019; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). However, it can be challenging for organisations to develop a culture of learning as this requires strong leadership (Popper & Lipshitz, 2000, as cited in Khalifa & Ayoubi, 2015).

Leadership

The feasibility of workplace learning is predicted by qualified leadership. Several authors confirmed this standpoint (Basit et al., 2015; Bui & Baruch, 2012; Hartono et al., 2017; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016; Popper & Lipshitz, 2000, as cited in Khalifa & Ayoubi, 2015; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017). Popper and Lipshitz (2000, as cited in Khalifa and Ayoubi, 2015) argued that leadership serves as a key predictor of organisational learning through developing both the structure and the culture of an organisation. Good leadership may encompass the establishment of a supporting system or motivational factors to enhance the desired outcomes of organisational learning (Hartono et al., 2017). The workplace leader must care to respond to the needs, security, and stability of and among the organisation's employees (Reuter & Backer, 2015). Voolaid and Ehrlich (2017), who conducted research in the context of higher education, also noted that quality leadership may create feelings of belonging among members at work by developing institutional strategies, visions, and other action plans to further organisational learning. Ponnuswamy and Manohar (2016) articulated a similar view, stating that the organisational structure in higher education institutions influences staff work performance. Moreover, Basit et al. (2015) supported the view that deans' or leaders' close engagement matters as it promotes learning at work if leaders take part in every process related to organisational tasks.

Partnership

Higher education institutions require partnerships and collaboration with others in promoting learning at work. Partnerships have been shown to be a key predictor of workplace learning (Akdere & Conceição, 2006; Dernova & Perevozniuk, 2017; Garnett, 2016; Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009). According to Dernova and Perevozniuk (2017), the core concept of workplace learning in higher education requires the involvement of several parties. Garnett (2016) explained that such collaborations are needed as partnerships promote learning that responds to the needs of both organisations and their individuals. As Garnett noted, flexibility is necessary in the context of workplace learning and higher education institutions. He argued that flexibility is crucial for higher education institutions to fulfil their function of upskilling labour to meet the ever changing demands of labour markets. To achieve this mission, it is very important for higher education

institutions to work closely and collaboratively with partners in providing education, such as employers and other partner institutions. In the same vein, Akdere and Conceição (2006) regarded concepts such as human resource development and adult education as valuable strategies of implementing workplace learning which may help limit competency gaps at work. These two concepts can be used in conjunction as they have several aims in common. Furthermore, Akdere and Conceição (2006) recommended that for an organisation to successfully achieve its workplace learning and organisational growth goals, human resources development and responsible professionals need to give priority to continuous learning activities. This requires the active collaboration of both practitioners and planners of adult education and human resource development. Schmidt and Gibbs (2009) agreed that partnerships matter and that the implementation of workplace learning may be realistic if organisations nominate their human resources departments to oversee workplace learning as well as of collaborations with industry partners, and with people who joined recent learning activities.

Employer-Employee Relationship

The relationship between employer and employee matters. The literature review (Dernova & Perevozniuk, 2017; Keeling et al., 1998; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017) showed that alignment between employer and employee strongly contributes to the implementation of workplace learning. For instance, Keeling et al. (1998) argued that a form of mismatch between the two parties may lead to negative feelings towards resource development, particularly approaches to skills and knowledge development and other capacity building affairs. Such a situation may be caused by a type of top-down management. For instance, employees who have served an organisation for years tend to feel neglected if opportunities for personal or professional development needs are ignored (Keeling et al., 1998). Other authors (e.g., Dernova & Perevozniuk, 2017) agreed with this standpoint, arguing that successful learning can be facilitated through close reflection on the relationship between the employer and the employee.

National Policy System

The present paper suggests that government policy serves as a significant predictor for making workplace learning realistic. Several authors agreed with this point of view (Cepic & Krstovic, 2011; Costley, 2007; Lauer & Wilkesmann, 2017, as cited in Souza & Takahashi, 2019; Mills & Whittaker, 2001; Souza & Takahashi, 2019). According to Mills and Whittaker (2001), the government's acknowledgement and understanding are necessary to implement workplace

learning as a government policy and incentives can contribute to the creation of an organisation's strategies for workplace learning. Government policies act as key drivers at the macro level. Mills and Whittaker further noted that appropriate policies from the government may involve practical support, such as increased access to workplace learning resources, increased competitiveness, and innovative pedagogy. Costley (2007) agreed and stated that appropriate policies facilitate workplace learning. In addition, it is crucial to consider the effective implementation of workplace learning and developing an effective assessment approach. In public higher education institutions, the transformation of standard practices is dependent on government policies and systems. Therefore, the establishment of appropriate policies is necessary, including the requirements and the principles of the implementation of workplace learning at each level: individual, team, and organisation-wide (Cepic & Krstovic, 2011).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

One main role of higher education institutions is to transfer knowledge to people. Yet recent literature identified several barriers for the implementation of workplace learning in universities. The present paper examined key predictors enabling workplace learning in higher education. Through an integrative review of literature, the present paper identified seven predictors, including individual learning (individuals with interest in and readiness for learning; supporting workplace goals; role models; team interaction; readiness for change), team learning (empowering and driving change; incubators of teamwork; developing cultures of learning), organisational culture of learning (organisational working values; roles and rights; encouragement; self-reflection and learning to learn), leadership (facilitating learning opportunities; developing structures of learning; caring for security, stability, responding to the needs of employees; enhancing learning outcomes and equity), partnership (promoting relevance of learning; understanding social trends), employer-employee relationship (fulfilling needs and close interaction), and national policy system (central policy support).

The findings of the present paper were discussed referring to theoretical perspectives of workplace learning in higher education. The paper's findings aim to be practical for addressing issues of implementing workplace learning. The findings may also be helpful in promoting or encouraging institutions to integrate the concept of workplace learning into their professional development activities. The identified predictors are key factors for universities to consider in their

transformations to become learning organisations. However, we recommend carefully considering each organisation's context as the factors identified and analysed in this paper might not represent the realities of some countries. Bearing this in mind, Rowley (1998) noted that in developing a learning organisation there is no one correct model or recipe for success. Readers should pay close attention to the differences between countries' and organisations' environments, demographic aspects, and contextual factors. This paper and its authors are open to exchanging views and sharing experiences with researchers, adult educators, as well as workplace learning practitioners.

This piece of work conducted an integrative review of literature. The papers included in the review were selected based on a set of criteria. However, the final number of papers, i.e., the sources of data for this review, was limited. This issue might concern the fact that the present paper did not use a search filter in its search strategy. Using an appropriate filter helps to narrow the search, so that the results are more relevant to the research question. Future research on the related area/topic might consider using a search filter in the searching process (e.g., article/publication type, publication dates). Moreover, some predictors identified in this paper need to be verified by more empirical evidence. This applies particularly to the factors of the employer-employee relationship and the national policy system. These two predictors have not been researched deeply and they are firmly linked to local cultures, political conditions, and socio-economic situations in a particular country where workplace learning may take place. In conclusion, further enquiries are necessary, including taking into account different contexts, to gain a more comprehensive picture. A mixed-method approach would be suitable for such further studies, particularly a comparative study of theoretical perspectives and empirical data within a specific context.

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4.2 Sub-study 2: "The conditions for workplace learning implementation in Laotian higher education"

This article was published online in the Journal of Adult Learning, Knowledge, and Innovation (JALKI) in 2024. The summary of the article is presented as follows:

It is claimed that several workplaces are facing challenges in enhancing learning at work among their employees. For instance, universities seem to be among those not engaging effectively in workplace learning implementation. Some reasons raised for the situation are related to a complex system and a lack of contributors/necessary conditions. Furthermore, past studies have called for further empirical research on workplace learning. This paper, therefore, aims to investigate the required conditions for strengthening learning environments at work, using a case study of a Laotian higher education institute. The article reviews different perspectives and models, such as March and Olsen's Cycle of Organizational Learning (1975) and related literature on key concepts, characteristics, and influential factors as required conditions for implementing learning at work.

The article has a research question as a guide: "Which conditions do Laotian faculty members take into account for implementing workplace learning?" Data was collected qualitatively; 12 faculty members were key informants in semi-structured interviews. The differences in demographic information were determined, such as positions, age, gender, and working experiences. The invited sample was encouraged to engage in open discussions and reflections on the situations of workplace learning in their respective contexts. The collected data was processed in analyses, using "a deductive category assignment". According to the research approach, the author of the article had prepared ten sub-categories/codes, including "C1: Individual commitment", "C2: Personal ambition", "C3: Self-efficacy", "C4: Role models", "C5: Learning from others", "C6: Organizational culture", "C7: Leadership", "C8: Faculty's support system for learning", "C9: Globalization", and "C10: Respect of national directions". The sub-categories were then grouped into three major dimensions, namely the environment-related, the organizational-related, and the individual-related conditions.

The article points out that the three described conditions are significant for developing a supportive environment for learning in workplaces. The article provides a fruitful discussion and implications for practical references. In addition, the article calls for more inquiries on the studied topic with a quantitative research design to confirm the relationships among related variables. The

article is significant in its empirical findings. It reports how workplace learning activities can be facilitated and identifies the required conditions for enhancing workplace learning in a university context. The findings of this research can be used/cited by scholars in the field of workplace learning for their further investigations. The publication of the article in JALKI is introduced in the following section, and it is available at:

https://akjournals.com/view/journals/2059/aop/article-10.1556-2059.2023.00074/article-10.1556-2059.2023.00074.xml

Vannasy, V., & Sengsouliya, S. (2024). The conditions for workplace learning implementation in Laotian higher education. *Journal of Adult Learning, Knowledge and Innovation*.

The conditions for workplace learning implementation in Laotian higher education

Abstract

Workplace learning is a necessity for the organizational growth of all types of organizations, including higher education institutions. There are different directions proposed on how to make the implementation of workplace learning realistic, however, the best practices in one context may not apply well in another. This paper investigated the conditions required for the implementation of workplace learning in the case study of Laotian higher education. Firstly, 12 faculty members were invited to a semi-structured interview. The study employed a deductive category assignment of QCA in analyzing the data. The findings revealed that three conditions, namely, individual-related, organizational-related, and environmental-related conditions, appear to be key and are taken into account in developing favorable workplace learning. A further quantitative study in this area is strongly recommended.

Keywords: Higher Education, Workplace Learning Conditions, Faculty Members, Individual-related Conditions, Organizational-related Conditions, Environmental-related Conditions

Introduction

Since the world changes over time, the perceptions of societies towards learning have also shifted. Educational institutions may not be the only main learning sources, but workplaces can be also valid sites for learning (Boud & Garrick, 1999). Existing literature has highlighted that universities do not seem to engage themselves in implementing workplace learning effectively, even though learning is their main task or function, or purpose (Bauman, 2005). Concerned by this, Bauman proposed a reason why these institutions may lack key attributes of workplace learning. That reason relates to a university's system of learning, considered to be more of a traditional learning mode and different from a workplace learning approach (Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009). Hübner (2002) noted that an organization fails to implement workplace learning due to its defensive schedules and complex systems. It could be that universities ignore supportive and flexible systems of learning management, especially for full-time individuals (Garnett et al., 2008, in Garnett, 2016). Another reason may be due to the faculty members' perceptions, whereby learning activities may not fulfill their needs in teaching practice improvement (Gugssa & Kabeta, 2021). Likewise, all the aforementioned assumptions are well supportive of what Garvin (1993, p.80) wrote: "many universities fail to qualify [because] ...these organizations have been effective at creating or acquiring new knowledge but notably less successful in applying that knowledge to their own activities" (cited in Bauman, 2005). Consistently, Bratianu (2018) accepts that workplace learning implementation may exist in any workplace but it is not easy for all of them to learn from their learning and to become learning organizations. Recent studies (e.g., Bratianu, 2018) have attempted to find out the required conditions for universities to become learning organizations and ways how to strengthen universities and/or faculty staff in knowledge management in order for themselves to face competitiveness in the new era.

The concept of workplace learning has been of great interest to many educators and researchers for decades. Regarding the definition of workplace learning, it has been made in different statements, for instance, Seagraves et al. (1996, p.6), note that workplace learning is "learning linked to the requirements of peoples' jobs . . . learning for work . . . learning at work . . .learning through work", (cited in Keeling et al., 1998). For Fenwick (2010), workplace learning refers to a process of changing an organization on a collective basis, through creating knowledge for innovation and extending this pursuit as organizational routines. A major aspect of workplace learning is the relationship between individual learning and organizational change (Garnett, 2016).

Bratianu (2018, p. 2) put that "Organizational learning is a process of transferring knowledge from individuals to a social structure which is able of developing a specific memory and specific routines in its collective behaviour". In the literature, the terminology choice for "workplace learning" varies. Some authors (e.g., Abbasi et al., 2015; Bauman, 2005; Bratianu, 2018; etc.) use the term "organizational learning" to represent the same concept of workplace learning, describing the learning processes/activities within a company, institution, and a workplace. The authors of the present paper preferred the term "workplace learning" and used it throughout the paper because it would be easily understood to claim that the concept discusses individuals' learning for work, learning at work that happens in their own offices/divisions/departments. In summary, what workplace learning means in this paper is the employees' learning engagement and their participation in any learning processes that lead to personal growth and transformation of the workplace. Workplace learning plays a great role in the change in organizations. Several authors (Čepić & Krstović, 2011; Gugssa & Kabeta, 2021; Hartono et al., 2017; McEwen & Trede, 2014; Prasanwan, 2005) have confirmed the significance of workplace learning in the growth of universities. According to Čepić and Krstović (2011), workplace learning is a necessity for empowerment in all types of workplaces, including higher education institutions. Similarly, new changes in globalization challenge not only industries and companies but also universities (Sutanto, 2017), because these institutions produce professionals and build skills and enable the transfer of knowledge (Aminbeidokhti et al., 2016; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). It is, therefore, necessary for higher institutions to seek creative methods to overcome the challenges. Simply put, universities need to transform themselves into learning organizations and more importantly, the faculty staff must be also responsible for their learning engagement/participation in order to respond to the changing world and a highly competitive environment.

Endeavors in promoting workplace learning in higher education are not a new phenomenon. An overwhelming array of research papers (e.g., Abbasi et al., 2015; Aminbeidokhti et al., 2016; Bui & Baruch, 2012; Hartono et al., 2017; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016; etc.) have employed a quantitative research paradigm to understand the topic. A qualitative study exists, too: Bauman (2005) investigated how workplace learning arises in universities and colleges. The study found three key conditions: the presence of innovative ideas, the questioning and reflecting in a group, and the creation and distribution of information. However, this research was conducted with an observational study design which may not include the participants' self-reporting. A more recent

paper by Vannasy and Sengsouliya (2022) identified seven predictors of the implementation of workplace learning in higher education; however, the study did not provide any empirical evidence.

In the context of Laos, all the colleges and universities are forced to strengthen themselves in order to meet the standards of other higher education institutions both regionally and internationally. Taking a closer look, professional development as part of workplace learning is fundamentally included in the Lao national strategic vision for modernization. Specifically, the national agenda on educational development for 2030 calls the Laotian institutions to put great efforts into globalization and the transformation into a knowledgeable society, aiming to be a learning organization (MoES, 2020). However, the implementation of workplace learning in Laotian higher education institutions is more individualistic, they follow their own cultures and traditional methods of learning and it seems challenging when striving to be learning organizations. Likewise, little research on this area has been done in the Laotian context. In order to contribute to the existing knowledge body in the area, especially how universities can succeed in the implementation of workplace learning, more research in different contexts seems warranted. The purpose of this paper is to probe into the conditions for enhancing workplace learning in Laotian higher education, by hearing the self-reflection of Laotian faculty members. The guiding question for the paper is "Which conditions do Laotian faculty members take into account for implementing workplace learning?" The term "condition" here refers to a necessity for the occurrence of workplace learning.

This paper is structured with the following sections: In the first section, the authors present the literature review in which readers are introduced to theoretical concepts and models of workplace learning, as well as the key conditions of workplace learning found in the existing literature. The second section discusses the methodology including sampling, data collection procedures, and analysis strategy. The third section presents the findings and, in the section, follows that it is the discussion in which the authors link the findings to existing studies before presenting or positing the final conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

Basic Concepts, Characteristics, and Aims of Workplace Learning

Boud and Garrick (1999) mentioned that ideas about learning have been changing due to knowledge societies; there is now a shift away from seeing educational institutions as the main places of learning towards accepting workplaces as sites of learning. According to Cairns and Malloch (2011), the workplace learning concept is basically associated with three terms: work, place, and learning; work is related to tasks and how individuals engage with activities to have the tasks done while the place refers to physical and spiritual spaces where individuals think, learn, and interact with others (as cited in Zhao & Ko, 2018). Zhao and Ko (2018) proposed a similar view, describing a workplace as a site or situation where work occurs, and workplace learning touches on a site where there exist opportunities for learning about work and improving work practice. A question may be raised about how learning occurs within a workplace. Eraut and Hirsh (2010) refer to their previous research by Eraut and colleagues (2000), indicating that most learning activities within the workplace are more informal settings; learning happens through consultation and collaboration outside and within the working group and "by the challenge of the work itself" (p. 25). An example of workplace learning activity covers learning through observation and from senior colleagues (Billett et al., 2008). Some authors (i.e. Slotte, Tynjälä, and Hytönen, 2004) further noted that informal and formal learning are key elements of workplace learning; These two forms of learning are equally significant but have different methods and outcomes. Slotte and her colleagues explained that informal learning happens as part of performing everyday tasks at work and creates tacit knowledge, while formal learning occurs in classroom-based learning activities or through structured training and develops explicit knowledge. It is also claimed that promoting learning at work more effectively requires a combination of both informal and formal education approaches (Slotte et al., 2004).

For Jones and Hendry (1994), workplace learning is naturally associated with training which focuses on sharing knowledge and discussing work practices within a workplace. Shaffer (1992) borrowed the words of past authors (e.g., Duncan, 1992; Hedberg, 1981), explaining that workplace learning is a continuous process of interactions between a workplace and its external networks. Furthermore, workplace learning refers to a process of changing an organization as a whole by creating new knowledge and extending this pursuit into organizational routines (Fenwick, 2010). According to these perspectives, workplace learning is essentially about the

participation of all employees in any learning activities that lead to personal growth and transformation of the workplace. Rowley (1998) pointed out that there are two key elements, namely individual learning and workplace learning while Huang & Shih (2011) mentioned that workplace learning is basically related to three levels, as the learning normally arises from an individual, then this individual knowledge is expanded to a group, and this knowledge is then further spread at an organizational level. Tynjälä (2008) acknowledged that workplace learning takes place at different levels. People do learn at work, for instance, through participating in every work process, collaborating and ideas exchanging with colleagues, as well as problem-solving. However, learning at individual and/or group levels may not be enough, and learning at this level mainly creates tacit knowledge only. In order to turn tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and skills and make it acceptable learning that leads to the development of expertise, the workplace should consider lifelong learning as a necessity within its environments and develop the workplace as a space for learning (Tynjälä, 2008).

Much evidence also pointed out that learning of individuals in the workplace is generally good, but it is probably much better if the individuals learn particular things that are in response to the workplace's goals. Workplace learning is not only about individual learning because the learning outcomes must be for the whole workplace (Bratianu, 2018). According to Billet (1995), acceptable learning of individuals must be appropriate and, most importantly, it must meet the needs of the workplace. Consistently, Rowley (1998) further noted that the outcomes of individual learning may not lead the workplace to significant transformation because workplaces often depend on "acceptable learning" by the members supporting the direction of the workplace as a whole and this learning also guides how members ought to behave within the workplace (Jones & Hendry,1994). According to Shaffer (1992), what is included in workplace learning are "expectational learning" and "experiential learning". In these two patterns of learning it is believed that workplaces determine options based on the expectation of outcomes and the workplaces apply lessons learned from partners when moving for changes. This might refer to how a workplace engages in learning. Workplace learning has some unique attributes that might be in contrast to a traditional mode of learning (Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009). Moreover, the aim of workplace learning is to equip learners with problem-solving skills that they can apply in their work practices (Mills & Whittaker, 2001). According to Argyris (1999, cited in Bratianu, 2018), by implementing workplace learning "whole organizations or their components adapt to changing environments by

generating and selectively adopting organizational routines" (p. 8). Several workplaces have the aim to transform themselves to become learning organizations in which learning is considered a key activity and the concepts of learning at work and for work can be extended among the members within the workplace. That reflects the need to encourage all employees to engage in learning in order to adapt themselves to the new world of work.

Having discussed the above-mentioned theories of workplace learning, the professional development concept appears to be intertwined. Villegas-Reimers (2003) wrote that "Professional development, in a broad sense, refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role" (p. 11). Some authors (eg. Zhao & Ko, 2018) claimed that workplace learning serves as a key part of teacher professional development. According to the literature, the concepts of workplace learning and professional development are intertwined. For instance, Schuller (2021) explained that both perspectives have a similar characteristic, they are more social in nature, having individuals learn things through discussion and interaction about practices. Schuller (2021) further adds that professional development plays an important role in workplace learning as it promotes implementing work skills development activities; higher education institutions, in particular, integrate the teacher professional development concept into strengthening their members' occupational and professional capabilities.

Conditions for the Implementation of Workplace Learning

Prior to discussing the conditions for implementing workplace learning, the authors of the present paper introduce a key model that explains the necessities a workplace should pay attention to when enhancing workplace learning. An early well-known and frequently applied model of workplace learning is the so-called "Cycle of organizational learning", developed by March and Olsen (1975). The model supports the influence of individuals' actions. This model describes the "action-response cycle" in which it is shown that the organization's members take action in response to their external environment based on their own beliefs, and these actions are considered to be fundamental to organizational learning. Organizational learning results in organizational actions and these actions in turn lead to the organization's adaptations that encourage the external environments and complete the cycle (cited in Shaffer, 1992). Shaffer also tested the model in his study on adaptations of organizations of continuing higher education and asserts that if the members learn and take action, their organization also learns. The authors of the present paper review a combination of previous studies in order to conceptualize the theoretical foundation to

investigate the conditions for workplace learning implementation in higher education. A detailed discussion of the previous studies is presented below. By reviewing a wide array of earlier works, several key conditions are found to be correlated with the chances for the successful implementation of workplace learning, such as individual-related (e.g., Rowley, 1998; etc.), where this condition concerns an individual's dedication to and efforts in learning at work, as well as their personal contributions into the development of their workplace; organizational-related (e.g., Bui & Baruch, 2012; Shaffer, 1992; etc.), and this dimension refers to the management, leadership, values, and practices of the workplace in integrating learning for change; and lastly, environmental-related conditions (e.g., Mills & Whittaker, 2001), meaning the need to understand external factors, such as networking with others as well as following national directions. The descriptions of these conditions are discussed next.

- **Individual-related Conditions**

According to some authors (eg., Rowley, 1998; Shaffer, 1992), workplace learning arises if the individuals in the workplace learn. Similarly, individual learning seems to correspond to the theory of adult learning because it is also about personal acceptance, leading to changes in attitudes and perceived values (Huang & Shih, 2011). The learning of individuals is influenced by personal motivation and commitment (Keeling et al., 1998), perceived self-efficacy (Maxwell, 2014), a role model (Farmer et al., 1992, cited in Kerka, 1997), according to Garnett (2016), and "individual knowledge" which is extremely important if it can be shared with others. More importantly, individual learning can be developed within the social context (Kerka, 1997; Prasanwan, 2005; Toma, 2012). Every individual member has the potential to develop or contribute to a team's dialogues and discussions (Khasawneh, 2011). An observation study by Bauman (2005) confirmed that workplace learning can be promoted through the members' actions for learning, including (1) faculty members seeking new knowledge - Bauman explained that innovative ideas and new knowledge come about through an individual's efforts, such as by performing daily work practices, experimenting, and seeking out new information; (2) probing into common knowledge and reflecting among colleagues; and (3) the creation and transfer of knowledge by faculty members. More interestingly, a review study, recently published, found individual learning to be one of the seven key predictors of workplace learning (Vannasy & Sengsouliya, 2022). Based on the perspectives above-mentioned, it can be summarized that individual-related conditions relate to

the presence of personal attributes, such as ambition, commitment, learning with others, perceived self-confidence, and a role model, all of which are needed for engaging in workplace learning.

- **Organizational-related Conditions**

Existing literature has pointed out that the workplace itself plays a significant role in workplace learning. For instance, Dennis (2007) contends that learning will never occur unless there is an effective system provided by the workplace (cited in Francis, 2014). Čierna and colleagues (2017) proposed that the system functions as a guide in unleashing the best potential of organization members, and a good organization prioritizes innovative management methods. An effective management system is a fundamental element because it supports the members in speaking out with their ideas (Juceviciene & Edintaite, 2012; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017). According to Shaffer (1992), support from the organization may include different forms such as recruiting more professional staff members or providing facilities, funding, and philosophical assistance (practical advice). The lack of a well-organized learning management system causes problems, meaning collective learning among the members hardly happens (Shaffer, 1992; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017). Moreover, workplace learning can be facilitated by good relationships within the workplace. Costley (2011) reminds us of some problems that happen in promoting the learning of individuals within the workplace, especially the matter of conflict, a mismatch in the interests and the benefits of individuals and the organization. Schmidt and Gibbs (2009) stress the importance of the institutions' overall strategies.

As suggested by Salaman and Butler (1994), in order for higher education institutions to become a learning environment, urgent consideration must be given to internal analysis, their processes, and their environments and to the identification of the preferences, appropriate responses, and implementation methods to take action (cited in Rowley, 1998). Furthermore, some other authors (e.g., Bui & Baruch, 2012; Hartono et al., 2017; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016) strongly agree with the importance of the presence of leadership because good leadership may be linked to an organization's culture of learning. In developing workplace learning, universities should also pay attention to human resource development. Cebrián et al. (2013) also stressed the importance of strong leadership in promoting workplace learning. Consistently, the first thing for a workplace to consider is to develop a culture of learning and to sustain this (Habtoor et al., 2019; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). To conclude, it is noticeable that organizational-related conditions relate to key attributes of the workplace, such as the organizational culture of learning,

its leadership, and the faculty's system for promoting learning, needed for implementing workplace learning.

- **Environmental-related Conditions**

Several authors have confirmed environmental factors as strong predictors of workplace learning implementation. It is vital for a workplace to learn based on external feedback, that is, from partners (Shaffer, 1992). Understanding social trends and having networks with external environments is important in the work focus, particularly for the learning of individuals and the organization itself (Garnett, 2016). Learning from others may occur through recruiting, hiring, or training staff (Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009). Some authors tend to stress the influence of state policy and regulations. Mills and Whittaker (2001) contend that governmental support, such as acknowledgment, understanding, and system support, is necessary for the implementation of workplace learning. More authors (e.g., Čepić & Krstović, 2011) seem to agree with this view, that government policy has a strong impact on the implementation process of workplace learning. From these perspectives, it could be stated that universities' actions need to be in line with the relevant ministry's policy and systems. The ministry's policy and systems could reflect the national vision and directions that all the organizations at the grassroots level have to follow. A study by Lauer and Wilkesmann (2017) highlighted that the system (top-down management approach) influences the activities of universities, for instance, an update in the curriculum needs to incorporate the relevant regulations (as cited in Souza & Takahashi, 2019). To sum up, it is noticeable that environmental-related conditions relate to key attributes of the workplace, such as the partnership and the respect of national policy and directions, needed for implementing workplace learning.

Lao Universities as a Research Context

Lao universities are actively committed to workplace learning by having close collaborations with partner institutions locally and internationally. A typical situation of workplace learning in Laotian higher education is characterized by receiving outsider experts for in-home country training and/or sending trainees to a host institution for training on-site. The Lao national agenda on educational development up to 2030 supports higher education institutions in globalizing and transforming themselves as learning organizations. With this in mind, the government of Laos has developed laws regarding human resources, for instance, Article 4, which states that all officials need to learn morals, and political direction as well as improve their specialized knowledge. The

essence of this article is to encourage officials to learn and develop themselves in order to be prepared and apply their new knowledge to work practices (Lao National Assembly, 2015).

Methodology

Research Design

As mentioned earlier, this paper has a guiding research question "Which conditions do Laotian faculty members take into account for implementing workplace learning?" and the paper aims to hear views reflected by the participants on the conditions required for implementing workplace learning at their workplace. In the literature reviewed, little research on the related area has been conducted qualitatively. This paper, therefore, employed a qualitative research method to examine the conditions for the implementation of workplace learning in Laotian higher education. Through this research approach, participants are encouraged to share their views and experiences on how learning can be promoted within their workplace. A qualitative research design offers space for participants to express their attitudes, behaviors, experiences, and thoughts regarding a particular situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Dawson, 2002).

Sample and Participant Selection

In this study, 12 faculty members from a Laotian university faculty were invited to a face-to-face interview, using a purposive sampling technique (Laerd Dissertation, 2012). In the hope of hearing the views of faculty members with different characteristics, the authors of the present study selected the participants based on variations in work experience (5-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16 years or more), gender, and position (Dean, vice-dean, department heads, division heads and teaching faculty members). Moreover, since the sampled faculty is characterized as diverse in its disciplines; its faculty members are from diverse backgrounds/specializations, and the recruited informants were selected based on their subjects: soft sciences and hard sciences, which it is assumed are in relation to different learning attributes.

Interviews and Procedures

The interviews were scheduled with the faculty participants. A semi-structured interview was the research instrument for this study in which the participants gave specific responses and were also probed further where necessary (Dawson, 2002). In each interview, the key conversation focused on asking and answering regarding topics, such as what and how participants learn at work, how participants get encouraged/inspired to learn things, including the facilities and

limitations for them to learn at work and for work, etc. Key questions in the interviews included: "*Could you describe how you've developed yourself as you are promoted/tenured at your current position? What are the typical workplace learning activities at the faculty? What comes to your mind when discussing the need for the implementation of workplace learning? What could you see as the barriers and contributors to implementing workplace learning at your faculty?*" Some follow-up probes were also made. To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the interview questions were reviewed by an expert in the field of adult education and some wording was revised accordingly. During the interview, Lao was the language of conversation. At the beginning of each interview, the participants were asked to introduce themselves and present their personal views on workplace learning at the faculty. Before conducting the interviews, the interviewer asked for permission to record the conversations. The interview time ranged from 24-49 minutes. All the interviews were transcribed into Lao and the English translation was made only for the purpose of publication.

Analysis Strategy

The current paper was a qualitative content analysis, using a deductive category assignment. Free software, called "QCAmap" developed by Mayring (2014) was used for processing the data. According to the process, a coding framework, which includes category definitions, anchor examples, and coding rules needs to be established beforehand. A coding frame is the most important part of qualitative content analysis as it covers all the aspects of the description and the interpretation of the study (Schreier, 2014).

After this step, the obtained data were transcribed into texts to prepare for the analyses. The text materials were then coded line by line. Moreover, during the coding process, both a formative check (for a revision of the categories and the coding guidelines) and a summative check of reliability (as a final check of the texts) were conducted (Mayring, 2000). The finalized categories applied in the analysis strategy for this study include three groups of categories/codes and ten sub-categories, they are "Individual-related condition", which refers to physical and psychological attributes, including C1: Individual commitment, C2: Personal ambition, C3: Self-efficacy, C4: Role models, and C5: Learning from others; Organizational-related condition, which refers to the organizational elements that influence the way the organization and its members behave, including C6: Organizational culture, C7: Leadership, and C8: Faculty's support system for learning; Environmental-related condition, which refers to the government's policy and directions, as well

as the situations of external partners, including C9: Globalization, and C10: Respect of national directions. The coding guideline of the present study is presented in *Table 1*.

Table 1. The coding framework

Category groupings & definitions	Anchor examples
Individual-related condition	
C1: Individual commitment An individual's self-investment and sacrifice for learning (Keeling et al., 1998)	"*For my learning, it is from my self-learning. Furthermore, I put myself to learning from reading materials, learning with YouTube, and TV*" (Case 10).
C2: Personal ambition A person's level of satisfaction with regard to opportunities offered within the workplace (Bauman, 2005)	"*...I am always happy and more than ready to learn whatever I can be exposed to learning with others, and further develop myself and the faculty*" (Case 1).
C3: Self-efficacy An individual's firm belief in his or her capacity to participate in learning activities, as well as their self-perception of strength (Maxwell, 2014)	"*As I am offered many opportunities at work I may be qualified in different aspects: my qualification, knowledge, experience, leadership as well as my personality*" (Case 6).
C4: Role model A person serves as an ideal one/a good example to be imitated (Farmer et al., 1992, cited in Kerka, 1997)	"*I imitate someone who is a good example in his or her work life. I also like to learn and follow the styles of working of a successful colleague. That taught me a lot about how to be successful*" (Case 7).
C5: Learning from others Any learning opportunities shared	"*I care much for others and adapt myself to the way how the others behave, but with valid reasonings*" (Case 12)

by surrounded people/colleagues, as well as making one's changes based on others (Khasawneh, 2011)	

Organizational-related condition	
C6: Organizational culture The faculty's perceived values, and practices for modernizing the organization (Habtoor et al., 2019; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016)	*"I am quite positive towards the faculty's professional development activities because they improve the solidarity with the organization and I support continuing such learning activities"* (Case 10)
C7: Leadership The faculty's leaders and their actions leading the members (Cebrián et al. (2013)	*"My personal habit is to think and plan ahead beforehand and I must share my ideas with the subordinates and ensure they know about all of my plans"* (Case 9)
C8: Faculty's support system for learning Faculty's motivation of members to participate in learning activities and the offering incentives/ rewarding for such participation (Juceviciene & Edintaite, 2012; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017)	*"In order to encourage staff to participate in a learning activity, you, as a leader needs to push and/or awake the members up and make sure the leader also need to treat every staff equally"* (Case 3)

Environmental-related condition	
C9: Globalization Learning based on external feedback/partners and understanding social/new trends (Shaffer, 1992)	*"It does matter if new ideas about work practices are ignored and/or unaccepted due to implementing only traditional ways of practices"* (Case 2)
C10: Respect of national directions	*"Learning of one's own organization's culture, the local context in management*

The faculty's attention to the government's policy, support and future directions (Čepić & Krstović, 2011)	*system and principles are crucial elements of learning at this 21st century*" (Case 3)

Findings

Through analyzing the interview data collected, this paper is based on the pre-developed coding framework and uses a deductive category assignment approach. The findings found 3 dimensions that are key conditions taken into account when implementing workplace learning, as shared by the sampled faculty members, including individual-related conditions, organizational conditions, and environmental conditions. The description of each condition follows:

Individual-related Conditions

According to the data analysis, it is particularly important to consider the individual-related condition when implementing workplace learning in a higher education context. This set of conditions includes an individual's ambition, an individual's commitment to learning, role models, self-efficacy, and learning from others. The faculty members' personal commitment acts as a catalyst for learning within the workplace. The learning would never happen and the tasks would never be achieved if there were no personal commitments, as stated by 7 out of 12 participants. Through the engagement of the faculty members, it is indicated that they search for every opportunity to sharpen their knowledge by themselves. This refers to how they learn their roles and tasks on the job. This is partly illustrated in this participant's statement:

> I am more engaged in self-regulated learning. I make myself
> learn from reading materials, learning with YouTube, and TV, (Case 10).

Individual learning will become more applicable and respond more to the needs of the learning within the workplace if individual knowledge can be shared. Learning with others helps determine the issues and navigate the solutions for such problems, as stated by 8 out of 12 participants. This tendency is reflected in the statement below:

> Exchanging ideas with others is very important. If one works alone,
> we never reach the goal. Success can be achieved through collaboration
> and the lessons learned with colleagues, (Case 6).

In addition, self-perceived efficacy is critical for learning as well. Taking part in every single learning activity, the feeling of belonging within a workplace grows, and having this trust they become self-confident and dare to take more risks. Personal ambition is another factor: if one seeks to learn for oneself and for the growth of the workplace, new ideas and knowledge arise. Moreover, the present study also points out that having a role model is also key because the model can motivate others and guide them in their actions, by showing how to behave and sharing their thoughts.

Organizational-related Conditions

Organizational-related conditions are found to be another aspect taken into account by faculty members when implementing workplace learning. This condition includes the workplace's culture of learning. This study indicated that having a positive learning culture can predict successful workplace learning. The culture of learning within the workplace should be treated as routine in informing practices at work as a whole. A supportive culture should be reflected in the workplace's knowledge management and strategy. A well-structured supporting system is found to be a condition taken into consideration by the faculty participants. Workplace learning can happen if there is a clear vision in the workplace and it develops a consistent strategy and management approach. This trend is illustrated in the following quote:

> The workplace must care to develop clear implementation, have a close
> follow-up to find out what problems there are and how they can be solved,
> including how faculty members become motivated and how they are
> improved professionally, (Case 4).

Moreover, workplace learning occurs due to a well-qualified leader. As described by the faculty members, the ideal leader should take just and equality-based actions. Given equal opportunities by the leader, all the members' learning can be promoted, and by receiving such support the members become more positive towards the leader and the workplace as a whole. This trend is revealed in the following statement:

> In general, I find that many employees have always attended learning
> activities, on the other hand, many others have not. I would like to
> recommend that the leader considers this issue more thoroughly, (Case 2).

Environmental-related Conditions

The environmental-related condition is one last aspect taken into account by the faculty participants when promoting workplace learning. When taking the steps to become a learning organization, it is extremely important to consider globalization, through strengthening the partnership. With such a strong network, the workplace can get useful feedback, absorb new ideas, and exchange better practices with partners. Most importantly, it is critical for a workplace to be exposed to the reality of society as well as to the world of technology. This description is reflected by the following statement:

> One important thing for the implementation of workplace learning is
> to learn from external situations, and the learning of science, technology
> and contemporary society, (Case 3).

According to the analysis, this condition also includes the workplace's understanding of contextual factors, such as political perspectives and national policies, which are considered a key part. Integration of this into organizational rules, which all the members have to follow, is required. Moreover, understanding such a contextual factor also includes the conduct of learning activities in the workplace that support the workplace's vision and mission. On the other hand, learning new knowledge that does mismatch with the actual needs of growth of the workplace, is considered as disrespect to the workplace norms. A lack of understanding of the state policies and directions can lead to faculty members not being considered competent enough to contribute to the workplace goals, and this impedes the occurrence of workplace learning. In addition, the conduct of learning within a workplace is not supported accordingly if the state policy is not integrated into its practices. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> I think that in order to learn and achieve professionally in the workplace,
> the employees have to understand the national directions, for instance,
> the rules of the organization. Even if a faculty member is knowledgeable,
> he or she needs to learn and understand the governmental directions, (Case 6).

Discussion, Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Discussion

Individual-related conditions, among others, are likely to be key elements taken into account by the faculty participants when implementing workplace learning. The majority of the faculty participants in this paper also claimed that they undertook self-searching for learning such as through reading materials, social media, and others. This learning pattern truly represents how adults learn (Knowles, 1980). They also reported that it is necessary for every employee to find out ways to sharpen his or her knowledge. In the absence of seeking new knowledge, workplace learning is impossible. This notion stresses the importance of personal actions and commitment to learning (March & Olsen, 1975). Shaffer also confirmed the influence of individual actions on the growth of the workplace. This study seems to be the same as a study of Bauman (2005), finding three conditions: the absence of new ideas, the questioning among colleagues, and the knowledge transfer among colleagues. These three key components also reflect the individuals' actions and commitment within the workplace. By engaging themselves in learning, employees' knowledge and innovative practices can be updated because the nature of learning within the workplace is more through cognitive apprenticeship (Kerka, 1997). Furthermore, this current study also revealed that learning with others can serve to determine the problems and navigate the solutions for these issues. This is the truth, as confirmed by the participants. According to Jones and Hendry (1994), "workplace learning" refers to training focusing on sharing knowledge and discussing the conditions of work. Despite finding the need for individual-related conditions, the individual's actions for learning appear to be strongly linked to the workplace's vision, mission, and the entire system. That means individual knowledge cannot be shared when there is a lack of support from the workplace: learning in the workplace does not seem to take place.

Additionally, the faculty participants reported that developing a positive culture of learning within the workplace is a must. Creating knowledge and innovation should be accepted as a routine within the workplace (Čierna et al., 2016; Fenwick, 2010; Souza & Takahashi, 2019). More importantly, a sustained learning culture is essential (Habtoor et al., 2019; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). The sustainability of this can be enhanced through team learning and empowerment among the members (Toma, 2012). According to the participants, equal treatment by the employer in the provision of learning opportunities is needed. They claimed that workplace learning can be promoted if everyone within the workplace learns together. This finding supports

Rowley (1998): it is crucial for the leader to integrate the learning task as a central responsibility, emphasizing the equal participation of all members, not restricted to only a professional group. Quality leadership may create feelings of belonging among colleagues/coworkers which is achieved by developing institutional strategies, visions, and other action plans to further organizational learning (Cebrián et al., 2013; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017). The present study points out that the participants take into consideration environmental conditions, such as collaboration and partnership. According to them, it is critical for a workplace to be exposed to the reality of society as well as to the world of technology. Workplace learning constitutes a continuous process in which an organization interacts with its external networks (Shaffer, 1992). Shaffer further noted that a workplace can borrow recipes from partners and incorporate them into innovation and changes. An organization will never become empowered without learning from its surrounding environment and its competitors (Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009; Toma, 2012). Consistently, Garnett and colleagues (2008, cited in Garnett, 2016) also proposed that structures, regulations, and procedures should enhance the partnership with other stakeholders. According to the participants, it is also a necessity to receive external feedback and make use of it in improving the practices of the workplace. The conduct of learning within the workplace would not be supported accordingly unless the state policy is integrated into its practices. Mills and Whittaker (2001) noted that the process of workplace learning (for instance, access to workplace learning resources, competitiveness, and innovative pedagogy) needs appropriate policies and contributions from the government.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

This study reveals several interesting findings that may contribute to the understanding of the conditions required for implementing workplace learning. However, the findings should be used by scholars and/or future research with some caution regarding limitations. One limitation is that since the present study involved a qualitative research method, interviewing 12 faculty members working at a faculty in a Laotian university, the findings may not explain the conditions in other institutions. Future inquiries may include faculty members from different sectors to get further details. The interpretation of this study was dependent on the interviewees' self-reporting: they were asked to describe their thoughts on and experiences of workplace learning; and the responses from the interviews were analyzed according to the qualitative content analysis, and the deductive category assignment (Mayring, 2014). Another limitation, since the present study

expected to get interviewees' descriptions of workplace learning in their organization, is that the interview questions were more open-ended and included less probing, so some responses obtained were fairly general. According to the present paper, three conditions appear to be key conditions in the implementation of workplace learning. However, these findings could be further tested by a quantitative research design.

Conclusion

The present paper is a case study among Asian contexts as it investigates the conditions required for implementing workplace learning in Laotian higher education. The empirical evidence pointed out a well-consistent tendency with theoretical perspectives and past works, of which the findings revealed 3 major conditions, taken into account by the sampled faculty members: (1) individual-related; (2) organizational-related; and (3) environmental-related conditions. Individual-related conditions appear to be foremost in the implementation of workplace learning in this case study; the individuals' actions regarding their learning are fundamental as this factor is a starting point for learning. However, the learning of individuals also appears to be subject to organizational-related and environmental-related conditions. That means individuals' knowledge cannot be shared when there is a lack of support within the workplace, as otherwise, learning does not occur. In the same vein, if the individuals' actions regarding their learning do not respond to the workplace's vision, mission, and goals, and do not respect the organizational rules, policy, nor the whole national direction, the learning may bring no outcomes/benefits to the workplace. Future research on the relationships among the three conditions (individual-related; organizational-related; and environmental-related) is strongly recommended.

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4.3 Sub-study 3: "The Barriers to Workplace Learning Implementation"

This work was officially published in the Indonesian Journal of Adult and Community Education (IJACE) in 2023. A summary is introduced in the following paragraphs:

Establishing favorable conditions to enhance learning at work among employees may require minimizing possible barriers hindering the realization of workplace learning by them and their participation in learning activities. Understanding these obstacles precisely is helpful for workplaces in planning for skills development and further learning on the job for their human resources. More research from different contexts may contribute to the existing knowledge on what prevents individuals from learning at work. The engagement in workplace learning by Laotian faculty members has not been investigated. A Laotian university was, therefore, determined as a case study for this research. The research question: "What could be the barriers impeding the implementation of workplace learning, as taken into account by Laotian faculty members?" is set as a guide. The author of the paper reviews the perspectives of workplace learning, the key predictors of workplace learning, and the definitions of barriers in past empirical works, etc., as the theoretical framework for the study. In the paper, the author collects qualitative data by inviting sampled faculty members working at a Laotian university for an interview. Then the interview data from the informants is analyzed with "a deductive category assignment," a type of qualitative content analysis method. Based on the approach, the transcriptions of the interview data are coded and assigned to the related sub-categories; there are 13 sub-groups, including "Lack of interpersonal communication", "Lack of self-efficacy", "Lack of self-learning", "Lack of team learning", "Lack of self-motivation", "Leadership", "Lack of learning culture", "Administrative system", "Lack of expertise", "Limited facilities", "Budgeting", "Lack of rewarding", and "Lack of trust", as well as an additional category on "gender".

The findings reveal that two levels of individual and organizational barriers tend to be influential in preventing the sample from learning in their workplace. A closer examination of each level indicates that strong barriers stem from the sample having low motivation for learning and perceiving little value in learning at work. Moreover, they do not even seek to learn from others. Some other barriers can be found at the organizational level, indicating that the sampled workplace lacks qualified leadership, as claimed by most participants. Another obstacle is associated with a lack of support from the workplace, which means knowledgeable faculty members do not have spaces and/or opportunities to use their knowledge and experiences in their routines/tasks.

Recommendations for further research made by the paper are that the two levels of barriers (individual and organizational) should be tested with a quantitative research method. The paper presents a structured report of possible barriers to the implementation of workplace learning in higher education. The findings can serve as useful references in explaining why individuals do not learn or learn very little at work. Most importantly, the findings can be taken into consideration when outlining how workplaces, especially higher education institutions, can facilitate their human resources to develop themselves about work and for work. The following texts are the presentation of the published article entitled "The Barriers to Workplace Learning Implementation" which can be found at https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/IJACE/index

The Barriers to Workplace Learning Implementation

Abstract

Inquiry into barriers to workplace learning implementation is ongoing. This paper uses qualitative content analysis to investigate possible barriers hindering workplace learning in higher education. The study involved a semi-structured interview with 12 faculty members from a Laotian university as key informants. By using qualitative content analysis, two aspects/components of an individual (lack of team learning, low motivation, limited self-learning, etc.) and organization (unqualified leadership, lack of learning culture, etc.) appear to be significant barriers to workplace learning. Future research may benefit from investigating this area quantitatively.

Keywords: Faculty Members, Higher Education, Individual barriers, Organizational barriers, Workplace Learning

1. Introduction

Workplace learning is defined as learning within the workplace in which the members engage in learning for their professional development through self-directed learning, formal and informal learning modes, as well as sharing knowledge with others. Several authors (Mills & Whittaker, 2001; Rowley, 1998, etc.) have posited the importance of workplace learning in higher education institutions. However, it is claimed that universities have challenges in committing to workplace learning (Bauman, 2005; Bratianu, 2018, etc.). These days, many workplaces, as well as educational institutions, are expected to establish favorable conditions to promote learning opportunities for their employees and this effort is closely linked to identifying barriers impeding the occurrence of workplace learning activities. Knowing these barriers can be helpful and useful for the leader of an organization in determining the direction of human resources' capacity reinforcement, especially a provision of learning potential for the members (Matin & Alavi, 2007). If a workplace invests more in upskilling its employees, the result of this new knowledge and ideas is that the staff will be more productive at work (Fiza et al., 2015). Identifying barriers to workplace learning has widely appeared in literature reviews, however, there has been little evidence on this topic from a qualitative perspective. According to Schilling and Kluge (2009), more empirical data is required to understand the reality of the issue.

Lao PDR has recognized education as a key to the nation's socio-economic development (MoES, 2020), at the same time, the government needs a standardized higher education system to have adequate faculty members who are knowledgeable and updated on a changing world. Moreover, Article 4 of the national law on human resources has also emphasized that Laotian officials have to keep learning and acquiring morals, policy and the developmental directions of the country (National Assembly, 2015). From the personal observations of the present authors, learning for personal growth and workplace learning engagement by the faculty members is skeptical and characterized as more individualistic and this may serve as a major block for their institution in becoming a learning organization. This paper, therefore, investigates the barriers to implementing workplace learning in a Laotian higher education institution. The study is also to further contribute to the existing body of knowledge on workplace learning. The research question guiding this paper is "What could be the barriers impeding the implementation of workplace learning, as taken into account by Laotian faculty members?".

The structure of this paper is presented thusly: Section 1 introduces the review of literature, in which readers are presented with some key concepts of workplace learning, as well as the existing barriers to workplace learning implementation. Section 2 relates to the methodological aspect, in which readers are introduced to the sampling, the data collection, and the analysis strategy used in the present study. Section 3 introduces the findings as planned to answer the research question and the section that follows presents the discussion of the findings; the last section will introduce some limitations before offering the conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Workplace Learning

The integration of workplace learning into human resource development is vital for various organizations, especially for higher education. Čepić & Krstović (2011) posited that workplace learning is a necessity for every workplace to become a learning organization. In universities, the concept of workplace learning is a means for self-preparation and a response to the world's rapid changes (Aminbeidokhti et al., 2016; Čepić & Krstović, 2011; Habtoor et al., 2019; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016; Rowley, 1998). Universities engaging in workplace learning can improve the quality of teaching performance (Hartono et a., 2017), and upskill their professional practices (McEwen & Trede, 2014). Moreover, Mills and Whittaker (2001) also acknowledge the significance of workplace learning in higher education in that it breaks down obstacles often faced in higher education institutions, enabling the institutions to build their capacity for competitiveness and allowing them to be able to closely connect with industry sectors. Similarly, the goal of workplace learning is to increase the capabilities of employees (Basit et al., 2015; Costley, 2007; Guta, 2018; Mills & Whittaker, 2001), and their increased motivation for job performance (Basit et al., 2015).

However, there appear to be some challenges for universities in implementing workplace learning (Bauman, 2005; Bratianu, 2018; Cebrián et al., 2013; Rowley, 1998; Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009). According to Rowley (1998), encouraging members to participate in individual learning is a real obstacle for institutions. The problem also concerns shared learning and having a collective vision to transform the institution into a learning environment (Bratianu, 2018; Rowley, 1998): for instance, not every member is ambitious about learning (Rowley, 1998). More consistently, it is also claimed that universities are poor at changing themselves (Bauman, 2005; Cebrián et al., 2013). These problems can be explained by how the system and structure of universities are very

complicated (Cebrián et al., 2013; Garnett et al., 2008, in Garnett, 2016; Johnson, 2001), and that there is a lack of acceptance or integration of a new change in teaching and learning culture (Johnson, 2001; Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009), poor knowledge management (Rowley, 1998), and staff finding it difficult to adapt themselves to the external environment (Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017).

Inquiry into workplace learning has been undertaken for decades. Unsurprisingly, the definitions of workplace learning have been presented differently. For instance, workplace learning is the characteristics of learning of individuals (Arygris, 1964, cited in Jones & Hendry, 1994); or, it is a process of updating knowledge and understanding to improve actions (Fiol & Lytes, 1985). Marsick and Watkins (1994, p. 130) wrote that "Organizational learning is a metaphor for adaptive responses to triggers in the environment". According to these authors, workplace learning is vital. For Jones and Hendry (1994), this type of learning refers to training that focuses on sharing knowledge and discussing current conditions of work. Accordingly, Fenwick (2010), Schilling and Kluge (2009) posited a similar view: workplace learning is a process of learning together by employees, aimed at transforming a workplace, creating innovations and knowledge, as well as integrating the learning into routines of the workplace.

Levitt and March (1988) viewed workplace learning as "routine-based, history-dependent, and target-oriented" (p. 319). Levitt and March explained that through this learning, a workplace respects the legitimacy of its actions reflects upon its past actions and targets the expected outcomes. Shaffer (1992) seems to agree with this perspective by noting that the essence of the workplace learning concept covers expectational and experiential learning. The concept of workplace learning is about individuals' learning of different aspects of their work lives and this learning appears to be connected to the concept of adult learning, where the learning should be more autonomy-oriented (Costley, 2011; Jones & Hendry, 1994; Knowles, 1980) because developing learning at the workplace requires considerable understanding of both teaching and learning of adults, especially their existing knowledge and experience (Costley, 2011). Ponnuswamy and Manohar (2016) cite Simon's (1991) words - a workplace learns in two ways: learning from its employees and recruiting new members who are knowledgeable in a field that the workplace has never had before. According to Huang and Shih (2011), workplace learning occurs on three levels where learning starts with an individual and then is shared with a group before spreading to a workplace as a whole.

The concept of workplace learning has different characteristics from the traditional nature of knowledge acquisition which uses a classroom-based learning method (Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009). According to Haruna and colleagues (2019), workplace learning relates to a learning activity, combining learning on the job and classroom-based learning. Consistently, workplace learning can also be seen as any patterns of learning in a form of either informal or formal learning (Basit et al., 2015; Lester & Costley, 2010), meaning that workplace learning does not necessarily take place within the university but it can be conducted outside the university; and this learning type can be shaped by multi-levels of academic knowledge where learners can learn at both a low-level and a high-level (Lester & Costley, 2010). To conclude, workplace learning is the learning of individuals who learn new things necessary for the empowerment of their workplace, through self-directed learning and sharing knowledge with others. And this definition is used to represent workplace learning in the present study.

2.3 The Overview of Key Predictors of Workplace Learning

Several authors have proposed some key elements needed for implementing workplace learning. For instance, Popper and Lipshitz (2000) noted that leadership serves as a key predictor of organizational learning through developing both the structure and culture of the organization (cited in Khalifa & Ayoubi, 2014). This could be true, as leadership and leaders are perceived as key to facilitating workplace learning (Bui & Baruch, 2012; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017). Shaffer (1992) stressed that "the opportunity for learning by the units" is greatly facilitated/fomented by the strong leadership of the organization. In this respect, an organization needs to create values, practices and methods in which learning and working are parallel across the organization (Rowley, 1998). Furthermore, Čierna et al. (2016) noted that to engage in workplace learning, a workplace needs an effective system in which the management of knowledge is determined. The lack of a well-organized learning management system causes problems and that makes sharing knowledge among faculty members barely take place. Basit et al. (2015) recommend it is a good idea to integrate workplace learning into a routine within the workplace; this pursuit may inform human resources development and the transfer of knowledge. Consistently, Salaman and Butler (1994) also proposed some key guides for workplaces to engage in workplace learning, stating urgent consideration must be given to the analyses of themselves, their processes, and their environments and the identification of the preference, appropriate responses and implementation methods to take actions (cited in Rowley, 1998).

Furthermore, promoting individual learning is key. A review study by Vannasy and Sengsouliya (2022) found individual-related elements as a frequently cited predictor of workplace learning. Similarly, Čepić & Krstović (2011) posited that the core concept of a learning organization is the transformation of individual learning into workplace learning. A well-known researcher, Argyris (1995), contends that individual capacity to learn is key as it determines the possibility to learn things. Argyris also noted that true learning takes place if people reflect, design, create and evaluate their initiatives. Seemingly, several past authors (Basit et al., 2015, Huang & Shih, 2011; Keeling et al., 1998; Kerka, 1997; Maxwell, 2014; Prasanwan, 2005; Rowley, 1998; Shaffer, 1992) have confirmed the influence of individual knowledge and individual actions on enhancing workplace learning. For instance, success in workplace learning implementation may depend on how actively the learners participate and how much learners have learned. Moreover, workplace learning is claimed to be related to the theory of adult learning, so it is all about individuals' acceptance, attitudes and perceived values for change (Huang & Shih, 2011). However, individual learning will become more useful for the occurrence of workplace learning if individual learning and/or individual knowledge, skills and experiences can be shared with others (Khasawneh, 2011; Maxwell, 2014; Toma, 2012). According to Khasawneh (2011), team learning is a key predictor serving as a fundamental learning spot within an organization in which all members can develop an open space for dialogue and discussion among colleagues. Workplace learning is facilitated by the learning engagement of individuals in different given opportunities, such as observing, listening to, and working together with more experienced peers (Maxwell, 2014). Fenwick (2010) agreed with this perspective, that learning arises through the interaction of individuals.

Yet another key component is environmental related factors. According to the literature reviewed (Mills & Whittaker, 2001; Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009; Shaffer, 1992; etc.), collaboration can make workplace learning realistic. For instance, learning from partners serves as a good source of obtaining new knowledge (Garnett, 2016). Moreover, through partnership, a workplace can absorb constructive feedback from partners as a guide for one's development (Dernova & Perevozniuk, 2017; Shaffer, 1992). In addition to this, the integration of state policy and/or governmental directions seems to be very important to the conduct of workplace learning. Practices in line with the given state policy and the system can bring about acknowledgement and relevant support from the government (Čepić & Krstović, 2011; Costley, 2007). More specifically,

in the context of higher education, any conduct of activities needs to be in line with the central regulations (Souza & Takahashi, 2019).

2.4 Defining the Barriers to Workplace Learning

This section presents the categorization of barriers to workplace learning in higher education. The overwhelming array of research papers has outlined the barriers, however, inquiry into barriers to workplace learning in higher education seems to be limited. The authors of the present paper have an interest in redefining a conceptual framework on barriers as the purpose of this study. Having collated and synthesized related previous works, 13 barriers have been identified. These barriers have been then categorized into 2 major groups: individual barriers, relating to personal factors, comprising individual members' qualities, attitudes and behaviors that act as barriers to workplace learning; and organizational barriers which refer to organizational factors, including practices, values and support to workplace learning. The detailed discussion is reported below:

1. *Lack of interpersonal communication:* this aspect refers to a problem of communication among colleagues within the workplace. Lack of good communication has been confirmed as a barrier to workplace learning implementation (Fiza et al., 2015; Makambe, 2014; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008). Maxwell (2014) noted that an individual's engagement in learning activities is connected with the opportunities of observing, listening to, and working together with more experienced peers, adding that the relationship with the peers is very useful for constructive feedback and support. According to Fenwick (2010), the learning that happens in the workplace includes any interaction between the members. This interaction leads to an opportunity for the members to discuss and share ideas. A lack of good communication within the workplace could undermine learning (Fiza et al., 2015). It is significant to encourage the members to open discussion and dialogue (Fiza et al., 2015; Matin & Alavi, 2007). Sharing ideas, giving feedback and listening to each other among colleagues strongly contribute to the development of workplace learning (Matin & Alavi, 2007). Furthermore, it is useful if a workplace considers encouraging different forms of interaction among its members due to personal convenience. For instance, Juceviciene and Edintaite (2012) found that some faculty members in higher education institutions tend to interact informally within their departments when discussing things.

2. *Lack of self-efficacy:* this is a problem of an individual's lack of perceived competence and self-confidence in participating in learning activities. Several authors (Billet, 1995; Fiza et al., 2015;

Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008) have confirmed it as a barrier to implementing workplace learning. McLaughlin et al. (2008) raised two barriers: "lack of retentive capacity" relating to an individual lacking the ability to apply a piece of new knowledge into his/her daily work; "lack of absorptive capacity" discussing the identification of value in new knowledge. These issues impede individuals' learning within the workplace and hinder development in the workplace. This kind of issue is usually found in a workplace where the employees are not very creative and have low competence in learning (Matin & Alavi, 2007). A study by Fiza et al. (2015) has pointed out an issue that challenges the development of learning within the workplace, finding that women lack learning ability. This problem could reflect a negative attitude toward women members and this may make other capable women workers discouraged from workplace learning and development (Fiza et al., 2015). This could be a gender bias that calls on the workplace to consider improving the self-efficacy of both male and female staff. Learning in the workplace can be realistic if the workplace supports individual learning capacity (Rowley, 1998).

3. *Lack of self-learning:* this aspect refers to the unwillingness of individuals to engage in learning and/or seeking new knowledge. This is another barrier to the conduct of workplace learning (Billet, 1995; Guggssa & Kabeta, 2021; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008; Silverman, 2003). This barrier includes an individual's lack of self-commitment to learning. According to Billet (1995), learning for the individual is important but the learning has to be appropriate and meet the needs of the workplace. Billet further noted that the individuals' access to learning activities is supposed to be authentic where the learners are challenged by critical thinking. Similarly, the barrier is characterized by an individual who is afraid of risk-taking in learning. It is required for the members to take a risk, experiencing difficulties learning from failures and evaluating one's performance to learn at work (Matin & Alavi, 2007), taking a risk, such as facing a penalty and losing profit also matters (Mclaughlin et al., 2008). Accordingly, Schilling and Kluge (2009) identified one of the barriers as related to a lack of skills and knowledge of innovation. Moreover, Gugssa and Kabeta (2021) found that a limitation of individuals' workplace learning involves a lack of learning behavior and seeking self-development opportunities. The members' self-learning is very influential. Saffer (1992) additionally affirms this: individuals who learn in the workplace can also learn.

4. *Lack of team learning:* this barrier relates to limited shared learning among colleagues. This issue is claimed to undermine the development of workplace learning (Faladillah et al., 2020; Fiza

et al., 2015; Guggssa & Kabeta, 2021; Makambe, 2014; Mclaughlin et al., 2008; Yuliana et al., 2020). Faladillah (2020) explained that the members' lack of self-motivation for sharing knowledge with others could be due to the personal perception that this task is not included in one's regular duties. According to Mclaughlin and colleagues (2008), this barrier may be linked to the "fear of exploitation" that the members are less likely to learn and/or share with colleagues due to the perceived lack of profits in return for their efforts, and the "fear of contamination" relating to the members being unwilling to work with others due to the perceived differences in specializations of colleagues. Moreover, the lack of shared learning and understanding may be influenced by a given opportunity provided by the workplace where they can be exposed to group discussions and sharing sessions (Juceviciene & Edintaite, 2012).

5. *Lack of self-motivation:* this is a barrier relating to an individual's lack of interest and to their resistance to learning. Several past authors (Faladillah et al., 2020; Gugssa & Kabeta, 2021; McLaughlin et al., 2008) have confirmed it. McLaughlin et al. (2008) tested the impact of the 25 barriers identified in the existing literature. The findings indicated that personal resistance is one of the barriers affecting knowledge management within the workplace. This is an internal characteristic that relates to an individual's attitude. According to Keeling et al. (1998), what is considered to be the biggest barrier to promoting workplace learning is the overcoming of employees' negative attitudes toward the perception of values and their benefits. The attitudinal barriers are from those employees who are near retirement, employees with little preference for personal growth and who do not perceive the usefulness of workplace learning (Keeling et al., 1998). Another reason for not wanting to change is that the members feel secure with their existing knowledge and therefore they see it as unnecessary to gain new knowledge. This is particularly the case for officially employed members (Matin & Alavi, 2007). Voolaid and Ehrlich (2017) pointed out that it is very challenging to promote individuals' active participation due to personal attitudes and aspirations for learning, especially in the context of higher education. Voolaid and Ehrlich further explained that the faculty members see themselves as knowledge creators, but are not open to further learning. Keeling and colleagues (1998) seem to confirm this tendency, that low motivation is an attitudinal barrier and people who do not perceive the significance of workplace learning will tend to reject participating in any personal development activities.

6. *Leadership:* this aspect relates to the workplace's action of leading, the ability to influence the members for learning and transformation within the workplace. This is a critical element of the

development of workplace learning and different authors (Faladillah et al., 2020; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008) have confirmed it as a major barrier to implementing learning activities at work. This barrier focuses on an issue in the leader's practices of leading the members. Matin and Alavi, (2007) pointed out that one problem is that the leader tends to emphasize managing rather than leading and often lacks effective planning. A recent study (McLaughlin et al., 2008) has indicated that the leader's lack of motivating employees hinders the conduct of knowledge transfer in the sampled organization. More problems in leadership include assessing the employee's potential knowledge and that leads to not knowing their learning needs (Faladillah et al., 2020). According to the literature reviewed, strong leadership is necessary for strengthening and supporting the members' learning culture. Leadership serves as a key attribute in workplaces (Bui & Baruch, 2012; Matin & Alavi, 2007). Some of the key characteristics include regular reflection on members' work practices (Čierna et al., 2016; Salaman & Butler, 1994, cited in Rowley, 1998), promoting workplace learning and team learning (Basit et al., 2015; Francis, 2014; Jones & Hendry, 1994; Khalifa & Ayoubi, 2014), the acceptance of changes, adaptations in structures as well as the strategic planning (Jones & Hendry, 1994; Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009).

7. *Lack of learning culture:* this barrier relates to the absence of a good culture of learning in the workplace. The barriers may include a problem of lacking vision and/or possessing an unclear method for achieving a goal (Faladillah et al., 2020), the lack of a professional development approach and the integration of pedagogy (Maxwell, 2014). In more instances, the barrier is also linked to a problem, the so-called "unprovenness" about whether new knowledge is rated as useful or not (McLaughlin et al., 2008); the less perceived value of innovation (Schilling & Kluge, 2009), that is the little appreciation by the workplace for utilizing innovations; lack of evaluations of the members' work practices (Cebrián et al., 2013; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008) and the unwillingness of sharing and learning with partners (Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008). According to McLaughlin et al. (2008), a workplace should establish a knowledge transfer mechanism as it can represent a learning culture within the workplace. Similarly, Fenwick (2010) put that having a clear goal for learning, including what should be learned and what the learning is for, is extremely important. The culture of learning influences the members' efforts to learn which makes them engage in interactions (Maxwell, 2014). However, developing a learning culture needs strong leadership (Khalifa & Ayoubi, 2014).

8. *Administrative system:* this barrier refers to a workplace's internal structure that informs the direction of certain activities, such as coordination, task allocation and supervision, to achieve the goals. According to Matin and Alavi (2007), many workplaces often have a barrier regarding the structure, and lacking a well-organized structure (e.g., "a machine-like structure", "a top-down approach", "Lack of recompensing system", etc.) may contribute to ambiguity in work definitions. McLaughlin et al. (2008), Schilling and Kluge (2009) have proposed weak management skills as one of the barriers to workplace learning management: this barrier involves the workplace's inability to utilize its existing knowledge effectively. More recent studies (Faladillah et al.,2020; Makambe, 2014) have also found that the possibility of workplace learning is hampered due to the heavy workload of the members. This reflects the workplace's poor management systems, and this problem causes incompatibility in members' work practices. Workplace learning is linked to a condition, so-called organizational norms (Shaffer, 1992). Consistently, Čierna and colleagues (2016) stress the importance of the quality management system, and good system guides for arranging human resources and job descriptions. Voolaid and Ehrlich (2017) also support this: the creation and sharing of knowledge among the members are likely to arise if the workplace has an effective system.

9. *Lack of expertise*: this barrier relates to an absence of authentic knowledge and skills, and lack of experience, as well as to a shortage of experts in the workplace. Many workplaces seem to rely on their experts when implementing workplace learning. It might be true to say that a lack of experts or the presence of experts who are unwilling to share their knowledge may impede the outcomes of workplace learning. According to Billett (1995), the unwillingness of experts to share knowledge and skills with colleagues is a major barrier that may harm workplace learning implementation and Billett assumed that this problem happens due to the fear of losing their position. McLaughlin et al. (2008) have confirmed a barrier to the depth of knowledge. This refers to possessing authentic knowledge and skills among the members within the workplace and to what extent they can apply the knowledge. A recent study (Nakpodia, 2009) has also proposed that retaining a senior employee who is knowledgeable and contributive is a challenge. More consistently, Bratianu (2018) seems to agree with the barrier and further notes a workplace must act and prevent knowledge loss, for instance, universities can develop "intergenerational learning" to retain the knowledge and keep the expertise when senior professors enter retirement.

10. *Limited facilities*: this barrier covers a workplace's availability of infrastructure, technology, learning sources and materials needed for workplace learning. A limit of facilities has been confirmed as a major challenge in past works (Billett, 1995; Faladillah et al., 2020; Makambe, 2014; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008). Such a challenge appears, for instance, in the capacity for use and the availability of technologies in support of learning within the workplace (Faladillah et al., 2020; McLaughlin et al., 2008): lack of internet connection bandwidth, and lack of "instructional media" (Billett, 1995). Billett views the use of teaching media as a limitation in different workplaces. A workplace needs to consider and manage to arrange a computer-based learning option when conducting workplace learning (Billett, 1995). Together with this, the barrier also includes learning materials and limited access to learning resources (Faladillah et al., 2020), as well as an absence of good infrastructure (Faladillah et al., 2020; Makambe, 2014). Makambe explained that having insufficient meeting rooms may reduce interaction opportunities among colleagues.

11. *Budgeting*: this barrier is related to the problem of money, that is, the inability of funding to support learning activities within the workplace. It seems money is a necessary condition for the conduct of workplace learning (Faladillah et al., 2020; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008). According to Matin and Alavi (2007), workplaces often face a challenge with money used in promoting workplace learning, especially for paying financial rewards, including model staff, overtime hours of work, promotions, and other academic activities. The challenge relating to money is the power in management where the workplace has no autonomy to carry out the reward system independently (Matin & Alavi, 2007). Similarly, McLaughlin et al. (2008) assumed that a barrier to a workplace's knowledge transfer is relative to the cost of managing collaboration. A recent study by Faladillah et al. (2020) has confirmed this, saying that lacking a budget for research is an obstacle impeding workplace learning implementation.

12. Lack of reward: this barrier relates to a lack of a system for motivating and encouraging employees to engage in workplace learning. Silverman (2003) has proposed that there is a relationship between rewarding and attending a learning activity, however, it may be a barrier that some workplaces do not consider the importance of rewarding. Silverman cited Benett et al. (1992) who noted that an absence of offering a reward causes the employees not to attend a training program. More authors (Faladillah et al., 2020; Gugssa & Kabeta, 2021; McLaughlin et al., 2008) have also confirmed that a lack of recognition and reward mechanisms creates difficulty in

conducting workplace learning. Gugssa & Kabeta (2021) stress the significance of recognizing and praising productive employees and senior ones who may be helpful in knowledge sharing at work. Offering a competitive reward can stimulate the members to do work practice. If they are well-recognized, motivated and rewarded they become more reactive and attentive to sharing ideas with colleagues (Hartono et al., 2017).

13. *Lack of trust*: this barrier relates to a lack of acceptance, tolerance, and respect among the members within a workplace. This problem seems to be often mentioned in the context of promoting workplace learning. Some authors (Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008; Yuliana et al., 2020) have confirmed that a lack of trust is an inhibiting factor. An absence of trust may harm a good relationship, which then causes a mismatch within a workplace. According to Keeling et al. (1998), mismatches matter. For instance, a mismatch in needs between the leader and the members leads to negative feelings towards the resources, skills and knowledge development. On the other hand, developing trust reduces the possibility of a mismatch or incompatibility within a workplace because trust is the solid base of dialogue and collaboration (Matin & Alavi, 2007). Moreover, an issue of trust would also relate to some counteractive behaviors within the workplace, that is acting against the actions and thoughts of the other members (Schilling & Kluge, 2009).

3. Methods

The current study was of a qualitative research design in nature. The recruited participants were determined in order to describe possible barriers to the implementation of workplace learning at their institution. With such a research design, the participants were involved in a semi-structured interview in which the interviewer could probe into further detail. According to Boyce and Neale (2006), and Dawson (2002), conducting a qualitative research approach is suitable for investigating the sample's point of view regarding a specific issue as well as the related behaviors. In this paper, the sample consisted of 12 faculty members working at a Laotian university, using a purposive sampling technique. The participants were purposely selected, by the authors, based on different characteristics, such as age, gender, position and work experience (Laerd Dissertation, 2012). The essence of using this sampling method is to hear perspectives from different groups of informants. Each of the participants was scheduled for an interview. The interview protocol contained both open-ended and closed questions and the validity of the interview questions were run through an expert check. Furthermore, the research instrument also underwent a pilot study

with one participant and this confirmed that the questions were well-understood by that individual. All the participants were interviewed by the same author and Lao was the language of conversation during the interviews. Each interview was recorded and notes were taken. This was to ensure the loss of key information. The length of time for the interviews ranged from 24-29 minutes.

The data obtained from the interviews was transcribed before conducting an analysis. The current paper employed a qualitative content analysis, through a deductive category assignment (Mayring, 2014), in which the category system was initially developed based on theoretical concepts, of which, there were 12 sub-categories: "Lack of interpersonal communication", "Lack of self-efficacy", "Lack of self-learning", "Lack of team learning" and "Lack of self-motivation" - these aspects are considered as individual barriers; and organizational barriers include: "Leadership", "Lack of learning culture", "Administrative system", "Lack of expertise", "Limited facilities", "Budgeting", "Lack of rewarding" and "Lack of trust". One additional category "gender" was also deductively included. Based on the method, a coding framework was established beforehand in which category definitions, anchor examples and coding rules were prepared. There were two main categories, including individual and organizational barriers. According to Schreier (2014), a coding framework acts as a key part of the qualitative content analysis because this part explains the body of the interpretation of the study. To ensure the validity of the coding framework, including all the categories, formative and summative checks were conducted in which the categories were revised accordingly, along with the coding (Mayring, 2000). In the coding process, data transcriptions were coded line by line, even including the interviewer's questions (Schreier, 2014); all the process was carried out in Lao and the English-only translation was made for the purpose of the publication. An extract of the coding framework is presented in *Table 1* below.

Table 1. An extract of the coding framework

No.	Category names	Definitions	Anchor examples
C1	Lack of self-learning	The unwillingness of individuals to engage in learning and/or seeking new knowledge.	*"From my point of view, what I see is that some faculty members are only waiting for a push by others to learn something. This is a barrier" (Case 3).*

C2	Leadership	The workplace's action of leading is the ability to influence the members for learning and transformation within the workplace.	*"One of the barriers in the leadership of our workplace appears to be a transparency of work practices" (Case 10).*
C3	Administrative system	A workplace's internal structure informs the direction of certain activities, such as coordination, task allocation and supervision, to achieve the goals.	*"An unclear strategy is a huge barrier in our workplace. This barrier causes a problem with job performance among faculty members and they find it hard to perceive the purpose of their roles and the direction of the workplace" (Case 2).*

4. Result and discussion

As stated earlier, the present paper looks into the barriers perceived by faculty members in implementing workplace learning in higher education. Through analyzing the interview data obtained from 12 informants, the findings found 2 major groups of barriers: individual and organizational barriers which appear to be hindering the conduct of workplace learning in higher education. The detailed description of each group of barriers is discussed as follows:

4.1 Individual barriers

According to the analysis, individual barriers, including lack of team learning, lack of self-motivation, lack of self-learning, lack of interpersonal communication, lack of self-efficacy and gender perspective, tend to hinder workplace learning.

- Lack of team learning: this refers to a barrier concerning a low level of teamwork among the faculty members. For this barrier, 6 out of 12 participants reported a limited ability to work and learn together in the workplace. They are likely not to communicate about work very much.

Moreover, some faculty members are not keen to listen to others' ideas, including a lack of sharing knowledge within the workplace. This tendency is reflected in the following quote:

> *"A barrier found in capacity building is that there is no the same*
> *practice. It is obvious that some units are working hard while others*
> *are not. This is a simple situation representing some dissonance in*
> *learning at our workplace (Case 3)."*

- Lack of self-motivation: this barrier relates to a limited aspiration for learning and a feeling of resistance to change among the faculty members. In this regard, 5 out of 12 participants reported that a major barrier relates to personal motivation for learning. They explained that the faculty members in their workplace expressed some demotivation when it comes to professional development and learning for change. It is observed that they are very passive and uninterested in learning. Furthermore, they are not willing to understand the external environment. A sample statement is demonstrated below.

> *"There might be often a case when nominating a faculty member to a training*
> *program, but he/she makes excuses not to. I try my best to encourage the*
> *members to further learning but they are not very positive about it (Case 10)."*

As mentioned earlier, some of the participants also claimed that they are fine with the existing knowledge they have. Therefore, they do not seem to perceive the value of updating themselves with new knowledge. A sample quote is below:

> *"Learning is individualistic. I think that learning should start with oneself.*
> *If he/she is not ready for change, learning will never happen (Case 3)."*

- Lack of self-learning: this barrier is about not having a learning-like behavior. According to the data, 4 out of 12 participants reported that the employees do not seem to seek a self-learning opportunity. For them, they only learn something if someone or the workplace pushes them to do so. This is reflected below:

> *"From my point of view, what I have seen is that some faculty members are only*
> *waiting for a push from others to learn something. This is a barrier (Case 3)."*

- Lack of interpersonal communication: this barrier relates to the ineffectiveness of communication among colleagues. In this aspect, 3 out of 12 have shared that there is a barrier

with the lack of good communication skills by the faculty members, such as communication with partner organizations, coordination, and collaboration within the workplace. This communication inability may sometimes lead to misunderstanding or conflict and even failure. According to the quotes, misunderstanding may occur due to not listening to others. A sample statement is revealed as follows:

> *"It seems to me, that a dominant barrier would be the faculty members'*
> *interpersonal communication, that is the inability to communicate to*
> *the point. One related issue is that they tend to stick to their standpoints*
> *by not accepting others' ideas (Case 10)."*

Furthermore, a lack of self-efficacy and a gender perspective are two additional barriers to the conduct of workplace learning. That means these attributes represent a negative attitude. By not being able to take a risk or make a decision about learning, he/she will never get an opportunity for learning, as stated by one participant. Moreover, gender is seen as a limitation for participating in a learning activity. Some faculty members tend to perceive that a learning opportunity is linked to gender.

To conclude, the conduct of workplace learning at the sampled higher education institution appears to face different individual barriers. They are concerned with the faculty members' lack of team learning, they are not willing to discuss and share ideas with others; they have low motivation for learning, are likely not to invest personal dedication into learning for personal growth; there is a lack of self-learning, that is a limitation of seeking learning opportunities; there is a lack of communication skills, that is a limited ability to communicate information effectively; also a lack of self-efficacy, this is an individuals' perceived confidence to attend to a learning activity; and a barrier of gender perspective, some faculty members still have traditional beliefs and habits.

4.2   Organizational barriers

This group of barriers encompasses several organizational attributes that impede the conduct of workplace learning, including leadership, lack of learning culture, budgeting, the administrative system, lack of expertise, lack of trust, limited facilities and a lack of reward.

- Leadership: this aspect refers to the unqualified leadership of the workplace. According to 8 out of 12 participants, a barrier is that the leader is not likely to encourage the employees to work practices and that also includes a lack of evaluation and monitoring by the leader. Moreover, it

appears that the leader does not see the employees' potential knowledge, and lacks an assessment of the professional training needs of all employees. As a result of this, the leader does not seem to arrange tasks for them accordingly. Some quotes of this tendency are demonstrated as follows:

"A barrier is that the leader of the workplace is not able to enhance and /or motivate the employees to perform a job. Also, I see that the leader does not care about arranging tasks for employees (Case 4)."

Another perspective exists, whereby the transparency of the leadership style of the workplace is in doubt among the employees. This reflection is presented in the following quote:

"One of the barriers in the leadership of our workplace appears to be transparency of work practices (Case 10)."

- Lack of learning culture: this problem refers to an absence of a variety of activities for professional development. According to the data, 6 out of 12 participants reported that the conduct of learning activities is not well-structured and the employees are not supported to learn things regularly. Instead, the faculty focuses more on developing students' skills. The following statement reflects this:

"At our faculty, there are very few capacity-building implementations for the faculty members, compared to the provision of skills for students (Case 11)."

- Budgeting: This concern appears to hinder the conduct of workplace learning as well. It refers more to the shortage of financial support for learning activities in the workplace. 6 out of 12 participants shared that budgeting tends to be a barrier in their workplace: without the capacity of funding, the learning activities at work cannot be implemented. Moreover, they reported that finalizing the budgeting priorities tends to be mismatched in the workplace. This reflection is demonstrated in the following statement.

"I think that the faculty has a limited budget to support workplace learning activities. Hence, different activities cannot be implemented simultaneously and sometimes some learning activities cannot be funded (Case 2)."

- Administrative system: this aspect refers to a concern regarding the management approach within the workplace and this seems to hinder the implementation of workplace learning. According to the data, 5 out of 12 participants reported that individual faculty members and units

cannot perform jobs functionally due to unclear regulations and human resource management. A sample quote points that out in the following statements.

> *"An unclear strategy is a huge barrier in our workplace. This barrier causes a*
> *a problem with job performance among faculty members and they find it*
> *hard to perceive the purpose of their roles and the direction of the*
> *workplace (Case 2)."*

- Lack of expertise: this issue relates to the lack of experts and the opaque knowledge among the members. According to the data, 5 out of 12 participants reported that a limitation for conducting workplace learning is due to the faculty members' experiences and specialized knowledge. This condition serves as a barrier because they do not have considerable skills to transfer to colleagues. Also, some faculty members, who have participated in a professional training program, seem not to be able to translate the knowledge learned into actual practice. This tendency is reflected below:

> *"What is considered to be a barrier is the lack of experience in work practice.*
> *Furthermore, we don't have an expert to share a particular specialization*
> *with our faculty members (Case 6)."*

- Lack of trust: this aspect refers to the trust among members of the workplace. The lack of trust appears to be a barrier to implementing workplace learning in the sampled institution. 4 out of 12 participants explained that the leader sometimes lacks trust in the faculty members, this involves not listening to different ideas proposed by the members, not valuing the members' performance, not accepting their productivity, as well as the disrespect among colleagues. A sample statement is as follows:

> *"A barrier that we have at the faculty concerns not allowing the*
> *members to think independently, not accepting their innovative ideas*
> *and not praising what the members have achieved (Case 5)."*

Furthermore, more barriers include limited facilities and an ineffective rewarding system. At the faculty, the facilities that support the employees' learning are problematic, including the infrastructure, learning materials, IT equipment, etc., as stated by 2 participants. Last but not least,

one participant recommended that promotion for learning should be integrated into a rewarding and recognition system. This participant shared that this remains a limitation in the workplace.

In conclusion, the organizational attributes appear to be a major barrier to implementing workplace learning in this case study. Those barriers include leadership, that is the unqualified leader; lack of learning culture, referring to the lack of professional training within the workplace; budgeting, referring to the limited funds and effectiveness of financing; unclear management, which is an ambiguous administrative system; lack of expertise, that is the opaque knowledge of employees and the absence of experts; lack of trust, referring to the respect and the trust of the leader-members and among the members themselves; limited facilities and lack of rewarding, with these last two relating to the support in the implementation of learning activities.

This present paper, having interviewed 12 faculty members from a Laotian university, finds two major barriers concerning individual and organizational factors. The findings seem to be consistent with several previous studies. The barriers merging from individual factors include a lack of team learning. According to the participants, most members of their institution are not very active in discussing issues, sharing ideas and learning from each other. This tendency has also been confirmed in many other studies (Faladillah et al., 2020; Fiza et al., 2015; Guggssa & Kabeta, 2021). They do not seem to be open-minded about accepting other people's different ideas and even keep their own knowledge to themselves, not wanting to share it in the workplace. McLaughlin and colleagues (2008) explained that an individual being passive about knowledge-sharing may be due to a person's perceived lack of reward. This study also reveals that one of the individual barriers concerns resistance to change. This tendency is found in some individuals' negative attitudes to learning and the learning environment of the workplace (Keeling et al., 1998; McLaughlin et al., 2008; Voolaid and Ehrlich, 2017). Keeling et al. (1998) asserted that a major barrier to promoting workplace learning is the need to overcome employees' lack of perception of the value and benefits of change. Another reason for not wanting to change may be caused by one's feeling of unnecessarily seeking new ideas and knowledge (Matin & Alavi, 2007).

Furthermore, a dominant barrier found is that some faculty members lack good communication skills - they do not seem to feel confident in communicating with each other within the workplace, including in the coordination and/or collaboration with partner organizations. This is also consistent with past works (Fiza et al., 2015; Makambe, 2014; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008). According to Maxwell (2014), learning something is connected with

opportunities for observing, listening to, and working together with more experienced peers, including building relationships with peers. Moreover, two additional dimensions also appear to be somewhat significant barriers: a lack of self-efficacy among faculty members, with some of them not seeming willing to take a risk or make a decision about their learning. According to the literature reviewed (Billet, 1995; Fiza et al., 2015; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008), it is another barrier to implementing workplace learning. However, this problem was mentioned by only one participant in the current study. Along with these, a gender issue was also raised by one participant as a barrier. A study by Fiza et al. (2015) has also pointed out that this problem reflects a negative attitude toward women colleagues within the workplace and this issue may affect the confidence level of other women workers for learning and development. Future research would do well to investigate this issue.

Regarding organizational barriers, the current study finds that one barrier relates to unqualified leadership. Workplace learning at the sampled institution is affected by the leader's lack of motivation for employees to learn on the job, including a lack of evaluation and monitoring of the members' work practices. An absence of leadership assessing the employee's potential knowledge causes a lack of understanding of their learning needs (Faladillah et al., 2020). The study also pointed out that an opportunity for professional development and training at the faculty is not very accountable, as some faculty members were found to have little chance of attending such activities. According to Matin and Alavi, (2007), a leader should focus his/her attention on their leadership rather than on management. According to the interview data, most participants all agreed that meetings, reflection and group discussion are sources of learning but they have little access to that. This also reflects another barrier to developing a learning culture. True workplace learning should involve regular reflection of the members in the workplace (Čierna et al., 2016; Salaman & Butler, 1994, cited in Rowley, 1998).

A learning culture influences the members' efforts to learn, encouraging them to engage more in group interactions (Maxwell, 2014). However, developing a learning culture needs strong leadership (Khalifa & Ayoubi, 2014). A cause for this barrier could be that the sampled faculty members lack a supporting mechanism and a vision of workplace learning development (Faladillah et al., 2020), as the situation can be seen that faculty members have a heavy workload for their teaching mission. That means the sampled faculty focuses more on developing students' skills but less on the empowerment of faculty members. It is critical for a workplace to establish a

mechanism of knowledge transfer (McLaughlin et al., 2008), effective planning and clearly-determined goals (Fenwick, 2010) when developing workplace learning. Furthermore, several past studies (Billett, 1995; Faladillah et al., 2020; Makambe, 2014; Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 2008) have proposed that a lack of facilities is a barrier to workplace learning. This study seems to find a similar tendency, as the sampled faculty does not have the readiness in providing sufficient infrastructure, IT equipment and related materials in promoting workplace learning. Another last barrier that is found includes a reward system. This is a limitation in which most faculty members are reluctant to engage in self-learning due to personal negative perceptions of the faculty's reward (Faladillah et al., 2020; Gugssa & Kabeta, 2021; McLaughlin et al., 2008). A well-organized rewarding system may also encourage competent staff and/or knowledgeable seniors to share their valuable experiences with colleagues (Gugssa and Kabeta, 2021; Hartono et al., 2017).

5.   Conclusion

The current study probes into barriers to workplace learning in higher education. 12 faculty members from a Laotian university participated in a one-to-one interview. By integrating a qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014), the finding reveals that there appear to be two levels: individual and organizational barriers that impede workplace learning implementation. At an individual level, dominant barriers are explained by having insufficient motivation for learning, the faculty participants do not seem to value learning new things, having low self-interest and also do not think that they need to; another significant barrier includes a lack of team learning. Most of them do not care to discuss, exchange and share knowledge with colleagues. Moreover, they do not seem to possess learning habits or learning-seeking behaviors. Regarding organizational barriers, unqualified leadership appears to be a frequently cited barrier. Faculty members with expertise in specific knowledge are found to lack the opportunity to use their knowledge at work. This problem could be due to a lack of regular follow-up and/or evaluation of the employees' tasks and work practices. The study also finds a limited learning culture as another organizational barrier to implementing workplace learning. Since the current study analyzed barriers qualitatively, one limitation can be concerned with the generalization of a larger population of faculty members. Moreover, one of the most dominant barriers is leadership. Future inquiry may further investigate the influence of leadership on workplace learning in higher education. Together with this, the two

levels of individual and organizational barriers identified in the present study should be further tested by future quantitative research.

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5.   Reflection

This section introduces the author's reflections on her previously published works on workplace learning in higher education. One of the articles examines the conditions of workplace learning, and the other one looks into the barriers to workplace learning implementation. Both of them offer empirical data from a case study of a Laotian university context. Having collated the works, the findings propose ten key dimensions that need to be considered when introducing workplace learning in higher education institutions, including personal interest, self-confidence, individual engagement, group learning, trust, management, expertise, collaborations, policy, and culture. The descriptions of these dimensions are reflected in the following paragraphs.

Dimension 1: Personal interest

According to the studies, implementing workplace learning requires a personal interest in learning through work and at work. This dimension involves having self-motivation by individuals as a starter to put themselves in any learning environment, either by self-seeking or opportunities provided by the workplace. Demotivation for learning by an individual is affected by a feeling of not wanting to change. It is observed that competence development and changing routines are not interesting for some individuals. A work of the current author has pointed out that not being willing to learn things in/around the workplace stands as a major barrier. According to literature, this tendency can be explained by several reasons. Individuals are not ambitious in learning at work because they cannot stand for different ideas and/or do not accept differences (Faladillah et al., 2020; Guggssa & Kabeta, 2021). Another reason concerns their negative attitudes toward learning new things (Keeling et al., 1998; Voolaid and Ehrlich, 2017); they do not perceive benefits from learning (Matin & Alavi, 2007; McLaughlin & et al., 2008). It is a major challenge as Keeling and colleagues (1998) suggest, that workplaces need to address employees' negative perceptions of changes. This argument is also supported by Illeris' (2011) model of workplace learning, which predicts learning at work by individuals based on the "content dimension" and "incentive dimension", covering senses, emotions, attitudes, and aspirations for learning. Last but not least, a role model tends to be a key motivator for individual learning as it guides, facilitates, and motivates actions, as found by the current author's studies.

Dimension 2: Self-confidence

Self-confidence is found to be influential in workplace learning implementation in a university context. According to her studies, the current author proves that the increased confidence perceived by individuals can contribute to the realization of learning at work. Simply put, learning will not take place if the learner lacks a satisfactory level of confidence. Individuals' self-confidence can be developed through participating in social activities at work; this can make them feel a sense of belonging and dare to face workplace challenges. On the other hand, a lack of confidence may lead to being passive in professional development and learning. Several past studies (Billet, 1995; McLaughlin et al., 2008; etc.) have agreed with this tendency. Moreover, one's lack of confidence at work may be linked to limited knowledge and skills, for instance, communication skills (Makambe, 2014; Matin & Alavi, 2007), and is affected by his/her peers' discouragement (Fiza et al., 2015). Suppose individuals cannot communicate with others and are not self-confident in the interaction process. In that case, learning in workplaces is questionable because workplace learning constitutes the ability to contact, share, and interact (Illeris, 2011). Developing employees' confidence is equal to encouraging them to achieve challenges at work. An individual's perceived confidence is predicted by the extent to which he or she is supported by colleagues and the workplace (Eraut, 2007).

Dimension 3: Individual engagement

Learning engagement or commitment by individuals is another dimension that predicts workplace learning. Citing a finding from her past articles, the current author points out that learning-like behavior among individuals matters. It is believed that every learning begins with oneself as a learner who accepts or rejects such information. Individuals can realize what knowledge they need to improve by engaging in skills development. Significantly, individuals seeking opportunities to update their knowledge are considered to show a form of engagement and this action represents the characteristics of learning in workplaces through cognitive apprenticeship (Kerka, 1997). This trend is supported by theoretical perspectives; personal actions and commitment influence workplace growth and development (Bauman, 2005; March & Olsen, 1975; Shaffer, 1992). The findings emphasize the need for personal actions for learning; however, it is indicated that these actions will be meaningful if they support the workplace's developmental needs and its overall vision. There might be cases in which individuals acquire inappropriate knowledge and imitate a negative mindset, which do not contribute to workplace growth (Billett,

1995), and the individual knowledge will be applicable if it can be shared with other peers, which must be facilitated by the workplace; all the employees' actions are also affected by the workplace itself (Billett, 2001). Gugssa and Kabeta (2021) found a lack of learning behavior and self-development-seeking behaviors to be limitations for workplace learning.

Dimension 4: Group learning

This dimension refers to individuals' interactions with colleagues and the learning that occurs from these interactions. The current author finds the extent of group interaction within the workplace is closely linked to the effective implementation of workplace learning. Learning with and from others can assist individuals in navigating problems and finding solutions. Theoretically, workplace learning encompasses training, knowledge sharing, and discussions about work situations to address issues (Jacobs & Park, 2009; Jones & Hendry, 1994). In another study on barriers, the current author discovered that participants experienced difficulties in working and communicating with colleagues, leading to a lack of idea-sharing and listening. This situation may explain why workplace learning in the respective context is not well implemented. Watkins and Marsick (1996) identified several key factors for promoting workplace learning, including encouraging collaboration and team learning. According to Toma (2012), Learning in workplaces is sustained through team learning and empowerment. Fenwick (2010) also suggests that learning occurs when group members share aligned identities and tasks.

Dimension 5: Trust

This dimension discusses respect, relationships among the workplace and its employees, and relationships among the employees themselves. Empirical data has highlighted the significance of relationships in the workplace. A major barrier to implementing workplace learning is the workplace ignoring ideas proposed by members, not valuing performance, and not accepting productivity. According to Maxwell (2014), learning is not only about observing, listening, and communicating but also about building relationships. The relationship between the employer and employee affects learning situations at work; if employees' ideas and choices are not included, it may lead to demotivation and a lack of value in learning at work (Vaughan, 2008). Similarly, Fuller and Unwin (2011) recognize the importance of relationships and harmony within the workplace; in any workplace with conflictual conditions, learning in those contexts is questionable.

Dimension 6: Management

This dimension has been confirmed by the empirical data as a strong predictor of workplace learning implementation. The term "management" is defined broadly in this paper, referring to leadership, administration, support, rewarding systems, etc. According to the data, an ineffective management approach is found to be an obstacle impeding learning at work. The participants reported having little chance to participate in learning activities. Marsick (1988) points out that a limitation of learning in workplaces includes employees not fully participating in sharing ideas and the decision-making process. O'connor (2004) stresses the significance of meeting learners' needs and suggests that practitioners in the field of workplace learning should be aware that the learning needs of individuals are not the same. Without knowing the learners' depositions and attitudes about learning, the provided learning sources are pointless (Vaughan, 2008). Since workplace learning, conceptually, is rooted in adult education (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005), it is recommended to develop a variety of learning environments and all forms of learning (informal and formal settings) to cover the needs of adult learners (Eraut, 2007; O'connor, 2004; Vaughan, 2008), as most adults learn best through practice, observation, and listening to others (Billett, 1996). Apart from encouraging individuals to learn at work, either through learning in their own ways or working in groups, the workplace must challenge them with difficult tasks so that they can struggle to find solutions themselves. Learning will occur if there is a challenge in tasks (Eraut et al., 2000, as cited in Eraut & Hirsh, 2010).

Gender equality seems to be an issue in the distribution of opportunities for professional development. In the case study, females are seen as disadvantaged in terms of participation compared to their male counterparts. A study by Fiza et al. (2015) found a similar situation: females were always given negative attitudes from others in the workplace, which may affect the confidence level of other women workers regarding learning and development. In addition, time and budget management are also found to be restrictions. The workplace cannot provide sufficient resources for workplace learning activities among its members. Regarding the issue, the workplace should offer suitable timing and schedules so that employees can spend time more consistently and effectively engaging in learning at work. It is advised that the time spent on working and learning among employees should be balanced when encouraging workplace learning (Marsick, 1988).

Dimension 7: Expertise

Implementation of workplace learning also requires expertise and experts. This dimension can determine how successfully workplace learning is integrated into the work environment. The empirical data point out that a lack of knowledgeable colleagues causes a major challenge in knowledge transfer and sharing practices. Worse, those colleagues who have been trained in skills are not able to translate the learned knowledge into actions in the work environment. Several past scholars (Billett, 2001a; McLaughlin et al., 2008; Nakpodia, 2009; etc.) have confirmed the danger of an absence of seniors who guide and share experiences of work practices. This is an issue of resource constraint, which includes a lack of trainers and facilitators (Crouse et al., 2011). It might be a typical phenomenon in higher education institutions where senior professors are retiring and take their expertise with them as they leave. Bratianu (2018) suggests that the educational workplace must maintain knowledgeable people and develop "intergenerational learning" to sustain the knowledge and expertise within the workplace.

Dimension 8: Collaboration

It is unavoidable that the construction of knowledge lies in collaborations. Evidence from the other's case studies shows that networking with partners can contribute to learning on the job within the work environment. By forming more partnerships, the workplace can exchange more ideas, feedback, and better practices. Eraut and colleagues (2000) write that learning takes place through consultations and collaborations outside and within the working group (as cited in Eraut & Hirsh, 2010). Partnership brings learning that meets the needs of both the workplace and the employees (Garnett, 2016). The core concept of workplace learning in higher education requires the involvement of several parties (Dernova & Perevozniuk, 2017). The process of workplace learning is characterized by a continuous interaction in which the workplace engages with external partners (Shaffer, 1992). Scholars (Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009; Toma, 2012) have noted that a workplace never gets stronger without learning from its surrounding environment and competitors. Moreover, collaboration and/or partnership does not mean networking with external parties only; it can also involve establishing collaboration among internal units. In the provision of learning at work, the workplace may coordinate with its own human resources division to be in charge of learning management and professional development aspects within the workplace (Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009).

Dimension 9: Policy

Policy is found to be another dimension that needs to be considered when introducing workplace learning in higher education. In her empirical research, the current author points out that the sampled university must accept the political perspectives and policy conditions in the respective nation when integrating the frameworks of workplace learning. According to the data, the participants report that workplace learning will not function well unless there is support and the state policy is acknowledged. Mills and Whittaker (2001) support this tendency, stating that the implementation of workplace learning requires a well-functioning policy system and active contributions from state units. Following the governmental policy results in acknowledgment and receiving relevant support (Costley, 2007). For instance, the sample institution also needs to operate competency development in line with the ministry's obligations. Central regulations will be applied as a measurement tool to determine whether the practices of higher education institutions are well implemented (Souza & Takahashi, 2019). Relevant policy bodies practically contribute to translating the requirements and principles of workplace learning at all levels: individual, group, and workplace as a whole (Čepić & Krstović, 2011).

Dimension 10: Culture

In the literature reviewed, culture has been frequently claimed to be a strong determinant. Evidence from the author's recent studies shows that culture stands as a key dimension for implementing workplace learning in a university context. The participants report that the main task of the workplace is determined to develop students' skills rather than reinforce their professional capacity. Knowledge construction and innovation should be treated as a routine within the workplace (Čierna et al., 2016; Souza & Takahashi, 2019). To prepare employees for learning on the job, it is necessary to establish a positive culture of learning within the work environment and ensure the sustainability of the learning (Habtoor et al., 2019). A lack of a supportive learning culture within the workplace leads to a failure of knowledge sharing among employees (Newman, 1985). On the other hand, having a learning culture prepares employees to learn and encourages them to discuss and interact with colleagues (Maxwell, 2014). According to Khalifa and Ayoubi (2014), developing a culture of learning within the workplace requires strong leadership. However, it is not easy to develop a constructive environment for learning at work. In the context of the case study, the sample participants are very reluctant to speak out and share their opinions that help support changes; this is a unique characteristic of the context that may explain the current situation.

To sum up, the above-mentioned descriptions present the ten dimensions that need to be taken into account when facilitating workplace learning among individuals in the context of higher education. These dimensions constitute:

1. **Personal interest**: This dimension discusses individuals' motivation, ambition, and perceived value towards learning and self-professional development. The dimension is claimed to be influential to the implementation of workplace learning, as indicated in the current author's recent empirical research.

2. **Self-confidence**: This dimension is defined as the perceived self-efficacy by individuals in knowledge sharing, task performance, learning at work, etc. This dimension is found to be a key component and is linked to the process of workplace learning development.

3. **Individual engagement**: This dimension refers to personal commitment, efforts, and actions in learning activities provided by the workplace. The dimension is found to be a significant factor associated with the realization of workplace learning.

4. **Group learning**: This aspect describes learning from others, discussing, and sharing work practices with colleagues. The dimension predicts the occurrence of learning at work.

5. **Trust**: This aspect points out the significance of relationships, respect, and understanding between the workplace and its members, as well as among its members themselves. Effective implementation of workplace learning is affected by this factor.

6. **Management**: Refers to administration, leadership, human resource development, etc., related to the provision of learning opportunities. Workplace learning will be systematically implemented if there is quality management.

7. **Expertise**: It points out the significance of knowledge transfer by seniors and/or experts. This dimension is found to be an important variable that should be taken into consideration when introducing workplace learning.

8. **Collaborations**: This is about partnership, networking, and learning from partners. This aspect has been proven as a strong predictor.

9. **Policy**: It is defined as acknowledgment, understanding, and contributions by public units and/or the government. This dimension stands as another key factor.

10. **Culture**: Discussing the traditions of practice, ways of thinking, and perceived value by the workplace. This factor is found to be a key dimension of enhancing knowledge construction in work environments.

The ten dimensions presented are derived from two empirical studies and a case study of a Laotian university. The findings may be helpful for the scholarly community in the field of workplace development and adult education, especially in understanding the situations of workplace learning in higher education and the related predictors. Verification of these findings in further research is encouraged. Scholars and practitioners in related fields may use the findings in planning for workplace empowerment and addressing possible issues in promoting workplace learning environments.

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