EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON TRAINING TRANSFER IN GHANA

by

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(Under the Direction of Karen Watkins & Khalil Dirani)

ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization, transferring training and knowledge across global boundaries is necessary as it gives competitive advantage to organizations, especially multinational corporations (MNCs) as they operate across national borders. As they compete in a complex global context, the efficiency of their core human resource capital may be critical to their success and survival. However, the transfer of Western-based training to the indigenous/local context; in this case Ghana is bound to encounter potential transfer hindrances due to the cultural and contextual differences. The aim of this qualitative study was to interview Ghanaian trainees who completed training in a Western country, to explore how perceived cultural and contextual factors impact their capability to transfer newly acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to the Ghanaian context; and how these perceived barriers can be overcome to enhance training transfer. The findings from this study indicated that substantial cultural and contextual issues exist in Ghana as well as in the transfer organization that impact the transfer of training to this context. These cultural factors include, but not limited to, an asymmetric power relations (imbalance of power) between those in leadership positions and subordinates, extraordinary
emphasis on hierarchy, high level of respect for age, seniority, die hard attitudes and mindsets, resistance to change attitudes, and extended family system; as well as the view of the organization as an extension of the family. These cultural beliefs and practices are deeply ingrained in the Ghanaian context and are part and parcel of the local lifestyles transcending from homes to businesses. Three overarching conclusions were drawn from these findings. The first conclusion is that: power distance permeates organizational life whether through hierarchy or asymmetrical power relationships, seniority, or age differences, and these must be addressed to facilitate the transfer of what is learned from training. The second conclusion drawn is that national culture constrains or outweighs organizational culture, however there are some nuances and exceptions. The findings support Adler and Gundersen (2007), Hofstede (2001), and Johns (2006) conclusions that national culture constrains and/or outweighs organizational culture. A third conclusion that may be drawn is that transfer of training in Ghana is subject to the same undercurrents of any other organizational change, and is significantly impacted by the degree of change required by the organization, by those in positions of power and how they manage and use their power, and by the resources available to support implementation of change.

INDEX WORDS: Training transfer, Ghana, Culture, Cross-national training, International Human Resource Development
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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my family, especially, my wife Ritania Attipoe, and our wonderful, brilliant, and beautiful three children, Giovanni, Yayranam (Rose), and Esinam Attipoe for your patience, understanding, and support during the course of this adventurous and sometimes pressured journey. Additionally, thank you for giving me the strength to strive harder when the going got tough, to a special place in my life where the sky was the limit. I would not have accomplished this without your love and supportive virtues. Finally, I dedicate this remarkable achievement to my parents for instilling in me the virtues of diligence, patience, faith, hope, and academic discipline.
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EDUCATION is Endless....
Seems like THE MORE I LEARN, THE SMARTER I Get, And THE SMARTER I Get, THE MORE I Realize HOW MUCH I HAVE TO LEARN... Tom Wilson
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the current world of globalization, advances in technology, innovation and increased interdependence, there is a growing recognition that we need training and learning that will transfer effectively from one context to the other. Scholars like Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, and Smith (1994); Watkins and Marsick (1994); and Bass (2000) recommend organizations restructure themselves as learning organizations to uphold high quality outcomes. A critical criterion and component of this expectation is the transfer of learning (Leberman, McDonald, Doyle, & McDonald, 2012). In other words, transferring learning or knowledge across global borders has become a vital component of competitive advantage for organizations pursuing success in the global economy of the 21st century (Fink & Holden, 2005). This is especially crucial to multinational corporations (MNCs), as their capability to create and combine knowledge efficiently from different contexts around the world is increasingly becoming an essential factor of competitive advantage, and will be more and more vital to their success and survival. This necessity was echoed by Javidan, Stahl, Brodbeck, and Wilderom (2005) when these authors noted that the globalization of business has necessitated “the need for effective transfer of knowledge across geographic and cultural borders” (p.1). As a result, cultural differences and cross-cultural contexts play an increasingly important role as these factors impact global knowledge creation and management significantly (Kohlbacher & Krähe, 2007). “The culture and environment of an organization can influence the types and numbers of learning-related events and employee job satisfaction as well as employee motivation to transmit newly
acquired knowledge to the workplace context” (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004, p. 280).

Furthermore, contextual factors in organizations have been identified to affect the transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010). Even though there have been comprehensive studies conducted on the transfer of training, as well as factors that affect the transfer process, most of these studies were conducted in Western countries. More precisely, there is no evidence in the literature to show that any studies have been conducted on the transfer of training from Western countries to the context of Ghana that also focused on culture specifically. It is therefore imperative to explore factors that may affect the transfer of training in the context of Ghana, especially, considering the cultural and contextual differences between Ghana and Western countries. This study aimed at understanding the perceived (primarily cultural and contextual) factors that may impact the transfer of training acquired by Ghanaian employees from Western countries to their organizations in the context of Ghana.

**Background**

In the current era of the global economy and the rapid evolution of innovation and technology, “organizations are facing an ongoing need for employee learning and development. As knowledge increasingly becomes a key factor for productivity, it has also become a currency for competitive success” (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004, p. 279). Discovering and understanding factors that foster organization learning as well as the transfer of learning to the context of work are necessary to human resource development (HRD) (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Organizations spend billions of dollars yearly on training in an attempt “to increase productivity so businesses can stay competitive in the face of fierce global competition and a rapidly changing environment, especially in cross-national training, and expect return on their investments” (Seyler, Holton, Bates, Burnett & Carvalho, 1998, p. 2). Blume et al. (2010) made similar observations. But to
what degree is the return on this investment being realized considering the existence of cultural
and contextual differences and challenges that could potentially affect cross-national training and
or knowledge transfer (Sainio, 2007)? Bartlett, Lawler, Bae, Chen and Wan (2002) and Wexley
and Latham (2002) noted, cross-cultural issues in HRD have to date been centered almost
entirely on the training of individuals without taking into account the broader issue of the
applicability and transferability of actual HRD practices across national boundaries.

Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) classic study on training transfer, which is widely cited by
numerous scholars in the training transfer literature, was groundbreaking in the sense that it
provided a foundational framework to examine critical factors that affect training transfer
(Blume et al., 2010). However, the training transfer knowledge base will benefit greatly from an
understanding of how a trainee’s national culture impedes or facilitates training transfer cross-
nationally. The significance of this need was highlighted by Sarala and Vaara (2009) when they
argued that in spite of the proliferation of research on cultural differences in international
mergers and acquisitions, there is lack of systematic analyses of the effects of cultural factors on
knowledge transfer. This necessity was also amplified by Hassi (2012), noting that there is a lack
of systematic and consistent study and a total absence of an examination of the impact of
national culture on training evaluation, and called for critical consideration of cultural
differences when designing training programs for employees from different countries.

Ardichvili and Kuchinke (2002) pointed out that:

Our ability to conduct international HRD research that produces useful results
depends not so much on our choice of methodologies but on our ability to
incorporate in our investigation culture as a major influencing factor and to
account for culture's influence on phenomena under investigation. And to do this,
we need a better understanding of our own and others’ culturally conditioned perspectives and assumptions (pp. 161-162)

Wang, Wang, Ruona and Rojewski (2005), reported that although more and more scholars and practitioners are recognizing the importance of culture-oriented differences, “our cross-cultural knowledge is still limited and much is needed in terms of further research in this area” (p. 324). The relevance of developing a strong research stream on culture is clear because cultural differences and national contexts have significant implications for our thinking about HRD (Marquardt, 1999). Consequently, it is safe to note that organization development and management practices in Ghana can be better understood through the comprehensive exploration of core cultural and contextual values and traditional practices that define this country and are manifested in HRD and management practices (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2001).

**Cross-national Training Transfer Issues**

The issue of training transfer draws international interest as scholars from diverse fields attempt to better conceptualize and operationalize effective approaches and practices to facilitate desired training transfer outcomes. In doing so, they are discovering the complexities and dynamics of learning/training transfer especially in cross-national contexts. For example, Javidan et al. (2005) related a case involving the experiences of NORDED, a Nordic European business school that sought to establish a base in South Asia. This training program was initiated because the top management, including their HR director at Thailand Bank (TAI Bank), had concluded that strategic and organizational challenges were substantial enough to merit an exploration of how major Western corporations tackle such issues as they face fierce competition from international banks like Citibank and Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) (Javidan et al., 2005). Although the program took off well, major cultural differences soon
emerged between the TAI Bank’s HR group and the NORDED in terms of philosophy, styles, and approaches. A major frustration expressed especially by the TAI trainees was the lack of transference or applicability of what they learned to the context of Thailand.

Similar challenges associated with transferring Western approaches to foreign contexts are not limited to Thailand. Asian and African countries have been documented to exhibit similar cultural challenges. Western countries like the U.S. are identified with individualistic culture while an Asian country like China and an African country like Ghana are identified with collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 1997; 2005). For example, in Chinese culture, group orientation is strong and highly valued. There is great emphasis on kinship ties and close personal relationships. It is believed individuals exist for the benefit of the group. Thus, people adopt group goals and opinions in exchange for reciprocal care and protection. The American concept of individualism is often rejected because it appears to the Chinese as selfishness (Fan, 1995). The individual commitment to the group may also be related to one's strong attachment to the family in ancient China. In fact, the extended family or the clan is viewed very importantly as a social force used to control behavior. The Chinese are more likely to base their business practices on guanxi (personal relationship), rather than on business regulations as commonly understood and accepted in the West (Zhou & Martocchio, 2002). This different cultural orientation creates cultural clashes between expatriates from the West or Western companies that operate in China and their Chinese hosts (Wang et al., 2005; Yan & McLean, 1997).

Some critical similarities can be drawn between the Chinese case and that of Ghana. In the sense that Ghanaian culture is collectivist as the Chinese and so are their views and orientations toward the relationship between the individual, group/family, community and business. The Chinese orientation to personal relationship in business practices is similar to the
personal relationship orientation common in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries as noted by
Budhwar & Debrah (2002) and Wanasika, Howell, Littrell & Dorfman (2011). Likewise, there is
a high power distance (unequal power distribution where the less powerful members of
organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally, as between
managers and employees) in Ghanaian culture between organizational leaders and their
employees (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002; Hofstede, 1997). Hence, the cultural
difference challenges that Western organizations face in China could be expected in business
transactions or joint ventures involving multinational companies and their local counterparts in
SSA countries including Ghana. This same argument can be made in the case of transferring
Western based approaches obtained through training in the West to Ghana. Evidently, difficulties
exist due to cultural differences when organizations from the West conduct business across
different geographical and cultural boundaries or when they transfer practices, specifically
between individualistic and low power distance countries (e.g., U.S.) and collectivist and high
power distance cultures (Sainio, 2007) such as Ghana (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002).

As the economy of Ghana grows amidst the rising need for organizations to develop
employees with the requisite knowledge and practical skills that are relevant to the ever-
changing national and international/global markets (Bass, 2000), organizations in Ghana are
sending their employees to more advanced Western countries to receive relevant training with
the aim that employees will transfer their newly acquired skills to their organizations locally.
Meanwhile, cultural values and attitudes are different from country to country, and culture
shapes work organizations and processes (Tayeb, 1994). Also, “since individuals and
organizations are part of their societies, it is plausible to expect them to reflect their national
culture in their thinking, practices, and values” (Javidan et al., 2005, p.5).
For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically in the Ghanaian national culture, collectivism is highly emphasized and this culture orientation is reflected in organizational development and managerial practices (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002) while in North American countries like the United States, individualism is emphasized (Andersen & Collins, 1998; Hofstede, 1980; Ziegahn, 2001). Similarly, the existing high power distance between managers and employees in Ghanaian society (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002) could potentially affect whether an employee is permitted or given the opportunity to transfer training; as opposed to the low power distance between managers/leaders and employees in North America, and other Western countries where this relationship is viewed as equal, consultative, or democratic (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, an uncritical adoption of Western approaches to the Ghanaian context may not be wise, and warrants further investigation to understand these dynamics. This study aimed to explore these factors and their implications for best practices.

**Research Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the potential cultural and contextual factors that impact the capability of Ghanaian trainees’ to transfer training obtained from Western country to their organizations in Ghana. The following research questions guided this study:

- What cultural and contextual factors in Ghana affect the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context?
- How can Ghanaian trainees transfer or integrate Western-based training to the Ghanaian context effectively?
Significance of Study

Transfer of training is as critical to business enterprises (and or multinational organizations) as it is crucial to education, which generally seeks to make an impact on contexts quite different from the context of learning. Consequently, transfer is a key concept in education and learning theory because most formal education desires to achieve transfer (Perkins, 1992). Researching this has both theoretical and practical implications as highlighted below.

Theoretical Significance

From a theoretical viewpoint, a more comprehensive conceptual framework of training effectiveness can be created and tested by taking into consideration the external factors of the formal training context (Bruce et al., 1995). Furthermore, understanding how culture impacts training transfer across different cultural and geographical contexts will contribute to the cross-national training transfer literature. Additionally, this study would contribute to the body of cross-national management literature and the transfer of learning knowledge base. It could inform international training program developers, management scholars, and students with critical perspectives on the transfer process from an international context that can assist them in the exploration of further studies. It would also help stakeholders in general to re-conceptualize training designs/programs for SSA countries.

Practical Significance

From a practical perspective, research-guided improvements to the work context should lead to enhanced training effectiveness and utility (Bruce et al., 1995). As multinational organizations spend billions of dollars on cross-national training and demand return on investments, training transfer continues to be a significant research issue especially for MNCs that operate in Ghana. Therefore, a deeper understanding of cultural dynamics in Ghanaian
context may help HRD practitioners in developing culturally sensitive programs to enhance training transfer to Ghana, as well as orient, prepare, and support their subsidiaries and expatriates working in SSA countries like Ghana. Thus help them avoid cultural conflicts, while enhancing a smoother, productive and successful cross border business venture. For example, the findings from this study may inform training program designers as well as trainers to critically consider the culture fit model that was proposed by scholars like Beugre and Offodile (2001). This model can be explored further to discover the most efficient way to integrate best Western management models with relevant and effective traditional practices in the Ghanaian context. A good case in point is the high collectivist orientation common in SSA countries like Ghana. This common collective concept that characterizes Ubuntu (Wanasika et al., 2011) is to a certain degree parallel to the modern organizational development approach of team orientation to work (teamwork) that is one of the characteristics of Western organizations (Beugre & Offodile, 2001).

Teamwork has been identified in HRD/OD as essential to many successful organizations, and Parker (2008) iterated how numerous organizations including Xerox, General Electric and Honeywell all reaped the benefits of teamwork. Teamwork could foster intrinsic and extrinsic benefits/values to employees. Some of these include enhanced confidence, feeling of belongingness/affiliation (intrinsic), and measurable performance improvements that contribute to organizational goal attainment and development (extrinsic). Baker, Day, and Salas (2006) posited that teamwork is a vital part of achieving high reliability in organizations. It is also associated with mutual trust characterized by a shared belief that members of a team/group will protect and support the interests of their team (Sims et al., 2004). This assertion highlights one of the main characteristics of a collectivist culture like Ghana, where there is shared belief or
expectation that members of a team/group will support each other reciprocally (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002), therefore integrating teamwork into the collectivist cultural orientation of Ghana would be a practical strategy, that would fit the Ghanaian context “naturally” and efficiently. The effect of taking this approach could potentially help employees and their organizations in Ghana.

**Significance of Training Transfer Studies**

Transfer of training is “increasingly becoming an important issue to organizations especially multinational organizations which spend billions of dollars on cross-national training and demand return on investments” (Seyler et al. 1998, p. 2). It is also a key factor in education and learning theory because most formal education desires to achieve transfer (Perkins, 1992). Researching this has both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical viewpoint, understanding how culture impacts training transfer across different cultural and geographical regions will contribute greatly to the cross-national training transfer literature and knowledge base. It could contribute to the development of new concepts and paradigms into international training transfer programs that are more effective in contexts such as Ghana. Finally, from a practical standpoint, it can help organizations to better prepare and support their subsidiaries and expatriates working in SSA countries like Ghana. The benefits may include the avoidance of cultural conflicts, while enhancing productive, and more successful cross border business endeavors, as well as organizational development and management practices.

Budhwar & Sparrow (2002) reminded us that it is important to have an understanding about the essential contributing factors of Human Resource Management (HRM) and HRD policies and practices in different regional and national settings. Negandhi (1983) proposes that one channel of integrating the wide range of contingent factors and emphasizing the
interdisciplinary nature of the international management discipline, is to guarantee that cross-cultural management studies become part of organization theory. He emphasized that several developments in organization theory are relevant for cross-cultural management research. He continued to contend that frameworks should include those environmental factors, contextual variables, and sociocultural forces that both affect and provide a thorough cross-cultural understanding of the factors impacting the functioning and structuring of organizations, and consequently the management policies and practices. As applied to this study, understanding the indigenous social and cultural factors that affect the functioning of human resource and OD in the Ghanaian context is essential to designing training programs that are culturally fit to enhance training transfer. Tsui (2004) reminded us that “high quality indigenous research involves scientific studies of local phenomena using local language, local subjects, and locally meaningful constructs, with the aim to test or build theories that can explain and predict the specific phenomenon and related phenomenon in the local social cultural context” (p. 501).

According to Tayeb (1994), cultural values and attitudes are different from country to country and that culture do shape work organizations and other social institutions. Jackson and Werner (2009) reported that HRM is a vital function in the success of any organization. External factors such as country cultures, economy and socio-political variables impact the way a company manages its human resources. Mendonca and Kanungo, 1994; Aycan et al. 1999, 2000; Beugré and Offodile, 2001, proposed a culture fit model which posits that both the socio-cultural environment and the organization context influence internal work culture and HRM practices.

Barrett and Bass (1976) noted that most research in industrial and organizational psychology is conducted within one cultural context. This context limits the scope of our theoretical understandings and practical solutions to organizational problems. This observation
emanates from the fact that during the period of their analysis of cross-cultural industrial and organizational psychology literature, culture was not considered an essential variable to explain organizational behavior and human resource management (Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, Deller, Stahl, & Kurshid, 2000). At that time, most researchers were mainly concerned with testing the generalizability of North American behavioral theories in other parts of the world. Since then, the conditions have evolved in two areas. First, because of growing demands of globalization which requires a liberalized and competitive business context, both researchers and practitioners have begun to pay special attention to the study of culture as an explanatory factor. Second, they have realized that the adoptions and transfer of HRM practices and approaches based on western cultural values and context may not be applicable or successful in other socio-cultural contexts (Aycan et al., 2000). The following section discusses how western management theories in relation to culture have evolved.

**Evolution of Western Management Theories in relation to Culture**

Until recently, the supremacy of American management theory has culminated in the notion that “one size fits all,” in the sense that effective management practices in the U.S. will be equally as effective anywhere. This notion is now being replaced with the awareness that managerial values, attitudes, behaviors, practices, and efficiency are different across national cultures. Differences in national cultures require differences in management approaches (Newman & Nollen, 1996). However, while cross-cultural and comparative research endeavors to explore and explicate similarities and differences are important, there are concerns with respect to such research. A major contention is that there is disagreement among scholars about the exact definition of culture and the operationalization of this concept (Dowling et al., 2008). As noted earlier, the construct of culture has caused much controversy. This has driven interest
in the issue from multiple disciplines which while increasing value, do not necessarily enhance clarity. It is noted in the literature that culture affect employee’s attitudes, efficiency and productivity on the job (Mahal, 2009), and can affect the ability of an employee to execute organizational plans and meet strategic goals (Chan, Shaffer & Snape, 2004). Within the same construct, organizational culture could actually influence a firm’s productivity and their overall performance.

International business is characterized by the interaction and movement of people across national borders, therefore an understanding of cultural differences and when these differences are important is very relevant. Research into these components has facilitated our understanding of cultural context as an essential variable that moderates differences between domestic and International Human Resource Management (IHRM) (Dowling et al., 2008). International firms compete in an increasingly multifaceted environment where the degree of the complexity of doing business can be extremely capricious. Internationalizing firms depend on having the right personnel to manage and operate their businesses and produce effective IHRM practices that are suitable to the context in which they occur. This mixture of appropriate personnel and HR practices has been a persistent significant factor for success in international business undertakings (Dowling et al., 2008). For example, Desatnick and Bennett (1978) asserted that the principal cause of failures in international endeavors emanates from a lack of understanding of the critical differences in managing human resources at all levels in foreign contexts. This is mainly because, even though certain management philosophies and approaches have been effective in the domestic environment, however their transference to and or application in a foreign context too often proved to be ineffective. The considerations of these human factors are as imperative as their financial and marketing measures used as the basis for many decisions to
undertake multinational ventures (Dowling et al., 2008). The next section introduces some of the major cultural and contextual dynamics in Ghana that must be understood and contextualized in relation to its significance to this study.

**Situating major Social, Cultural and Contextual Dynamics in Ghana**

In Ghana, HRM is influenced by both internal and external contextual factors. These interrelated factors can often complicate the management of human resources. Two major external environmental factors that affect the management of HR are: (1) the government’s predominant role in the economy (economic and political); and, (2) national socio-cultural factors. Beside these factors, the influences of colonialism and traditional practices with respect to traditions and institutions, customs and socio-cultural practices permeates and shapes management practices and organizational decision-making (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002). Hence, a complicated situation exists whereby traditional Ghanaian behaviors, beliefs, practices and attitudes, which often conflict with Western modern management systems and practices, undermine organizational performance. There is a high feeling of collectivism in Ghana which may have influences on human resource management (HRM). Ghanaians are born into extended families and the cultural expectation is to take care of their members. Individuals provide help and support to kinsmen and expect to receive help in return when in need (reciprocal). These cultural norms are usually manifested in organizations (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002).

Furthermore, the emphasis laid on the family results in a view of the organization as an extension of the extended family. Just like the extended family, there is an expectation that the organization will cater to the needs of its employees, in addition to considering their family circumstances when making personnel decisions (Aryee, 2004). Likewise, Budhwar and Khatri (2001) noted that collectivistic and high power distant countries have a tendency to put greater
importance on recruitment criteria, such as attributed status and socio-political affiliations, than on hard criteria like knowledge, skills and abilities. Hence, it is safe to expect that a trainee’s newly acquired skills from the West may not be given the same value and support to facilitate transfer especially if this knowledge or skills do not reflect the Ghanaian cultural norms and traditional practices in the local organizations.

Decades of research in strategy and organizational behavior have indicated that cultural and societal factors affect organizations; therefore, it is important to integrate contextual and cultural factors especially when training leaders for international environments like Africa (Zoogah, 2009). Some multinational firms and related joint ventures flounder because they fail to fully consider the impact of culture (Oertig & Buergi, 2006). Beugre and Offodile (2001) posited the development of a culture-fit model (rather than a blind transfer of unedited Westernized ideals and approaches) representing a fusion between best indigenous cultural practices and contemporary (Western) management techniques in SSA countries; suggesting that constructive cultural patterns may support implementation of new managerial techniques such as quality management, re-engineering, teamwork and collaborative management.

Whitley (1994) noted that every society is unique and its course is shaped by its distinctive history, cultural norms and values. On that note, one can safely contend that Africa in general and Ghana specifically have unique historical events, traditions and cultural norms that define this context, and must not be overlooked. Avoseh (2008) noted that values are the foundation for indigenous African society and education. In traditional African societies, the whole tenet of education was located in and defined by sets of values that mirror the aims and objectives of the community’s in a lifelong process of education. The core values of true citizenship impact especially the education of adults even at the level of higher education and
illuminate the good names of the family and the community. The cultural factors discussed above are very significant in all aspects of this traditional/indigenous context, as such, should be critically considered when examining the transfer of training from Western context to this context. It was the aim of this research project to explore this deeper meaning and understanding in relation to the transfer of training.

As noted earlier, transferring training and organizational practices from Western countries to nonwestern countries is difficult because of cultural and contextual differences between these different geographic regions. A review of the literature did not reveal any existing research that focused on the specific exploration of the impact of cultural and contextual factors on training transfer to the context of Ghana. Hence, this study is important. The following describes the purpose of the study and related research questions, followed by the significance of the study.

**Definitions**

*Transfer of Training*. Transfer of learned skills to the work context, or specifically, the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes learned from training on the job and subsequent maintenance of them over a certain period of time (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Xiao, 1996).

*High power distance*: The unequal power distribution where the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1988).

*Low Power Distance*. In low power distance countries subordinates and superiors consider each other as equal in existence, and decentralization is popular (Hofstede, 1988).

*Individualist Culture*. In an individualist culture people take care only of themselves and their immediate families, and remain emotionally independent from the group (Biró et al., 2002).
Collectivist Culture. In a collectivist culture people differentiate between in-groups and out-groups, anticipate their in-group to care for them, and individuals express their identity by their connections to others and group belonging (Biró et al., 2002).
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will be examining the literature on training transfer. I will also examine the relationships, similarities, and differences between these concepts, and their significance to the field of HRD and education. Finally, I will present a historical overview of training transfer studies.

Transfer Defined

The concept of “transfer of training” has been defined differently by different authors. However, one of the most commonly cited definitions is: the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes learned from training to the job and subsequent maintenance over a period of time (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Xiao, 1996). Similarly, Cormier and Hagman (1987) defined it as the application of skills and knowledge learned in one context being applied in another context (Cormier & Hagman, 1987). The terms ‘training’ and ‘learning’ are frequently used synonymously, but they can also be used to mean different things. Training draws thoughts of embarking on specific skills and can seem very task-oriented, the outcome being learning. Learning, however, appear to denote a much broader term, covering not only particular skills, but also socio-cultural, cognitive and behavioral features (Leberman et al., 2012). There is considerable debate about the nature and occurrence of transfer, as well as an unequivocal awareness of the central importance of transfer (Leberman et al., 2012). Despite the terminological debate, Comier and Hagman (1987) contend that the term transfer of learning is
equal to the term transfer of training. Likewise, Perkins (1992) stated that no absolute line can be
drawn between ordinary learning and transfer while other scholars have posited that training
transfer and learning transfer can be used interchangeably. There is considerable debate about the
nature and occurrence of transfer, as well as an unequivocal awareness of the central importance
of transfer (Leberman et al., 2012).

**Significance of Training Transfer**

Organization’s competitive success is achieved through people. As a result, the skills and
performance of people are crucial to organizations because they spend billions of dollars on
training of their employees (Yamnill & McLean, 2001). “Whether be it in the community, in
professional settings, or in business and industry, educators who plan and implement programs
for adults hope that what is taught is learned and that this learning transfers beyond the
classroom” (Merriam & Leahy, 2005, p. 1). Organizations estimate only about 10% of this
expenditure results in the transfer of knowledge, skills, and behaviors acquired from training
(Awoniyi, Griego & Morgan, 2002). The employer and trainee want transfer to occur, but there
is an underlying recognition that education and training is often too theoretical, as a result there
is a lack of integration of the learning that occurs at training to have an impact on-the-job
through transfer (Haskell, 2001). This creates frustration and disenchantment in both trainees and
management. Hence, it is essential to pay special attention to the needs of the individual learner
and the organization. Also this demands balancing, so that the transfer outcomes benefit both
parties and enhance development (Leberman et al., 2012). Increasing calls for accountability and
evaluation systems have brought to the fore-front the importance of return-on-investment and the
need to facilitate education and training programs that do have impact (Williams, Graham &
An important criterion for measuring the effectiveness of any formal training program is the transfer of training to the job (Bruce, Tannenbaum & Kavanagh, 1995).

Certainly insights about transfer examined from the training literature are also likely to be relevant to adult educators who work in multiple contexts. Researchers have come to recognize that transfer is a fundamental concept associated with learning as well as process and outcome. Transfer helps us learn by promoting the way a learner stores, processes, remembers, and retrieve information. Every time learning takes place previous learning is used as the foundation on which to add more knowledge (building block). It is not only the very basis of all subsequent learning activities and processes, but it is also essential for other cognitive functions such as, reasoning, thinking, planning, decision-making, meta-cognition and problem solving. In addition, it is the ultimate goal of teaching and learning (Leberman et al., 2012). Various reports on the condition of education have acknowledged transfer of learning as a fundamental factor, as such its importance in tertiary education courses has been receiving significant attention (Leberman, et al., 2012). Caffarella (2002) stated that training is a component of the planning process that is getting growing attention as both participants and sponsors of education and training programs demand more concrete and effective results. Unfortunately, the adult education literature also indicates that few education and training programs actually reflect transfer in either the planning or implementation stage of programming (Merriam & Leahy, 2005).

Very often the application of what is learned in educational programs has been indeterminate. In addition, it could be that because the adult education literature is relatively quiet on the topic of transfer, many adult educators have just a superficial understanding of the nature of transfer including what promotes or inhibits the transfer process. However, at the center
of the practice of adult education is our knowledge about adult learning, the context where learning takes place, and how to design and deliver programs. Dealing with the idea of transfer would add a significant component to both our practice and theory base (Merriam & Leahy, 2005).

Adult educators and human resource developers stand to benefit greatly in understanding transfer and Caffarella (2002) highlighted that integrating transfer of learning strategies and techniques is often an important determinant of whether or not program outcomes can be obtained. Integrating strategies that connect to program design is important. These include advance organizers and breaking content into manageable parts, providing feedback, practice of new learning, and making certain that learning is relevant (Merriam & Leahy, 2002). Billet (2005) posited that the use of questioning, problem solving and scenario-building to extend learners’ knowledge to novel situations are techniques for facilitating learning transfer. This criterion is based on a model that contends that adults learn through instructions with pedagogic practices which are: through participation in work, through guided leaning at work, and through guided learning transfer. Other scholars have proposed best learning transfer instructional strategies and practices. For example, Morgan, Gorden and Ponticell (1997) recommended that trainers discover the student’s learning strengths and issues, use relevant adult-training materials, provide opportunities for working together and learning from one another, provide feedback, and use different instructional strategies. According to Merriam and Leahy (2005), taking into account what we know about adult learners (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999), these instructional technique is laudable, especially, if one takes a constructivist rather than knowledge-acquisition conception; that is constructing knowledge, or meaning-making, is what learning is all about for adults. When previous learning is connected to new learning through the process of meaning-
making learning transfer is facilitated for adults. Moreover, the more authentic the training experiences, that is, the more closely it is linked to the actual practice situation and needs of participants, the more likely transfer will occur.

There is strong agreement among numerous training transfer scholars that the acquisition of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes through training has little significance if the newly obtained characteristics are not generalized to the job context; and if not maintained over time (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Kozlowski & Salas, 1997). In other words, training is insignificant if it cannot be transferred into an actual task performance on the job. Holton, Bates, and Ruona (2000) reminded us that learning and transfer of learning are essential outcomes of HRD, and that “organizations wishing to enhance the return on investment from learning-training investments must understand all the factors that affect transfer of learning, and then intervene to improve factors inhibiting transfer” (p. 334). Swanson (1995) noted that for HRD to become a core business component, performance is the key. Transfer of training is a central issue with regard to connecting individual change to the requirements of the organizational systems, “Therefore, if we believe that training truly makes a difference in organizational and individual performance, we must understand how to support transfer of training in organizations” (p.1).

Given that training transfer may be defined as the degree to which trainees apply the knowledge, skills and behaviors acquired through training to their jobs suggests that transfer of training is affected by factors within the training context as well as in the application context (work environment) (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume et al., 2010). Since the mid-1990s the work context is being recognized as an important factor in determining whether or not learning transfers. The work environment (Burke & Hutchins, 2007) (includes a number of variables, such as trainee opportunity to use newly-acquired skills, incentives to transfer learning,
supervisory and social support, and the organizational climate (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Merriam & Leahy, 2005). Lim and Johnson (2002) indicated that the opportunity to use new learning impacts transfer. Specifically, these authors reported that a critical factor in learning transfer is the opportunity for trainees to apply what they have learned to their jobs. Without a solid alignment between the training content and the trainees’ work roles, it is not likely that transfer will occur. Multiple studies have also indicated consistently that successful transfer is restricted when trainees are not offered opportunities to use newly acquired training skills in their work context (Gaudine & Saks, 2004; Lim & Morris, 2006).

Clarke (2002) reported that the inadequate opportunity to perform newly learned skills on the job was the highest inhibitor to the success of training transfer to the work setting, and to address the provision of such opportunities to enhance successful transfer, managers should consider adjusting their trainees’ regular workload to enable them to practice the new skills on their job. Researchers like Smith-Jentsch, Salas, and Brannick (2001), Tannenbaum, Smith-Jentsch, & Behson (1998) identified supportive actions supervisors can employ to facilitate transfer of training. These include participating in training, providing encouragement, discussing what trainees learned and directing them on the use of their newly acquired learning and skills on the job, and positive supervisor feedbacks. Furthermore, Facteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, and Kudisch (1995) noted that peer support have also shown to produce even stronger positive effect on trainee transfer than supervisor support. Numerous scholars have attempted to investigate the training transfer process and have produced multiple results. The next section reviews some of the key research literatures on training transfer.

**Training Transfer Studies**

The classic investigation of training transfer was conducted by the celebrated educational
psychologist Thorndike (1901 & 1923) in the first and second decades of the 20th century. Thorndike studied the proposition that the learning of Latin disciplined the mind and prepares learners for better performance in other subject matters. Thorndike (1923) compared students’ performance in other academic courses who had taken Latin with those who had not studied Latin and discovered no advantage of Latin studies whatsoever. In other experiments, Thorndike and Woodworth (1901) examined and generally failed to find positive effects of one type of learning on another. Thorndike concluded that transfer depended on "identical characteristics" in two performances, in addition, most performances were just too dissimilar from one another for much transfer to occur. This study provided a monumental guide to studying and understanding the transfer of learning. However, this study did not cover transfer moderating factors, and specifically the impact of culture in relation to my primary research focus.

Blume et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of 89 empirical studies for the purpose of providing a comprehensive understanding of the variables that predict transfer of training (described as predictors). These authors examined the effect of what they described as predictive variables such as trainee characteristics, work environments, training interventions on the different tasks, and contexts. They also examined the impact of moderating variables pertaining to relationships between these predictors and transfer. Their research concluded that there was a positive relationship between transfer and predictors such as cognitive ability, conscientiousness, motivation, and supportive work environment. They also discovered that several moderators had strong impact on transfer relationships, including the nature of training objectives. This study had benefits as well as limitations as any other. In the context of my research, it did not provide information on culture-specific moderators; however the study provided very useful information on other predictors such as trainee’s motivation to transfer, effect of leadership support, and the
relevance of a supportive work environment. Their identification of motivation as a potential predictor of transfer provided a relevant pointer in relation to my research. For example, trainees from Ghana must have the motivation to transfer the training obtained in Western countries. Even if the training was effective, the lack of motivation on the part of a trainee could result in unsuccessful transfer. Given that the contexts and cultures of Ghana and that of the United States or Europe are different, these could add another layer of difficulty in the transfer process. Along the same line of reasoning, even if the trainee has the motivation to transfer, the different cultural and contextual factors could result in unfruitful transfer endeavors. Hence, the best way to understand these dynamics and how they affect the transfer process is to investigate them through research, as this study aimed to accomplish.

Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) model of training transfer is highly regarded and referenced in numerous discussions and writings on learning transfer. The goal of their study was to provide a critique of the existing studies on transfer and to propose directions for future research (Blume et al., 2010). These researchers organized their qualitative review around a model of training inputs characterized by characteristics of the trainee, design of the training, and conditions of work; training outputs which they identified as the acquired knowledge and skills during training), and the conditions of transfer involving the degree to which the knowledge and skills acquired during training can be generalized to trainees’ jobs, as well as the maintenance of that learning on their jobs over time (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Some of their key findings were: There was a need to not only create a framework for conducting studies on the impact of trainee characteristics on transfer but also a need to test the numerous operationalization’s of training design and work related environmental variables that have been identified to have effect on transfer. Moreover, they posited a need to make advances in the conceptualization and
operationalization of the categorization of transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

Bennett, Lehman and Forst (1999) examined the effects of contextual factors such as leadership, teamwork, goal structures and organizational climate on transfer of training. Training transfer was measured with regards to employee self-reported responses to customer service and over 900 employees were surveyed. The results of the study showed moderately high correlations between employees’ perceptions of some training goals and positive transfer climate. Researchers cautioned against the acceptance of these results due to study limitations in that it was post-test measures only without a control group. Another limitation in regards to my research study was that this research did not measure specific cultural variables.

Broad and Newstrom (1992) discovered that out of nine learning transfer barriers identified by these authors, the lack of reinforcement within the practice context was the biggest barrier. Several studies including Tracy, Tannenbaum, and Kavanagh (1995) also discovered that a negative and non-supportive transfer climate was a barrier to transfer. Daley (2002) identified four contextual variables that affect what professionals learn in a Continuing Professional Education (CPE) program, and how they apply that information they acquire. The first factor pertained to how the trainees see themselves as professionals; the second factor was the nature of the work itself, especially the needs of the clients and the services the person provided, the third factor was the organizational culture itself. The culture can be conceived as integrated, segregated, or disjointed, and the politics of these different structures impact learning and the application of information in professional practice. The forth factor was the level of independence or autonomy the professional has to move within and around the organizational structure, determined whether or not the information acquired from training can be used in practice (Merriam & Leahy, 2005).
The fourth factor is noteworthy because if it is applied to the context of Ghana with respect to the high power distance between employees and managers (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002), it would be understandable to expect that trainees, especially, those with lower level positions would be constrained in their level of autonomy in their organizations, as well as, ability to express their desires to practice/transfer newly acquired knowledge freely. Therefore transfer of learning may be inhibited. The following section presents tables 1 and 2 showing not only the history of some of the numerous studies conducted on the transfer of training but also some of the key findings that shaped research on this important topic.
Table 1. Training Transfer Theoretical Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
<th>Assessment of Key Factors &amp; Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Thorndike & Woodworth (1901 & 1923) | Hypothesized that transfer is maximized to the degree that there are identical stimulus and response elements in the training and transfer settings  
**Near Transfer:** Transfer is greater when the training and application contexts are similar.  
**Far Transfer:** Transfer is lesser due to the dissimilarities between the training and application contexts | Identical stimulus and response | Based on Identical elements theory: Focus is on Identical stimulus and response in the training and transfer environments. Provided an instrumental framework to assess conditions under which learning transfer may/may not occur |
| Holding (1965)                | Summarized the study on transfer by detailing the type of transfer expected based on the similarity between the stimuli and response | Relationship between transfer stimuli and response | Based on Identical elements theory: Highlighted on types of results in relation to similarities between stimulus and response |
| Hunter (1971)                 | Provided a good operational application of the identical elements approach to the transfer of training problem | Identical elements approach to the transfer of training problem | Characterized by Identical elements theory: However with a better operationalization of application and transfer variables |
| Wexley & Latham (1981)        | Defined positive transfer of training as the degree to which trainees effectively apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in training | Positive transfer of training to application context | Defined when transfer outcome has materialized as positive |
Table 1 continued. **Training Transfer Theoretical Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
<th>Assessment of Key Factors &amp; Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clark &amp; Voogel (1985)</td>
<td>Hypothesized that the greater the specificity of where and how the training is to be applied to the job, the more successful the near transfer.</td>
<td>Design processes and procedures of training effect on transfer</td>
<td>Provided a guide to knowing best practices and approaches that promotes transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldstein (1986)</td>
<td>Suggested that it is possible to design training environments without too much concern about their similarity to the transfer situation, so long as it is possible to utilize underlying principles.</td>
<td>Training design to achieve effective transfer with the use of fundamental and generalizable principles</td>
<td>Based on Principle theory: Transfer would occur when a learned procedures/basic principles are generalized to new situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldwin &amp; Ford (1988)</td>
<td>Defined positive transfer of as the extent to which trainees effectively apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired in a training context to the application context. Noted that transfer is affected by inputs, outputs and conditions</td>
<td>What it means when transfer is labeled as positive transfer</td>
<td>Provided a fundamental framework/model on examining key training transfer variables that are cited by many training transfer writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laker (1990)</td>
<td>Posited that first, there can be transfer to “near” situations (similar to the training conditions) and/or to “far,” (dissimilar situations). The second amplification is that of generalizing learned skills to different settings, people and situations (far transfer)</td>
<td>Distinction between situations or conditions where a near and far transfer occur</td>
<td>Elaborated on the differences between the near transfers of training and/or far transfer situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blume, Ford, Baldwin &amp; Huang (2010)</td>
<td>Suggested that transfer of training is moderated and or predicted by variables such as trainee characteristics, work environments, training interventions on the different tasks and contexts.</td>
<td>Identified and tested the impact of moderating variables pertaining to relationships between predictive variables and transfer</td>
<td>Made determination that individual features, training environment, application context, as well as other factors do impact the degree to which training transfer occurs. Research offered significant contribution to the transfer literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR &amp; DATE</td>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Results/Key Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorndike &amp; Woodworth (1901 &amp; 1923)</td>
<td>To test whether learning Latin disciplined the mind and prepared learners for better performance in other subjects</td>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>Tests failed to show that transfer occurred but concluded that the learning context and application context must be identical for learning transfer to be effective. Also, they found that learning transfer is greater in <strong>near transfer</strong> than <strong>far transfer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldwin &amp; Ford (1988)</td>
<td>To examine predictors and moderators of training transfer, make best practice recommendations to enhance future research</td>
<td>Examined connections between training input and output factors and generalizability and maintenance over time</td>
<td>Input and Output conditions do impact transfer to a degree. Found a need to create a framework for conducting studies on the impacts of trainee characteristics on transfer, test the numerous operationalization’s of training design and work related environmental variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennett, Lehman &amp; Forst (1999)</td>
<td>To inform research on the effects of contextual factors such as leadership, teamwork, goal structures and organizational climate on transfer of training.</td>
<td>Measured employee self-reported responses to customer service (used mixed methods)</td>
<td>Discovered moderately high correlation between employees’ perceptions of some training goals and positive transfer climate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 2 continued. Training Transfer Empirical Studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHOR &amp; DATE</th>
<th>Purpose of Study</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Results/Key Findings</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seyler, Holton, Bates, Burnett, &amp; Carvalho (1998)</td>
<td>To empirically and systematically assess a computer-based training program to determine the influence of selected variables that are believed to impact trainee’s motivation to transfer training</td>
<td>n=74</td>
<td>Two instruments (Reaction and Transfer Climate) were used in combination with four others (Computer attitudes, Self-directed learning readiness scale, job attitudes, and START instrument).</td>
<td>Results show significant correlations except for internal work motivation and learning. (The largest correlation with motivation to transfer were opportunity to perform, peer support, organizational commitment, supervisor sanctions and computer confidence)</td>
<td>Provided valuable insights on the relation between trainee’s motivation and transfer. This study did not assess the effect of culture on training transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holton, Chen, &amp; Naquin (2003)</td>
<td>To diagnose and assess how transfer could potentially break down in terms of motivation to transfer, personal capacity to transfer, peer and supervisor support, perceived content validity, and opportunity to use</td>
<td>n=900</td>
<td>Used LTSI: a diagnostic device for assessing potential areas where transfer may break down</td>
<td>Discovered statistically significant differences among the types of organizations on all measured criteria with exception of two: performance self-efficacy and learner readiness.</td>
<td>The findings in this study shed light on potential areas where transfer may be affected negatively. Also it identified what, where, and when factors affect transfer. Cultural variables were not studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blume, Ford, Baldwin &amp; Huang (2010)</td>
<td>To provide a comprehensive meta-analysis of the variables that predict and moderate transfer of training</td>
<td>n=89</td>
<td>Meta-analysis of empirical studies of 58 journal articles, 5 conference papers, 24 dissertations and 2 unpublished manuscripts</td>
<td>Research concluded that there is a positive relationship between transfer and predictors such as cognitive ability, conscientiousness, motivation, and supportive work environment.</td>
<td>Identified major areas where training transfer may be impacted positively or negatively and that provided an important guide to the exploration of further studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This author believes that culture is a powerful concept that shapes communities and people across the world. Among other factors, it can affect how they think, act, store information, as well as retrieve, process and apply information. Many scholars including Schein (1985); Schneider (1995); Hofstede (1981); Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997; 2004) have attempted to explore not only the characteristics and dimensions of culture but also the deeper meaning of it. The next section examines some of the important studies conducted on the concept of culture.

**Cultural Frameworks**

Schneider (1988) posited that the model Schein (1985) developed helps to organize the pieces of the culture puzzle. This model, represented culture at three levels: 1) behaviors and artifacts; 2) beliefs and values; and 3) underlying assumptions. These levels are organized according to how easy they are to notice them such that behavior and artifacts are the easiest to spot while the underlying assumptions require great inference. In addition, though behavior and artifacts may be observable while beliefs and values can be assessed, the meanings associated with them may not be easily comprehended. In order to understand what the behaviors or beliefs actually mean to the members, the underlying assumptions have to be explored and discovered (Schneider, 1988). Likewise, Dahl (2004), drawing on the work of Hofstede (2001), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) declares that there are multiple levels to culture (similar to the layers of an onion). These range from the easily noticeable outer layers (such as behavioral conventions, observable practices and artifacts) to the more complex to comprehend inner layers (such as assumptions and values). This is especially relevant in the context of international joint projects. Internationally teams with diverse backgrounds may appear, at face value, to have cultural understanding, yet a deeper interaction or encounter may exhibit clear
conflicts as a result of deeply held preconceptions of key actors (Schneider, 1988).

Ferris et al. (1998) developed the social context model and posits that the attitudes, beliefs, and values which comprise the corporate culture influence the development of HRM policies, practices, and systems. These authors assert that when the culture within a firm is well-defined it should stimulate the development of consistent HRM policies as employees values are mirrored in the development of these policies (Schneider, 1988). Bowen and Ostroff (2004) magnified this view. These authors claimed that organizational assumptions and values impact HRM practices, which, in turn fortify cultural norms and routines which drive individual performance. Considering that culture has varying expressions and meanings, numerous authors have offered different definitions of culture. Hofstede (1980) proposed one of the most frequently quoted and recognized definitions. He stated that culture is made up of patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, obtained and conveyed mainly by symbols; constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their expressions in artifacts (Bogićević-Milikić, 2009). Hofstede’s definition is also repeatedly cited in the field of management studies as it encompasses empirical evidence of what he was able to measure. In the view of Hofstede (1980), culture is treated as the collective programming of the mind which differentiates the members of one group to another and its foundation includes systems of values. Cultures have important influence on approaches to managing people, so where cultural differences exist, there is a need for differences in management practices (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2004). As Javidan and colleagues (2005) posited, the globalization of business is requiring the effective transfer of knowledge across borders. As a result, cultural differences and cross-cultural contexts are significant factors impacting global knowledge creation and management (Kohlbacher & Krähe, 2007). However, “Little is known about the effectiveness of cross-border transfer of
organizational knowledge involving dissimilar cultural contexts” (Bhagat, Kedia, Harveston, & Triandis, 2002, p. 204). The table below depicts the cultural theories as presented by the key authors on the concept of culture as explored in this paper.

Table 3. **Cultural Theories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition/Description</th>
<th>Major Characteristics &amp; Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hofstede (1981, 1994)</td>
<td>Culture characterized as software of the mind, collective programming of the mind. Patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, obtained and conveyed mainly by symbols... including their expressions in artifacts.</td>
<td>Featured culture as ways of thinking, feeling, reacting, as well as expressions, symbols, and artifacts. Suggested culture can be seen at multiple levels as layers of onion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schein (1985)</td>
<td>Culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions a group learned as it solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration, adopted and taught to new members as the proper way to perceive, think, and feel in connection to those problems.</td>
<td>Examined culture as ways of perceiving, thinking and feeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall &amp; Hall (1990)</td>
<td>Cultural context refers to the evidence that surrounds an event; it is intimately surrounded by the meaning of that event.</td>
<td>Defined high and low context cultures in terms of how information is communicated, body language, time management, interpersonal chemistry, work/life relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trompenaars &amp; Hampden-Turner (1997)</td>
<td>Culture as easily noticeable outer layers e.g. behavioral conventions, observable practices and artifacts) to the more complex to comprehend inner layers e.g. assumptions &amp; values</td>
<td>Illustrated culture at 3 levels, furthering Hofstede’s thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferris, Arthur, Berksen, Kaplan, Harrell-Cook, &amp; Frink (1998)</td>
<td>Viewed culture from a social context model, posits the attitudes, beliefs, and values that comprise the corporate culture influence the development of policies, practices, and systems.</td>
<td>Examined culture from a social context perspective at the organizational level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spencer-Oatey (2000)</td>
<td>Culture is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, norms of behaviors, underlying assumptions and values shared by a group of people that influence each member’s behavior and their interpretations of the meaning of other people’s behavior</td>
<td>Saw culture as characterized by a set of behaviors, beliefs, assumptions, and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahl, S. (2004)</td>
<td>Multiple levels to culture (similar to the layers of an onion), from easily noticeable outer layers e.g. behavioral conventions, observable practices, to the more complex inner layers (such as assumptions and values</td>
<td>Presented culture at 3 levels: each level with distinct characteristics ranging from less complex to very complex features/attributes. Expanded on Hofstede and Trompenaars &amp; Hampden-Turner’s concepts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Budhwar and Sparrow (2002) reminded us that it is important to have an understanding of the essential contributing factors of HRM and HRD policies and practices in different regional and national settings. Negandhi (1983) proposes the integration of a wide range of contingent factors that guarantees that cross-cultural management studies become part of organization theory. He stressed that several developments in organization theory are relevant for cross-cultural management research. He continued to contend that conceptual approaches should include those environmental, contextual, and sociocultural factors that both affect and provide a thorough cross-cultural understanding of the attributes affecting the operation and structuring of organizations, and thus the management policies and practices.

Leonard (1987) reminded us that many of the dissimilarities in organizational behavior between Africa and the United States and Europe are not because of managerial failures but are due to principal differences in the value primacies of the societies that holds them. “Any attempt to treat management science as suitable for a mechanical transfer of technology is bound to meet with failure. We need to understand how sociopolitical realities affect the various levels of managerial behavior” (p. 901). Barrett and Bass (1976) noted that most research in industrial and organizational psychology was conducted within one cultural context. This context limits the scope of our theoretical understandings and practical solutions to organizational problems. This observation emanates from the fact that during the period of their analysis of cross-cultural industrial and organizational psychology literature, culture was not considered an essential variable to explain organizational behavior and human resource management. At that time, most researchers were mainly concerned with testing the generalizability of North American behavioral theories in other parts of the world. Since then, the conditions have evolved in two areas. First, because of growing demands of globalization which requires a liberalized and
competitive business context, both researchers and practitioners have begun to pay special attention to the study of culture as an explanatory variable. Second, they have realized that the adoptions and transfer of HRM practices and approaches based on Western cultural values and context may not be applicable or successful in other socio-cultural contexts (Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, Deller, Stahl, & Kurshid, 2000) such as Ghana.

Ardichvili and Kuchinke (2002) pointed out that conducting international HRD research that generates fruitful outcomes depend primarily on our ability to integrate cultural factors in our investigation and to identify its effect on the subject under study. And to accomplish this, we need a deeper understanding of not only our personal culturally tempered views and assumptions on culture, but also that of others (pp. 161-162). Wang et al., (2005) posited that, although an increasing number of scholars and practitioners are recognizing the significance of culture-oriented differences, further research is required to add to the knowledge base. The relevance of developing a strong research stream on culture is clear because cultural differences and national contexts have significant implications for our thinking about HRD (Marquardt, 1999).

Consequently, it is safe to note that organization and management practices in Ghana can be better understood through the comprehensive exploration of core cultural and contextual values, social patterns and structures, as well as traditional practices that define this country (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002). According to Tayeb (1994), cultural values and attitudes are different from country to country and that culture do shape work organizations and other social institutions. Jackson and Werner (2009) reported that HRM is a vital function in the success of any organization. External factors such as country cultures, economy and socio-political variables impact the way a company manages its human resources. Beugré and Offodile (2001); Mendonca & Kanungo (1994); Aycan et al. (1999, 2000), all proposed a culture fit
model. This model generally posits that both the socio-cultural environment and the organization context influence internal work culture and HRM practices. Specifically, this model advocates a fusion of the best indigenous practices in the African context with the best management practices and models from Western countries (Beugré & Offodile, 2001). The following are tables (1) depicting the existing cultural features in Ghana and table (2) illustrating the proposed culture fit model in the context of Ghana.

In connection with a study conducted by Ghebregiorgis and Karsten (2006) that examined the characteristics of indigenous management practices in relation to the success of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), with six Kenyan affiliated businesses as the units of analysis, suggested that when management systems and practices are suitable to the local cultural context, it enhances successful organizations. Similarly, based on a study of cultural influences on HRM practices in Eritrea, Jackson, Amaeshi and Yavuz (2008) observed that certain contextual factors exert some level of challenges to HRM practices. Their findings also showed that HRM concepts and practices such as training, employee participation, performance appraisal, reward systems, compensation and recruitment are present, however with some signs of local/indigenous factor influences. International business is characterized by the interaction and movement of people across national borders, an understanding of cultural differences and when these differences are important is very relevant. Research into these components has facilitated our understanding of cultural context as an essential factor that moderates differences between domestic and International Human Resource Management (IHRM) (Dowling et al., 2008).

International firms compete in an increasingly multifaceted environment where the degree of the complexity of doing business can be extremely capricious. Additionally,
international firms depend on having the right personnel to manage and operate their businesses with effective IHRM practices that are suitable to the context in which they occur. This mix of appropriate personnel and HR practices has been a persistent significant factor for success in international business undertakings (Dowling et al., 2008). For example, Desatnick and Bennett (1978) asserted that the principal cause of failures in international business endeavors emanates from a lack of understanding of the critical differences in managing human resources at all levels in foreign contexts. This is mainly because, even though certain management philosophies and approaches have been effective in the domestic environment, however their transference to and or application in a foreign context too often proved to be ineffective. The considerations of these human factors are as imperative as their financial and marketing measures used as the basis for many decisions to undertake multinational ventures (Dowling et al., 2008). The following section briefly introduces the evolution of management theories which were initially dominated exclusively by Western-oriented thinking. This evolution will be examined in relation to varying geographical and/or national cultural characteristics and contexts.

Until recently, the supremacy of American management theory had culminated in the notion that “one size fits all,” in the sense that effective management practices in the United States would be equally as effective anywhere. This notion was being replaced with the awareness that managerial values, attitudes, behaviors, practices, and efficiency are different across national cultures. Hence, differences in national cultures require differences in management approaches (Newman & Nollen, 1996). However, while cross-cultural and comparative research endeavors to explore and explicate similarities and differences are ongoing, there are concerns about such research. A major contention is that there is disagreement among scholars about the exact definition of culture and the operationalization of this concept (Dowling
et al., 2008). As noted earlier, the construct of culture has caused much controversy. This has driven interest in the issue from multiple disciplines which while increasing value, do not necessarily enhance clarity. It is noted in the literature that culture affect employee’s attitudes, efficiency and productivity on the job (Mahal, 2009), and can affect the ability of an employee to execute organizational plans and meet strategic goals (Chan, Shaffer & Snape, 2004). Within the same construct, this author believes that organizational culture could potentially impact not only actions by employees (at the individual or group level), but also the overall productivity and performance of an organization, especially in the case of Ghana.

**Culture Variations**

Despite common conversation about globalization, the experienced international business traveler will be very much aware of differences in the way things are done from one country to another and from region to region. Such differences are rarely more noticeable than in the field of organization development and management. Not only will the traveler notice that conventions for doing business are bound by culture, but also that the existing systems and structures for the management of people are exclusively driven by the variables of tradition (Hollinshead, 2009). Hall and Hall (1990) examined low and high context cultures and contend that context refers to the evidence that surrounds an event; it is intimately surrounded by the meaning of that event. In low context countries such as Switzerland, Scandinavia and North America, interaction between individuals tends to be clear, unequivocal and formal in tone. Time management, deadlines and punctuality are emphasized while work and home life are quite strictly differentiated.

In high context cultures such as Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Japan, and southern Europe, it is presumed that most information resides in the person and therefore interpersonal chemistry is emphasized, and body language is demonstrated in informal, word-of-
mouth, face-to-face interaction. In such cultures there is less emphasis on time management and an indistinct division between work and domestic activities (Hollinshead, 2009). The comprehension of this concept would be particularly relevant in cases of joint ventures between low and high context regions as these are becoming more common, potentially causing clashes in values, norms and expectations. It is not surprising that based on the findings from Hofstede’s (1980) studies, he noted that the “nationality of respondents” explained cultural values of individuals in different countries “highly significantly” (1980, p. 71). Hofstede (1983) concluded that management is culturally dependent and that for organization to attain best results a “multinational’s management practices should fit the local culture” (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 441-442). This assertion aligns with the culture fit model proposed by Beugre & Offodile (2001).

Hofstede’s (1980) study, based on survey data acquired from two companies in 1968 and 1972 involving 116,000 IBM employees across over 60 countries, has provided influential insights into varying cultural predispositions across boundaries of nationality. His study has been highly influential in academic and business fields because it highlighted the significance of culture in international business engagements; and in shaping managerial behaviors across national borders. It is this author’s opinion that even though Hofstede’s (1980) cultural concept may have a flaw, in terms of the risks of broad generalization, as well as its applicability to certain regions of the world today, considering that some cultural systems, patterns, and related practices may have evolved over time due to the dynamics of globalization, it does however provide significant theory base and framework for cross-cultural studies. In the next section, I will identify and discuss Hofstede’s acclaimed four national culture dimensions.
Hofstede’s National Culture Dimensions

Hofstede (1994) identified the generic factors that typify value systems in different national cultures, including those of software and systems developers, applying statistical cluster analysis based on questionnaires from over 50 countries. Four dimensions were identified that demonstrated universal applicability across cultures. Each country was assigned an index score for each of the following four dimensions of national cultures: Power distance, individualism verse collectivism, masculine verse feminism, and uncertainty avoidance.

*Power distance* is characterized by the extent to which people see it natural that power, status, and privileges are shared unequally among individuals or that this distribution is insignificant in their lives. In low power distance countries (e.g. United States) subordinates and superiors consider each other as equal in existence, and decentralization is popular, while high power distance countries subscribe to authority of bosses and centralization of power (Biró et al., 2002). Ghana is an example of a country with a high power distance structure (Aryee, 2004). In this culture context, individuals (i.e. employees) are subservient to the authority of bosses, there is centralization of power, and respect for seniority and elderliness is highly valued in decision makings and actions (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002).

*Individualism vs. collectivism* is defined in regard to people’s reverence of individual activities and successes vs. the importance of their belonging to a social group. In an individualist culture people take care only of themselves and their immediate families, and remain emotionally independent from the group (Biró et al., 2002). Most North American countries including the U.S. exemplify this culture (Zoogah, 2001). On the contrary, in a collectivist culture like Ghana (Aryee, 2004) people differentiate between in-groups and out-groups, anticipate their in-group to care for them, and individuals express their identity by their
connections to others and group belonging (Biró et al., 2002). The individual and the group have a mutual responsibility of protection in exchange for loyalty. This is an example of how Ghanaians employees especially managers show loyalty and care to their family and friends (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002). This behavior may be unacceptable in individualized cultural context like the United States.

**Masculinity vs. femininity** is better explicated as hostility and quantity orientation verse concession and quality orientation. Masculine cultures emphasize competition, assertion, and materialism in terms of earnings and advancements, promotions and big bonuses. A feminine culture on the other hand, reflects the concern for people, the quality of life, nurturing, and social well-being (Biró et al., 2002). While Ghana exemplifies some feminist orientations to humanity, it exerts masculinity orientation in organizational settings (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002).

**Uncertainty avoidance** is defined in terms of people’s approach toward ambiguous or uncertain situations. Innovation usually is characterized by a lot of ambiguity; it is consequently easier in weak uncertainty avoiding cultures (e.g. U.S.) while in a strong uncertainty avoiding culture (e.g. Ghana) there is high anxiety in people who usually like to work hard and like instituting and following rules. The real execution of the outcomes of innovation is an activity that requires this orientation (Biró et al., 2002). Hofstede (1980) later added a fifth dimension to the original four dimensions of national culture which he named as long-term vs. short-term value orientation (Hofstede, 1991, 2001). This refers to “the choice of focus for people’s efforts: the future or the present” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 29). Ghana and the US were identified as having Short-term time orientations (normative). The following shows a table depicting the cultural differences between the United States and Ghana.
Table 4. Ghana vs. U.S. National Culture Dimensions Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Orientation</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power Distance</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism vs. Collectivism</td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity vs. Femininity</td>
<td>Femininity/Humane</td>
<td>Masculinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Orientation</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Hofstede’s (1980, 2001): National Culture Value Dimensions

In the next section, I situate the cultural and contextual variables existing in Africa in general, and then Ghana specifically, in relation to its HRD and management practices and approaches.

Cultural Dimensions of Sub-Saharan Africa

Wanasika et al. (2011) noted that many management theories are based on Western scholars whose disciplinary orientations were heavily grounded in economics and classical sociology. Hence, their writings show people as being individualistic, maximizing utility, and mainly focused on transactions. Theories of management centered on this assumptions usually lead to mechanistic depiction of human behavior that greatly undermine the cultural or geographical differences. On the contrary, people are not just economic beings. They are also social and communal beings who are often impacted by emotions than by a supposed logic. In addition, the relative balance of such variables in determining managerial and employee behavior can be significantly different across cultures.

Wanasika et al. (2011) synthesized the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior
Effectiveness (GLOBE) project with respect to five Sub-Saharan African Countries (Nigeria, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa) into six major cultural themes to produce a picture of leadership and managerial patterns in these SSA countries. In particular, these “Societies share a common historical experiences that include early hunter-gatherer groups, ethnic and tribal loyalties, colonial dominance and exploitation of rich natural resources, subsequent independence, and efforts at responsible self-governance” (p. 234). In these communities, traditional leadership was centered on attributed power passed on through patrilineal inheritance. Power-distance and in-group collectivism are generally high in SSA countries and “Humane orientation permeates the core of societal and organizational life” (Wanasika et al., 2011, p. 238). In this respect, Ghana exemplifies this cultural orientation (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002). Age is associated unequivocally with seniority and accrued wisdom. There are high power-distance relationships based on ascribed status, gender, and age (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002).

Furthermore, most theories have focused on Western theories and commentaries rather than reflecting on the relevance of indigenous dimensions and context that are critical to African leadership (Blunt & Jones, 1997). Some SSA cultural dimensions are likely different from or conflict with Western managerial practices. These include a deep respect for the elderly due to oral traditions where age is closely associated with wisdom and relationships between different age groups are highly revered (Beuge & Offodile, 2001) and generally paternalistic (Linquist & Adolph, 1996). “The extended family serves as the building block for any organization and tolerance and forgiveness indicates the importance of interpersonal relations over individual achievements. Moreover, in African organizations, the importance of clan/ethnic interests over individual needs are manifested in different ways.” Attempts have been made to identify core
values of African leaders (Wanasika et al., 2011, p. 235), and Mbigi (2002) identified five core values: respect for the dignity of others, group solidarity, teamwork, service to others, and the spirit of harmony and interdependence (Beugre & Offodile, 2001). This interdependence is reflected in what is labeled as “Ubuntu” (Mangaliso, 2001; Mbigi, 1997). Ubuntu is a fundamental philosophy of collectivism and familial relationships that characterizes the existence and social relations in Africa (Wanasika et al., 2011). This philosophy of affinity and kinship among and between indigenous people of Africa is paramount (Karsten & Illa, 2005). Respect for hierarchy is viewed as unconditional obedience to instructions and directives and reflected in decision making in the context of high power-distance relationship (Hofstede, 2001) between management and ordinary workers in Africa (Kiggundu, 1989). Responsibilities of leaders to their extended families, tribes, or ethnic groups supplant performance based reward systems and final decisions are based predominantly on hierarchy.

A complicated situation exists whereby traditional Ghanaian behaviors, beliefs, practices and attitudes which often conflicts with Western modern management systems and practices undermines organizational performance. These traditional practices are often adverse to economic shrewdness, making the operating echelons inefficient and costly. Consequently, these factors almost always affect the performance of organizations adversely. These also compromise the integrity and competence of the formal bureaucratic systems by introducing an element of subjectivity in management practices, such as recruitment, performance appraisal and compensation (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002; Kiggundu, 1989). In a society like Ghana, there is high degree of respect for the elderly/age, status, and people in authority and this submissiveness is reflected in organizations (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002; Nzelibe, 1986).

Ghana is a high power distance country (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002). This
value orientation characterizes structural expressions in authoritarian leadership and highlights status differences (Aryee, 2004). Social distance between superiors and subordinates is distinct and so is status variance between management and rank-and-file employees. Subordinates rarely challenge or question those in authority and neither do they express their opinions openly, however there is no shortage of opinions privately. Managers seize on this situation to get lower level employees to complete personal/non-organizational tasks or errands for them (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002). Aryee (2004) noted that the cultural values that provide the organizing framework for discussing HRM in Ghana are power distance and collectivism. There is a high feeling of collectivism in Ghana which has some negative influences on HRM. Ghanaians are born into extended families and the cultural expectation is to take care of their members. Individuals provide help and support to kinsmen and expect to receive help in return when in need (reciprocal).

Under the traditional system, relationship is mutual as opposed to an exploitative relationship. However, when this cultural beliefs and practices are extended to a modern bureaucratic organization it becomes challengingly exploitative (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002). In particular instances, many people pressure their relatives to employ them or their children, irrespective of their qualifications or whether there is a vacancy (Gardiner, 1996). For example, it is the moral obligation of employed members of the family to provide financial to the elderly and less fortunate members (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002). When this is transferred into organizational context, the related duty to help ones’ kinsmen, have been identified to emasculate the goal-oriented merit-based or meritocratic principles of a bureaucratic organization. This is because it emboldens particularistic instead of universalistic organizational practice (Aryee, 2004). Similarly, the decision to employ, promote and reward an employee
should be centered on the universal principle of an employee’s contributions to organizational goal fulfillment. However, in a particularistic environment, such decisions are made on non-merit considerations such as kinship ties (Aryee, 2004; Budwhar & Debrah, 2002). Furthermore, the emphasis laid on the family culminates to the view of the organization as an extension of the extended family. Just like the extended family, there is an expectation that the organization will cater for the needs of its employees, in addition to considering their family circumstances when making personnel decisions (Aryee, 2004). Likewise, Budhwar and Khatri (2001) noted that collectivistic and high power distance countries have a tendency to put greater importance on recruitment criteria, such as attributed status and socio-political affiliations, than on hard criteria like knowledge, skills and abilities.

In the following section, I present a table depicting the cultural characteristics of Ghana, followed by the methodological map that characterized this study. With regard to the cultural characteristics of Ghana as depicted on table 5, it is important to note that these cultural attributes are the most common and salient in this context, however there are different ethnic groups in Ghana whose cultural attributes may differ.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Traits</th>
<th>Manifestations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal chemistry</td>
<td>Viewed as important aspect of human relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body language</td>
<td>Speaks volumes. It could speak louder than words e.g. smiling, nodding, eye contact, waving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>Most businesses transactions, and communications are conducted through words of mouth and honor system is highly practiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greetings/salutations</td>
<td>Symbolizes good faith, respect, and expression of recognition, heart-warm welcome, engaging social interactions at individual, group, community, and professional settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority/Elderliness</td>
<td>Respect for the elderly and seniority in organization is highly emphasized. At meetings and gatherings, elders are given the inalienable right to speak first, lead, offer words of wisdom, and advice. Any deviation from that could attract strong criticism and isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship ties/Family relationship/ Social Relationships</td>
<td>Collective orientation: Individualism is disdained. Extended family is valued. Emphasis on harmony, helping each other, affinity, teamwork, solidarity. Orient on the African proverb: It takes a village to raise a child, the right hand bath the left and the left bath the right-signifying interdependence (of human nature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work &amp; Life</td>
<td>Closely linked/organization is viewed as part of community/extended family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power relationships</td>
<td>Asymmetrical and culturally sanctioned as norm, respect, subservience/obedience for authority/position of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; Professional</td>
<td>No considerable distinctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humane orientation: Forgiveness, kindness, sympathy, social/ community support</td>
<td>Highly favored and practiced as integral part of culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Collectiveness, supporting each other/group orientation, interdependency, manifestation of the spirit of Ubuntu. Reflected in adages like the left hand helps the right and vice versa (collaboratively)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of Time</td>
<td>Less focus on strict management of time, much focus on social wellbeing and personal safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Given serious value as it is viewed as a reflection of family name/community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following is a depiction of the theoretical map that guided this study.

Figure 1. **Training Transfer in Ghana Theoretical Map**
Theoretical Map Narrative

The diagram depicts factors interacting in the transfer process including the connection between training, transfer, culture and context, and their perceived effect on transfer outcome. The training context is situated in a Western country while the transfer context is located in Ghana. Employees from Ghana receive international training abroad in a Western context (Lim, 2000) sponsored by their organization in Ghana, and are expected to transfer what they learned to their organizations (Lim, 2000) referred to as transfer context. Culture as depicted in the diagram is conceptualized as an intervening variable potentially impacting learning transfer (Lim & Johnson, 1998; McDonald, 2001), therefore situated between the actual training the employees receive and learning/training transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume et al., 2010). It is necessary to note that the training the Ghanaian employees receive is generally based on Western culture, therefore the different cultural and contextual factors in Ghana particularly, could promote or inhibit (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002) the transfer of training. Given the vital role of culture in the transfer process, the common characteristics of the Western cultural orientation as well as the Ghanaian national culture are identified using Hofstede’s original four dimensions of national culture. The map is categorized into Input, Process, and Output. Input represents the training the Ghanaian employees received in the Western context; Process depicts the transactional endeavors of transferring what they learned and the meaning making endeavors associated with it. Output represents the application or transfer outcomes.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a presentation of the overall design and methodologies of the study. It will state the purpose of the study followed by a description of the design of the study, which will include the epistemological and theoretical frameworks, sample selection criteria, data collection and analysis, validity and reliability, as well as researcher’s biases and subjectivities. Finally, it will discuss the limitations of the study.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the potential cultural and contextual factors that may impact the capability of Ghanaian trainees’ to transfer training obtained from a Western country to their organization in Ghana. The following questions guided this study:

- What cultural and contextual factors in Ghana affect the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context?
- How can Ghanaian trainees transfer or integrate Western-based training to the Ghanaian context effectively?

Design of the Study

In this section I will present the design of the study, my epistemological viewpoint, theoretical framework undergirding the study and methodology.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the “branch of philosophy that investigates the basis of knowledge
claims or the grounding of knowledge” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 32). It is characterized by questions such as what model of knowledge is the researcher adopting here? What grounds exist for accepting this model?” What makes it legitimate? What is the researchers’ personal definition of knowledge, and what does the researcher base it on? This author contends that philosophical issues are as essential as learning to use a particular research method, and we must pay attention to them and that “the researcher today must be aware of the epistemological grounds on which his inquiry rests” (p. 32). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that epistemological beliefs “shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it” (p. 19). Mason (2002) also echoed that in qualitative interviewing, an epistemological position is important because it allows us to generate data in a meaningful and concrete way and that “Your epistemology is, literally, your theory of knowledge, and should therefore concern the principles and rules by which you decide whether and how social phenomenon can be known, and how knowledge can be demonstrated” (p. 16).

My epistemological position is that knowledge should not be treated as neutral information (Netting, et al., 2008; Mason 2002) or be separated from the individual and wider societal interests (Craib, 1992; Murray & Ozanne, 1991) or from the context in which knowledge construction takes place (Netting, et al., 2008) and the power relations that are socially and historically organized (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). Also I hold the view that rich and insightful knowledge can be gained through grounded theory. Grounded theory allows me to examine and personally engage in my participant’s cultural context to gather and analyze qualitative data in the participant’s real world (natural setting) in a unique way. Moreover, an individual’s meaning making is relative to their world view, and lived experiences among other social factors. This complexity and uniqueness is the reason why exploring and understanding
these views in the individual’s or participant’s own voice was very essential and a rich source of qualitative data which I aimed at exploring, articulating and bringing to life (to the audience). Through this epistemological lens, I approached this research with the understanding that the conditions and processes of these social endeavors are shaped by multiple forces including power relations, cultural and contextual dynamics, and that the learning experiences, as well as the transfer endeavors of my participants were not free of social forces.

**Methodological Framework**

The methodological framework that undergirded this study was constructivist theory. Constructivism is a theory of learning that posits that learning is an active, constructive process in which the learner is the primary constructor of information and knowledge by transforming and developing their subjective reality from objective reality. Constructivist posits that “learning is a process of constructing meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience” (Merriam & Caffarella, 2000, p. 261). These theorists have a common agreement that the development of knowledge cannot be separated from the meaning associated with the learner’s experience. In the same vein, constructive-developmental theory examines the process it calls development as the process by which what was subjective in our representations is gradually transformed to objective reality. Constructivism acknowledges that reality does not occur preformed and waiting for us just to copy a picture of it. How we perceive is simultaneously an act of how we conceive, and how we interpret (Kegan, 1982, 1994).

Merriam and Leahy (2005) suggested that transfer of training can be facilitated best if trainers use a constructivist approach to delivering their instructions. I believe this same approach is applicable to understanding the transfer of training. In this study, I used the constructivist framework to examine how Ghanaian trainees made meaning of their learning
experiences that included how they processed and transferred their newly acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to the context of Ghana vis a vis the effects of Ghanaian culture and context. In other words, I used this theory to explore how trainees from Ghana constructed new knowledge, skills, and abilities and the meaning they made out of it through the process of acquisition, transmission, and application, with cultural and contextual forces as critical antecedents.

Research Method

This study was a qualitative study and used qualitative interviewing methodology (Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002) to collect data in relation to the research questions this study sought to explore. The following section presents a description of the researcher’s rationale for using qualitative theory.

Rationale for Using Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research focuses on “discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offering the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base to the practice of education” (Merriam, 1998, p. 3). Qualitative study involves analyzing and interpreting texts and interviews in order to find meaningful patterns that describe a particular phenomenon. Qualitative inquiry as a form of research is entrenched in empiricism. Specifically, it is the philosophical tradition that argues that knowledge is acquired by direct experience through the physical senses. It is an expansive approach to the study of social phenomena (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). It uses multiple methods of inquiry characterized by a naturalistic and interpretive framework (Denzin, 1994). Patton (2002) noted that “qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail and that “approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis
contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry” (p. 14).

Through qualitative research, researchers can discover wide ranging “dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginations of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate” (Mason, 2002, p.1). This means that it has unique capacity to produce persuasive arguments about how things ensue in particular contexts. As Patton (2002) noted, “Qualitative inquiry is especially powerful as a source of grounded theory, theory that is inductively generated from the field, that is, theory that emerges from the researcher’s observations and interviews out in the real world” (p. 11).

With respect to this study, the choice of qualitative methods for accomplishing this research is because I believe it offers the most efficient opportunity to gather a wealth of detailed information (Patton, 2002) from the research field/context, on my research interest, and from research subjects in a natural setting (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) without being restricted by predetermined categories as in quantitative methods which “require the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned” (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Moreover, the critical cultural and contextual component of this research interest would be better served if the researcher interacts personally with research subjects in their local context. As Rossman and Rallis (2003) highlighted, qualitative researchers value the disorderliness of the lived world; they make a sustained focus on context vital to their work and assume that a detailed understanding of human experience is obtained by exploring these complexities. Life occurs in
context that is the natural environment in which people work, study, play, drink, and actually lives.

**Research Site**

This study was conducted in the West African country of Ghana. The specific locations for the interviews were decided collaboratively by the researcher and the participants.

**Sample Selection Criteria (Casting the Net)**

Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora and Mattis (2007) used the term “casting the net” to refer to sampling of participants. I adopted this term, because they contend that as a researcher, how you cast your net as well as where you cast your net (with regard to the decisions you make about the methodologies you use to sample your participants) determines the types of fish you catch. The sample collection method used to identify and recruit potential participants was snowball sampling and purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990; 2002). Snowball sampling technique was used to identify potential research participants by using a small sample of initial informants to identify and recruit other research participants who met the eligibility criteria and who could contribute productively to this study (Patton, 1990). Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative studies to select participants that would provide the researcher with rich information regarding the focus of the research study (Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this study, the snowball sampling method helped identify potential research candidates while the purposeful sampling method helped to narrow down the most relevant participants from the initial sample. My decision to conduct this research in Ghana as well as the choice of sampling methodologies was based on several factors. The main factors were as follows: Given the context of the research being Ghana, I knew the context as a native of this country and I knew a few individuals who have participated in international trainings, and one of whom lived
with me. My informal conversations with some of these individuals suggested there was a common issue of transferring Western training to the Ghanaian context. After further discussions with these individuals, they identified a few other people who have participated in training in Western countries.

**Sample Size**

The initial sample size was 12 participants but the groundwork in Ghana through snowball sampling yielded 17 participants in all. All the 17 participants interviewed were in upper level positions or management positions in their organizations. They represented both private and public organizations. 11 participants were employees from private international/multinational organizations and the other 6 were from public organizations. See figure 4 for participant demographic information. The participants were selected based on the following selection criteria:

A. Employee of an organization in Ghana

B. A native of Ghana

C. Both adult males and female employees who are at least between the ages of 18 to 55 years

D. Received training in a Western country and returned to Ghana to transfer their training

E. Must have received between one month to twelve months training in a Western country

F. Must be at least in a lower to medium level position in the organization

G. Must have obtained the training within the last 6 months to 5 years ago

H. Must be in a managerial or leadership position

I. Must have some college education
Table 6. Research Participants Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwesi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manager/Trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aku</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kojo</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frimpong</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjoa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afriyee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amega</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Snr Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzifa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Snr Manager/Head of Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kofi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Snr Manager/Head of Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwame</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manager/Chief Relationship Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asamoah</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Manager/Programs Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Manager/Head of Client Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dede</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Manager/Programs Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kweku</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaw</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Snr Manager/Chief Program Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the section below, I present a brief overview of the gender dynamics in some of the organizations studied in Ghana.

**Overview of Gender and Leadership Positions in the Ghanaian Context**

An interesting and intriguing observation and a food for thought. I realized that one of the organizations where I had the most participants, six of the participants were males and two were females. Also, I observed that another organization where I had the second largest participants from a single organization, two of the participants were males and one was a female. An examination of the top managerial leadership of this organization also showed that eighteen (83%) were men and three (17%) were females. This may be a reflection of the disproportionate gender disparities in such leadership positions across other contexts as gender roles are also culturally delineated and socially sanctioned in Ghana. I have no doubt that due to globalization and its related dilution of the local cultural practices, these gender disparities may be reduced.
with more and more women occupying leadership positions. Two participants, Dzifa and Esi, also highlighted this gender disparity dynamics in Ghana.

**Data Collection**

As noted earlier, interviewing was used to collect data in this study. The following were the justifications for using this data collection method. Interviewing provides a means of acquiring verifiable data about the social world through asking participants to talk about their lives. Almost 90 percent of all social science investigations involve some form of interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). They “are one of the most recognized forms of qualitative research method” (Mason, 2002, p. 63). Additionally, it is one of the most important qualitative data-collection methodologies. The qualitative research interview is an encounter where knowledge is constructed from the interactions between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale, 1996). During this encounter, the interviewer guides the topics surrounding the conversation as well as the directions of the conversation. In the same vein, the interviewer collects information from the interviewees/participants’ lived experiences that help the researcher garner an understanding of the meaning behind their experiences/stories (Kvale, 1996). Mason (2002) reported that an interviewer/researcher may choose qualitative interviews if the researcher’s perception of the ways in which social explanations and arguments can be constructed focusing on details, complexities, subtle distinctions, and completeness in data, as opposed to surveys which gather data generally on superficial patterns.

Mason (2002) noted that if a researcher chooses interviewing it may be because the researchers “ontological position suggests that people’s knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality” (p.63) which his/her research questions are constructed to discover. As a researcher, it is critical
to learn about the dynamics of interviewing. An important step in learning about interviewing is for the interviewer to reflect critically on his/her interactions with others within the research context through close analysis of his/her interview transcripts (Roulston, 2004). Hence, reflection is a critical component of this qualitative interview process. It involved examination of the data collection experience as well as the cultural and contextual implications.

**Conducting the Interview**

Ripley (2012) contended that interviewers are crucial to the overall trajectory of their interview with their interviewee as they initiate the discussion topic and then can follow-up on specific issues. He continued to argue that although it may appear mundane, the work of interviewers can "direct, incite, and encourage interviewees to talk on specific topics" (p. 543). There are multiple ways to conduct qualitative interview(s). Interviews can be conducted through “one-to-one interactions, larger group interviews or focus groups, and may take place face to face, over the telephone, or the Internet, or in small groups (Mason, 2002, p. 62). The researcher must make the decision as to what interview methodology is most practical and most efficient to produce the desired goals/results (Creswell, 1998).

As applied to this study, it was conducted in person/face to face by the researcher and each participant was interviewed separately. This was because researcher believed that (1) conducting the interviews personally and face to face would produce the most valuable data (Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003), and (2) because conducting it within the cultural context of the participants validates a critical part of the research interest: understanding how cultural and contextual factors impact training transfer in the Ghanaian context. Furthermore, capturing participants’ stories real time establishes an interpersonal relationship that facilitates participant’s comfort in sharing information which some participants’ may
consider as personal (especially to a stranger).

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) highlighted how interviewers get words to fly (stimulate positive response). The interviewer accomplishes this by developing a defined topic, designing interview questions that fit the topic, asking the questions with consummate skill; and having enough time to “pitch” the questions to interviewees who are forthcoming and knowledgeable. As with pitching balls, however, the process of generating good interviews takes practice. Contrary to a human baseball pitcher whose satisfaction comes from throwing the ball that batters never touch, however, in this context, you (the interviewer) throw questions with the intention of having your respondents hit and hit well. As a researcher you want your pitches or questions to stimulate verbal responses from the important interviewees who are knowledgeable about what the researcher doesn’t know. From this flight you will generate the information that you transform into valuable data. As applied to my research, I had experience conducting interviews and had developed skills that would enhance the conducting of the interviews, but at the same time I acknowledged that developing effective interviewing skills takes time and practice. Thus, it is an evolitional and developmental process where you learn new things every time or construct new knowledge, and make new meanings that make you learn more and sharpen your interviewing skills as each interview/case may be unique. Furthermore, the interview questions for this study were carefully designed to be relevant to the research interest with the purpose of stimulating appropriate responses from interviewees while generating rich data to answer research questions.

**Interview Design**

A semi-structured interview (Mason, 2002) protocol was used in this study. Semi-structured interviews are the types of interviews where an interview protocol is used as a guide.
The interviewer starts the questions and then follows up with probes in response to the interviewee’s talks and accounts. Also, in this instance, the interviewee chooses their own terms to formulate answers to the research questions posed by the interviewer (Roulston, 2004). In this study, I used an open questioning format to elicit responses from the interviewees (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). According to Roulston (2004) “Open questions are those that provide broad parameters within which interviewees can formulate answers in their own words concerning topics specified by the interviewer” (p. 12); such as: tell me about or describe... This invites the interviewee to describe the subject matter in detail with respect to the interviewer’s question and thus generate additional information. I employed probes and formulations while conducting the interviews. This strategy allowed me to get more information from the participants especially those I deemed were not detailed enough in response to questions. Probes are techniques used by the interviewer to delve deeper or ask more questions in depth and detail, and thus encourage the interviewee to shed more light on a topic or issue (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; 2011). In probing, the interviewee’s own words are usually used to generate questions that elicit additional description while formulation involves the interviewer using their own words or transforming the participant’s words to sum up or to clarify the interviewer’s understanding of what the interviewee stated (Roulston, 2004).

The following table shows the questions explored in this study. It is made up of eleven questions.
Table 7: Training Transfer in Ghana Interviewing Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Factors Impacting Training Transfer in Ghana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Which country did you receive your training?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tell me about the purpose of your training?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How long was your training?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In what way do you think the national culture of Ghana has an impact on your ability to transfer what you learned from the training back to your organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In what ways (if any) did the culture of your organization in relation to Ghanaian culture/context, help or prevent you from transferring or applying what you learned from the international training?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tell me about ways you think western training can be transferred effectively into your organization to fit the local Ghanaian culture context?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What are some special components of your training that in your view can be integrated effectively into your organization to fit the context of the culture of Ghana?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How have the issues of managerial practices including power and hierarchy in your organization affected your ability to transfer what you learned back to Ghana?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Based on your training experience, compare the Ghanaian culture with the culture of the western country you received your training, in what areas do these two cultures differ or similar?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In what ways do these differences or (similarities) impact your ability to transfer what you learned to your organization in Ghana?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is what you learned in the training applicable/transferrable to your job? If so, tell me how, if not, why not?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora and Mattis (2007), “The pond you fish in determines the fish you can catch” (p. 296). These authors use this African proverb to signify
the intentional nature of the data-collection process. This proverb translates to mean that the contexts in which we conduct our work determine the outcomes generated from any process of inquiry and data collection. In the case of qualitative research, the authors posited that the sources from which researchers draw on, as well as the tools they employ in data collection determine the type of data they produce, the meanings they craft from those data, and the knowledge claims they make. These highlight the significance of understanding participant’s social context and how to navigate this context respectfully and effectively. Gaining entry, gaining access, and building rapport are important issues when discussing the dynamic as well as complex process of negotiating a research relationship when conducting qualitative studies (Maxwell, 1996). This process is relational in the sense that it requires the researcher to be aware that individuals and artifacts are embedded in social worlds (Hall & Callery, 2001).

As the researcher I recognize the value of these factors and did not have the issue of gaining accessibility, entry or rapport. As a native of Ghana I had access to the research context and have established an ongoing contact with key members of the research context and some of the potential research participants. Also, I had several phone conversations with key participants about my research interest, purpose, and strategized how they can help the researcher identify potential participants who meet the participant selection criteria (having completed training in a Western country and returned to their organization in Ghana to transfer acquired training).

Data Analysis

In this section I will describe how I managed, processed, and analyzed the collected data. This description includes methods of transcription, coding, and final narrative of findings.

Transcribing the Interview

Transcription of interview data was a critical component of the research process.
According to Polkinghorne (2005) it is important to understand that some information maybe lost when oral data are transcribed into written text. Transcribing oral speech into written text also requires the researcher to make choices. This includes whether to transcribe the statements word for word or whether to revise the data into a more formal style and whether to include or exclude factors such as emotional expressions, pauses, sighs, intonation, etc., (Kvale, 1996).

With respect to the interviews completed in this study, while I was transcribing the interviews I endeavored to safeguard against losing important interview data by paying strict attention to the transcription process, and ensured an alignment between what my interviewees reported and my written account. I was careful to keep statements in their original forms as expressed by the interviewee.

My data analysis began with an initial reading of the transcript to familiarize myself with important text content (exploratory). After I completed my initial review of the transcript (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), I then began my coding process.

**Coding of Interview Data**

Coding is a methodological procedure for organizing the transcript texts and identifying patterns within that organizational structure (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), codes or labels are used for “assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information” put together during data collection (p. 56). They facilitate organization of the material into groups of words, phrases or sentences before bringing meaning to them (Richards, 2005). In addition, Charmaz (2000) noted coding begins the chain of theory development and that coding helps us to gain new perspective on our data and to focus on better data collection. “The central idea of coding is to move from raw text to research concerns in small steps, each step building on the previous one” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 35). The
steps of coding can be seen as a staircase that moves the researcher from a lower to a higher (more abstract) level of understanding. The lowest level of the staircase is the raw text while the highest level is research concerns (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

In this study, I used the steps of coding as proposed by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), and they are: (1) raw text to relevant text (2) repeating ideas (3) themes (4) theoretical constructs (5) theoretical narrative. The following is a description of the steps involved in the data analysis stage of this study.

The first thing I did was transform the interview data (text) into manageable proportions. This was a filtering process, in which I chose which parts of the text to include in the analysis, and which parts to discard. In this phase I used the research concerns to select relevant text. This was accomplished by first reading through the text with the research concerns in mind. Text that related to specific research concerns is called relevant text (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). For example, I focused on participants’ statements that covered the broader issue of the local Ghanaian culture and context. Having selected the relevant text, I noticed that different research participants often used the same or similar words and phrases to express the same idea. For example, several participants reported that the local culture practices are factors that affect their transfer endeavors. These statements were made in different ways but their concerns and meanings were the same. These ideas are called repeating ideas, and they shed light on research concerns (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). At this stage, I identified the repeating ideas and grouped them into themes as described in the next step. A “theme is an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 38). At this point I recorded repeating ideas by assembling related passages of relevant texts.

The relevant themes identified were associated with cultural and contextual factors in
Ghana as well as factors related to the training program and the trainer. I categorized each of these major themes and gave them specific code names. Each code was associated with the aforementioned themes that answered the research questions that guided this study. At this juncture, the identification, categorization and coding of these relevant themes gave the researcher a better understanding of the major factors participants reported to affect the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context. Similar to how the repeating ideas were organized into themes, I organized the themes into larger, more abstract ideas consistent with the theoretical framework of this study. This is referred to as a theoretical construct (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Finally, I organized the theoretical constructs into a theoretical narrative, which summarized what I had learned about the research concerns.

**Theoretical Narrative**

The narrative is the concluding step that provides the “bridge between the researchers’ concerns and the participants’ subjective experience. It tells the story of the participants’ subjective experience, using their own words as much as possible. It is characterized by knitting together subjective experiences and abstract concepts and thus bringing together the two different worlds of participant and researcher (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 40).

After the data was successfully transcribed, carefully coded, and closely analyzed, the following chapter offers the findings that emerged.

**Ethical Considerations**

Mason (2002) reminded us about the relevance of ethical considerations in qualitative research and highlighted the need for researchers “to be clear about operating a moral research practice at every stage in the research process” (p. 79). Suzuki et al (1999) noted that several ethical challenges may arise in collecting qualitative data. Some of these challenges may include
informed consent, confidentiality, and the relationship between researcher and participants. Also qualitative researchers must be cognizant of the potential biases that may impact the questions in their study such as who is included in the study. Whose voice does the research process benefit? Whom does the research advantage? What are the effects on an individual who shares their life story especially on a risky topic? And how does the researcher give back to the individual or the community? In addition, issues of informed consent may become hazy as the qualitative process is often evolving and open. This study enabled the voices of these participants to be heard and hopefully helped their organizations, managers, and trainers have a better understanding of their experiences and needs. It may also help international training program developers/designers and trainers re-conceptualize and redesign training programs that take into account trainees cultural and contextual needs. As noted earlier, the researcher endeavored to reduce or eliminate risks in the conduct of this research with great care and professionalism.

Suzuki et al (1999) continued to remind us that the data that surfaces as well as procedures may take on new routes as the information develops. If the interview protocol such as the type or order of questions will take new forms through the interview process, the researcher should disclose this clearly when obtaining IRB approval as well as to participants. As applied to this study, I adhered to the highest professional standards as well as by the rules and regulations governing IRB approvals for this research. Once again, I was clear and concise about my research purpose and what the data would be used for. I received each participant’s informed consent before the interviews are conducted. I ensured that I answered all questions that participants might have had and ensured that they were satisfied before the interviews were conducted. I ensured that participation in the study was not based on any form of direct or indirect coercion or manipulation. I endeavored to make the interview questions clear and not
leading or tricky. Participants who decided not to complete the interview were free to do so without any repercussions. This was made clear to the participants from the onset.

**Ensuring Quality and Trustworthiness of Study**

Data quality, validity and reliability or trustworthiness was a top priority in this research. I developed strategies to address this critical component through triangulation, member-checking, disclosure, checking researcher’s subjectivities/biases, objectivity, and transparence. Specifically, this research employed multiple sources and methods (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) for data collection that included interviews, document and cultural artifacts review when available and/or necessary. These ensured triangulation (using multiple information sources to enhance validity) which is valuable in qualitative research (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004).

As stated above, data quality was a primary consideration in this research. This was because if the data was not rich, it could consequently affect validity and overall efficiency, dependability and credibility of the results. With regard to exploring the true value of inquiry (internal validity), I traveled to Ghana to stay and interact with the context of this research while fully engaging with the participants for a period of at least 2 months to ensure the establishment of trust and as Lincoln and Guba (1986) noted, it is important to establish prolonged engagement in the field as well as create rapport and participants trust. This trust would positively contribute to the collection of rich, reliable and valid data. The study was designed to be collaborative and engaging in nature, therefore it facilitated the issue of member checks while engaging participants to give their constructive feedback and contributions to the research process. Any anomalies in the data were addressed with the participants immediately and also through a follow up conversation that occurred during my transcription of the data while I was still in Ghana. In terms of addressing the neutrality of the study, research questions were designed to be straight
forward, unambiguous and unbiased (Patton, 2002) to solicit honest and concise answers from the participants.

**Member-checking and Data Validation**

Member-checking is a strategy that ensures that the data and interpretations accorded them are accurate in their depiction or representation of what was stated by the interviewee and interpreted by the researcher (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). To achieve this purpose of validation, I completed follow up meetings with six of the participants in this study to discuss and review my interpretation of their statements. Any discrepancies were corrected (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) to ensure concise representation of participants’ statements and thus ensure validity (Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002). For example, I had both face to face and telephone meetings with these participants during which we discussed my transcription of their interviews. Also, I asked them to clarify statements they made that were either inaudible or not clear to me during my playback of the audio recordings. I also sought the help of a native Ghanaian to help me better understand the pronunciations and spellings of some of the indigenous (Akan/Twi) words or terminologies/jargons that the participants used such as “Dumsor” and “Me ba ha che.” All these steps helped me to ensure the accurate interpretation and validity of my data.

**Insider versus Outsider Status: Benefits and Limitations**

In this study, one of the potential challenges was insider/outsider status (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001). These authors noted that early discussions on insider/outsider status were characterized by the assumption that the researcher was mainly an insider or an outsider and that each status had certain merits and demerits. However, more recent discussions have revealed underlying complexities in either status and have recognized that the boundaries between the two positions are not all that simple or clearly
demarcated. Banks (1998) proposed a typology of insider/outsider status with four possible positions as follows: The \textit{indigenous-insider} is one who validates the unique cultural values, perspectives, traditions, behaviors, beliefs, and knowledge of his/her indigenous community and ‘who can speak with authority about it’ (p. 7). The \textit{indigenous-outsider} (a second position), has undergone great cultural assimilation into an outside or different culture but remains attached to his/her indigenous community. The \textit{external-insider} rejects much of his or her indigenous community and validates the norms of another culture to become like an auxiliary insider. Finally, the \textit{external-outsider} is ‘socialized within a community different from the one in which he or she is doing research’ (p. 8).

With respect to this study, the issue of insider versus outsider status did not have any ramifications. To reiterate Patton (1997): “Too much closeness may compromise objectivity. Too much distance may diminish insight and understanding” (p. 283). I refer to this statement as the researcher’s paradoxical dilemma. I believe as a researcher the depths of information you obtain from the participants or community as well as your perspective are connected to the level of experience and connection you have with the community you are studying. When researchers are members of the community their insider status provides them with rich insights into the cultural and contextual workings, dynamics, and issues of the community under study. There is no doubt that both insider and outsider statuses have advantages and disadvantages. For example, the insider may have the advantage of accessibility and better insights of the customs, vocabulary, artifacts and inner workings of group/community under study.

Also, the insider may be considered more trustworthy than an outsider. However, the potential disadvantages include the issue of how serious will the people you know take you? There may be an underlying issue of the insider’s familiarity with the group. This could
potentially compromise the insider’s objectivity and could make him/her miss some taking-for-granted vital data. On the other hand, the researcher’s outsider status may cause him/her a problem associated with a lack of entry/accessibility and trust that could be costly in time, effort and resources. It may also take a longer time to build rapport with the group/community as you may be viewed with suspicion as an intruder. In addition, the information obtained from the research participants or context may not be as rich or complete. The outsider status however, may possess the benefit of objectivity as a result of existing interpersonal distance (between participant and researcher, etc.,), more curiosity in the process of inquiry and not overlooking taken-for-granted practices within the community that may be useful data for the research.

As a researcher whose country of origin is Ghana, I do have a good level of knowledge and understanding of the Ghanaian context, culture, and social structure. I also relate more to the Ghanaian culture. In other words, I have connections to this culture and embody many key traditions of this culture. Therefore, I fit the insider status to some degree. However having resided in the United States of America for several years and having experienced some level of assimilation into the American culture, there was a high degree of outsider status and some members of the Ghanaian community saw me as being “Americanized.” Hence, I fit or exemplify the indigenous-outsider status as posited by Banks (1998) and I endeavored to reconcile any status gap that could be unproductive to the participant’s community and the research process. For example, I endeavored to respect and adhere to the expectations of the local culture, language, and practices.
Subjectivities Statement

In this section I discuss my subjectivities as these are factors that could influence the study in many ways. Also, disclosing and addressing my subjectivities is a means to ensure the trustworthiness (validity and reliability) of the results of this study. Qualitative researchers acknowledge the significance of reflecting on who they are and how this affects their research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Subjectivity is a critical consideration in qualitative research. Peshkin (1988) defines subjectivity as "the quality of an investigator that affects the results of observational investigation" (p.17). It is an individual’s position in life with respect to his/her ethnicity, religious associations and other factors that forms and shapes his/her subjective view.

Peshkin (1988) proposed that as researchers we needed to be aware and transparent about our subjective self. With that stated, I am an African American PhD student in Adult Education/Human Resource and Organization Development. Specifically, I am an African (Ghanaian) by birth and an American by naturalization. I am originally from Ghana in West Africa which is also the site of this research. I have great ties to this country, and the center of this research. This research means a lot to me as it is my fervent desire that training and development programs are not only effective but also culturally sensitive. It is my view that when training programs are culturally sensitive, it will in turn promote motivation to transfer. While growing up in Ghana, I observed where western cultures are transferred to the Ghanaian context by international organizations operating in Ghana, without due consideration and sensitivity to the unique indigenous culture. This behavior often causes cultural conflicts. I believe that Ghana should adopt effective western models but at the same time I feel the adoption or transfer of western models should not be at the peril of Ghana’s rich cultural heritage. Hence I prefer a culture fit (Beugre & Offodile, 2001) or integrative model.
According to Patton (2002) reporting the strengths and weaknesses of one’s own views requires both self-knowledge as well as self-disclosure. It is my view that to be able to put my subjectivities in check, it requires reflexivity. “Reflexivity in this sense means thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and often challenging your own assumptions, and recognizing the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research and what you see” (Mason, 2002, p. 5). Also, Peshkin (1988) and Chaudhry (1997) noted the importance of identifying our own subjectivities and ensuring that it does not negatively impact our research. I had some biases in this research which I have identified. I was careful to put this in check through critical reflection and reflexivity. This ensured that my subjectivities did not impact the quality and validity of this research.

**Limitations of the Study**

It is necessary to note the limitations of this study. Considering that this study was a qualitative study based on the interviews of 17 research participants representing 10 organizations, the results cannot be broadly generalized. In qualitative studies, the small sample that is generally used for the collection of data runs the risk of generating inaccurate data if not managed appropriately (Homick, 2007) or as Hamel, Dufour and Fortin (1993); Yin (1993, 1994) claimed, the reliance on small samples limits generalizability. Westbrook (1994) noted, the findings from qualitative research cannot be extended to broader populations with the same degree of assurance in comparison to quantitative analyses because the findings of the qualitative study are not tested to ascertain whether they are statistically significant or whether they are due to chance. However, Yin (1989) also argued that general applicability of the study will emanate from the effectiveness of the set of methodological approaches employed, as well as the thoroughness with which the study is undertaken.
Qualitative studies has the limitation of potentially misinterpreting the voices or statements of the participants. This is especially the case when the researcher has biases and subjectivities about the research topic or interest. Likewise, if he/she does not take a careful, critical, and objective view and interpretation or analysis of the collected data and thus preventing their personal biases and subjectivities from clouding their objectivity, ethical obligations, and professionalism, it may impact the authenticity and validity of the research. The volume and/or scope of the collected data could potentially make the transcription, analysis, and the interpretation process very time consuming and stressful. As Homick (2007) noted, qualitative research may have a disadvantage associated with the demanding amount of time required to gather and analyze data. Qualitative interview research makes it necessary to conduct data gathering/interviews in person/face to face, but the downside of this is that, the researcher's presence can likely affect participants' behaviors including responses to questions posed by the researcher, just as how the insider and outsider statuses can also impact respondents’ responses. Homick (2007) stated, in qualitative research the data gatherer is “part of the data--meaning that the experiences and knowledge of both the informant and the subject affect the outcome of the data--a factor that is both a strength and a possible weakness” (p. 26).

The study is centered on culture and culture is a dynamic concept that can also be elusive and is prone to misinterpretation. This can affect the interpretation, analysis, and conclusions drawn from the findings. Moreover, the case of confidentiality and anonymity can be problematic during the presentation of the findings. In this study, I struggled with how to present the participants voices uniquely without compromising their anonymity or confidentiality, or giving away any identifying information such as names of individuals mentioned in the data, locations of the interviews, etc., However, I believe when qualitative studies are conducted
effectively, free of researcher’s unconstrained biases, and thus ensuring validity and reliability, it could produce important theoretical and practical implications, and making valuable contributions to the field. The section below describes some of my critical experiences and observations in Ghana during the conduction of this study.

**The Story of Researcher’s Experience in Ghana**

The journey to Ghana to conduct this study was an adventurous one. After 9 years of not being to Ghana, my feelings before the travel were mixed with excitement and anxiety. I landed in Ghana after an 18 hour flight. The weather was humid and I found myself missing the comfort of Air conditioning. However, I was very delighted for a safe journey and to see members of my family and friends who welcomed me and offered their greetings as it is traditionally done. I was amazed with the changes I observed in some of the infrastructures I was accustomed to. The Airport had expanded. There were new roads including highways leading to and from the Airport as well as connecting to the outskirts of various parts of the city. There were new western style businesses all across the city. I was an awe to see all these infrastructural developments and in response I informed by the members of my family who picked me up that Ghana even has multiple western style malls located at the Airport area where I can get almost anything from the west that I want and is accustomed to. The driver made a quick stop at one of the malls to get me a box of drinking water since I had to drink bottled water until I can get used to the environment to be able to drink the local water.

I soon realized what the members of my family told me about how I can find some of the things I find in America. I was impressed by the modern types of cars that Ghanaians were driving amidst others who were driving very old cars. At the same time, many people lived in affluent communities, huge Hollywood style mansions, while others lived in an average to poor
housing conditions. Upon close observation and reflection, I was led to believe that there are many people living a western style life in Ghana while others are living a life of the underprivileged. The intriguing part was that people didn’t seem to really care about or focus their attentions on what somebody else was driving or living in, as they are quite content with what they had at that moment, and what mattered most was if it can meet their basic needs, and then they strive to get better lives one day at a time as the “turtle” (an ethnic adage or fable in Ghana).

**Household Consumer Items:** There are influxes of household consumer items from China and Dubai which are not of good quality. This drives down prices of genuine and good quality consumer products from the United States and Europe. Most of the traffic lights are powered by electricity so when the power is out, these traffic lights are not functional. Drivers have to use independent judgments and volitions to go through the traffic lights. This was a concern to me as the wrong move or miscalculation by any driver can cause a serious accident. I observed that at certain locations there were police officers manning traffic lights.

**Technical/Logistical and Infrastructural Challenges in Ghana.** While I was in the United States of America I heard that electricity was in short supply in Ghana. I was so delighted and fortunate that I arrived in Ghana to see we had electricity/light in the area I resided. For four straight days we had light and this was a great comfort to me. But then the delight didn’t last too long. The light was turned off after the fourth day. After that, the light was rationed on a schedule. We got electricity for 24 hours and then it was turned off for 48 hours. This problem of not having continuous electricity was not something I was accustomed to. I found it difficult to live in the darkness. Meanwhile the local citizens were used to it.

The lack of electricity affected me in many ways. I could not easily make simple things like photo copies or print documents I needed for my study. I had to search for areas/businesses
where there was electricity/power to complete these activities. In many cases the next town or business where there was power was a distance away and I needed transportation to get there. Furthermore, it limited my ability to communicate with my participants to set appointments and hold discussions whenever needed and on a timely manner. I had to keep my phone charged during the time we had electricity and pray the battery lasted till the light came back again. I got to know that I needed what is called a “power bank” which was commonly used in Ghana. This power bank stores energy and is used to charge phones when the light was off. I eventually had to repair a generator but yet the generator required buying “petrol” as it is called in Ghana, while it is called fuel or gas in the United States. Considering I was used to saying gas/gasoline in the United States I kept calling it gas and the first couple of times I did so I was misunderstood either at the petrol/gas filling station or by my family members, friends or helpers. I discovered the price of petrol/fuel was quite expensive as compared to the United States of America.

The issue of lack of electricity supply which is nicknamed in the local Ghanaian language (Akan/Twi) as “Dum sor” translated in English as switching the “light-off-and-on” also affected my ability to type up my research data as I received them. I had to be doing some of the work manually. I tried my best to charge my laptop battery but even when it was fully charged it could only last for about 2 hours maximum. As for the local small businesses who depend on electricity and that did not have generators, they were faced with the grim fact that their fresh edible goods will spoil. In the capital of Ghana, Accra, I noticed there were several generators in front of businesses. In the United States we have the comfort of using the GPS navigator to help us travel to locations or destinations, but in Ghana I realized I could not use a GPS navigator because the infrastructure is not there to support such a system. However, interestingly I could
count on the mental maps of the local people to give me directions or to drive me to my destinations.

In Ghana, people had to buy minutes and data plans or a combination/combo plan that had both calling and data plan. Buying call minutes meant buying a calling card at different prices with different plans. The basic calling top-up card is about 5 Ghana cedis (currency in Ghana) which is equivalent to almost two US dollars ($2.00). The truth is, that plan would not give you adequate minutes that will last long so I had to buy more and more. That is to say, I soon realized that when I purchased minutes which is locally referred to as “top up” meaning adding minutes to your phone, it runs out quickly. I had to be buying minutes regularly because that was my only source of communication with participants to set up appointments and to complete other arrangements. Wi-Fi which is so widespread in almost every corner of the United States of America is not easily available or accessible in Ghana. Even if you find one you must pay to use it or have limited access. You must buy a data plan to get Wi-Fi.

I observed with keen interest and concern that the lack of electricity affected both individuals (like myself) and businesses. This is because, take for example, when my phone is off I may miss important calls from participants or they could miss important calls from me. I had several instances where I was trying to call a participant to confirm an appointment, verify information or get additional information but the calls wouldn’t go through. I got the standard automated answering machine message that said “the mobile phone you are trying to reach is switched off.” I learned that this automated answering message meant either the phone was off due to the lack of power/electricity, lack of calling minutes or might have been switched off purposely to preserve batteries. So until the participant’s phone was back on I could not reach them. It was like everything had come to a standstill until I could get through to the participant I
was trying to reach. It was quite frustrating sometimes. I was also faced with the difficulty of transportation. My mobility was key to making appointments on time and sometimes I had several interviews in a day. I ended up having to purchase a vehicle under quite difficult circumstances.

**Preparation for the Interviews**

I carried two digital recorders for my interviews. One was the primary recorder and the other was a backup recorder. I had a very scary episode when in one case my battery ran out in the middle of an interview. In the other incident, the recorder run out of memory in a strange way because the storage capacity was enough to accommodate the recordings. I was fortunate to have the backup recorder which recorded the entire interview. I was so relieved to discover that the backup digital recorder functioned properly during the course of the interview so I did not lose the critical data and avoided the stress of having to apologize to the participants, and then telling them we need to start the interview over or reschedule the appointment because of a technical problem. It was difficult enough to schedule the interviews so the fact that I didn’t have to go through the hassle of rescheduling or doing the interview over was a blessing.

**Scheduling the Interviews**

I looked forward to meeting up with the participants I had been in contact with prior to my travel and informing them that I would be in Ghana to interview them. As soon as I arrived in Ghana, I started contacting the participants to let them know I was in the country and setting up appointments with those who were available to meet sooner. I immediately realized that making an appointment with a participant is not guaranteed that it would take place at the set time. I have had situations where I went to appointments for interviews but I had to wait for hours and in some cases the participants had to reschedule the appointment. Even though it was quite
disappointing, I had to take it with a grain of salt.

During my initial visit my excitement was almost blighted as some of the major participants I was looking forward to interview disappointed me by deciding not to participate at the last minute. Others did not pick up my calls. In one instance, I was forced to make a last pitch by going to visit their office, but I was not able to meet them. I was asked to leave a note with my contact information but the potential participant never called me or returned my calls. One of the participants refused to take part because of concerns about a follow up interview. Despite my assurances that a follow up interview was not required, they still decided not to participate. One of the good parts of this adventurous experience was that in some of those cases where I was able to interview participants, I discovered other participants through this interview. I realized the snowball sampling effect was at play! I was very happy for that. One of the challenges I faced was finding a conducive location to conduct the interviews. I wanted a location that was private and free of obstructions and distractions. The participants and I worked it out eventually collaboratively, and I give these participants my great appreciation for their flexibility and understanding. They were masters of the context so they helped come up with multiple locations and we settled on one that worked best.

**Manifestation of the Ghanaian Culture in a Western Organization**

About a month into my visit to Ghana, my brother and I went to a western airline office to check on the price of an air ticket. When we got there, we sat down to be served. After about 20 minutes of waiting we were not served, however I noticed something interesting and quite mind-boggling. One of the employees was having a personal conversation with an individual in the local Akan language during the entire time we were waiting to be served. I knew this because I understood that language and I heard what they were talking about. The second employee was
on her phone and appeared to be texting. After waiting for another 15 minutes or so, I decided to go talk to the employee who was texting. I asked her if someone could please help me but she told me to sit down and that one of them would help me. After waiting for another 10 minutes without being helped I left in disappointment. This incidence intrigued me because this was a German company and we would expect the employees to display professionalism in orientation of the western culture and related business philosophy and practice where the “customer came first.” This led me to realize that this was a prime example of the local culture manifesting itself in a western organization and potentially trumping over a western culture as this study discovered.

**The Story of Resilience in the Ghanaian People**

In Ghana, despite the challenges the people face on a daily basis, ranging from the lack of electricity, inadequate supply of basic necessities of life, inflation, unemployment, lack of major infrastructures; they remain resilient, adaptive, positive, humble, and hopeful, while they strive hard for better opportunities against all the vicissitudes. It was humbling and enriching to see that they always kept an assuring smile on their faces and are gracefully kind and welcoming.

**Reflections**

I reflected on how grateful and thankful I was to all the participants who made it possible and the key contacts who made this study fruitful. Initially, scheduling the interviews was not going the way I had expected prior to embarking on this adventurous journey. I had logistical challenges with transportation, electricity, location, communication networks, as well as scheduling the interviews. However, after 3 weeks of constant endeavors, things began to fall in place gradually. I often reflected on how blessed we are in the United States of America and how we take for granted the great opportunities we have, yet we complain. In America, we usually do
not have to wake up every morning or go to bed every night thinking about electricity, transportation, and so forth. We have resources at our disposal that include public transportation, private cars, functional traffic lights, and good sanitation and sewage systems, free Wi-Fi networks and advanced communications systems, and state-of-the-art business operation methods and infrastructures. It is quite the opposite in Ghana.

In Ghana, people have to devise different methods of keeping their food or groceries fresh so they don’t go bad. They keep fresh foods in the freezer based on the calculation the freezer would keep the food fresh until the light comes back on. Due to the lack of sustained electricity and inconsistent power sources, household electronic gadgets like televisions, fans, and phones go bad easily. The hard cashed Ghanaian has to worry about how to replace the damaged item on a regular basis. Interestingly, the local people are accustomed to it even though this is not their preferred condition, they do with what they have and expect that one day things will change for the better.

Conclusions

The problem of inadequate electricity has plagued Ghana for years and it is an ongoing politically charged issue. The government of Ghana continues to assure Ghanaian’s they are working on solving the problem and have signed contracts with foreign energy organizations. It was also reported that the government had purchased ships that would supply additional electric energy. It is my hope that this electricity problem will be solved as soon as possible as it is having detrimental effects on the livelihood of Ghanaians and businesses. It is also having a direct effect on productivity, employment, investments, and consequently affecting the infrastructures and the economy of Ghana.
Summary

In this chapter, I presented the overall design and methodologies of the study, the purpose of the study, followed by a description of the design of the study, which included the epistemological and theoretical frameworks, sample selection criteria, data collection and analysis, validity and reliability, as well as the researcher’s biases and or subjectivities. It continued with a discussion of the limitations of the study. The limitations identified included the lack of generalizability of the findings from the study. However, the potential benefits are expected to be at the individual and organizational levels, as well as theoretical and practical dimensions. Finally, the chapter concluded with the researcher’s experiences in Ghana while conducting this study, as well as reflections and conclusions from this experience.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the potential cultural and contextual factors that may impact the capability of Ghanaian trainees’ to transfer training obtained from Western countries to their organizations in Ghana. The following questions guided this study:

- What cultural and contextual factors in Ghana affect the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context?
- How can Ghanaian trainees transfer or integrate Western-based training to the Ghanaian context effectively?

I identified fourteen relevant themes for research question one as follows:

- Sometimes it is the culture that would prevent you
- As a society, the way we have been brought up, you know that your bosses are never wrong
- In Ghana we respect the elderly and we tend to take the decisions of the elderly
- We work like a family and form closer bonds
- To change the status quo doesn’t go down well with people
- It takes a long time to change the mindsets and attitudes of people
- You have issues with the simple things like electricity supply…water supply
- Africans we mystify what we don't know
• Me ba ha che syndrome: someone has stayed in there for 30 years, he doesn't want to move…
• There is no systematic way of doing things…We don’t do things timorously
• The economy is very volatile that peoples salaries erode very quickly so when they come to work even the ability to remain focused on the task ahead is very difficult
• So our organizational culture allows us to promote and use what we actually train in
• The fact that we have mixed races or mixed culture at the office somehow has diluted the effect of the Ghanaian nest or the fact that we locally would be resisting change
• Make everything very basic for everybody to understand

With regard to research question two, I identified the following themes:

• Western training should be tailored to meet challenges in Ghana/Africa
• Preparing the trainer for the context of those of us from Africa

I organized the themes into three primary categories. The three categories were: 1) Cultural factors and 2) Contextual factors relating to research question one (What cultural and contextual factors in Ghana affect the transfer…?), and 3) the training program/trainer in relation to research question two (How can Ghanaian trainees transfer or integrate Western-based training…?)

Specifically, the themes that correalted with the cultural factors such as attitudes, mindsets, beliefs, and practices were categorized under the “cultural factors” while themes associated with economic issues, infrastructure deficits, and organizational structures were categorized under contextual factors. These contextual factors occur both at the national level (e.g. the economic factors) and at the organizational level (e.g. HR/OD policies and practices and power structures). Hence, the contextual factors were subdivided into National Factors and Organizational Factors. The national factors are generally connected to the organizational factors. Therefore there is
some overlap. The cultural factors at the national level are manifested in organizations, therefore the two are interrelated significantly. One of the primary reasons is because the Ghanaian employees are the transmitters of their national/local culture. A third theme that is associated with trainee’s attributes that affect training transfer in the Ghanaian context such as motivation to transfer and adaptability of western training into the Ghanaian context was categorized as individual factors (Individual Level). The last but not the least, themes associated with the training program and the trainer were categorized under Western Training. The following section presents synopsis of participants storylines highlighting not only some of the challenges trainees faced while attempting to transfer training, but also illustrating factors affecting the transfer of training in organizations in the Ghanaian context.

Story Vignettes

Kwesi said he received training in the UK, Europe and returned to Ghana to transfer what he learned to the organization that he worked for. He described his training: in a software that the company was implementing for the treasury activities, so I was trained on that so I could implement the same in Ghana and other countries in West and Central Africa. And it is new so we, part of the implementation of that is to train the users, and all the users are the treasurers in all the countries. Kwesi said when he returned to his organization to transfer what he learned to employees, he faced some challenges that he described as, the only issue...I had when I was training...the end users was the issue of resistance to change....People were already used to...doing the treasury activity their own way, I experienced that kind of resistance, people were not willing to let go what they are comfortable with. And we had to take some steps in order to force people to because it is a group-wide initiative so they don’t have a choice. But I really had that problem. Kwesi recalled how he was in contact with other members of his group who
received the same training and were tasked to transfer the training in their respective organizations in other countries as telling him it was much easier for them to transfer what they learned. He narrated it this way, *the fact is, my colleagues who were also part of the training to also implement in other countries, I have been in touch with them, we didn’t have the same problem as I had in Ghana or this part of Africa, in particular people who were resistance to change their ways.* He continued to describe the difficulties he faced during his attempt to transfer training further this way, *but other countries tell me it was easy for people to embrace this new software, but in my case in Ghana it is not the same. I experienced a lot of resistance.* So to use this new tool to get our bank position on daily basis people just won’t do it! They would just not do it! And after we had implemented this, they still prefer to call the bank and talk to the relationship manager of the bank.

Kwesi went on to give additional vivid account on some of the factors that facilitated the hindrances to his transfer endeavors by contextualizing how the asymmetrical power relationships between employees and their managers (bosses) and related fear affected this process by saying that, *Other ways too, other end users would have to weigh the time when they would be available for this training,...assuming it conflicts with an assignment they have to deliver for one of this other people in higher position, they would choose between me and the boss, and obviously they would choose the boss, the is the bigger person, higher person. Because everyone is afraid to wrong the boss. That was also another challenge. So people would give you excuses [like] I have to deliver this report to my boss on this date and the bosses would also insist that the report has to be delivered to them, even though they know this training is very important and has to be done. So I experienced these problems as a result of the power structure we have in Ghana where the bosses are very important and very powerful and you cannot wrong*
them or offend them just any how because you fear the consequences.

Dzifa said she went to the United States to receive her training in corporate governance and compliance. When she returned to Ghana to transfer her training in her organization she faced some challenges. She described this experience this way…With the leadership, there is a knowledge gap obviously, because I have been trained, I report directly to the managing director and he hasn’t got the information I have, so already there is that knowledge gap between what I know and what he knows, so…to get his support on how we can implement the knowledge I gained in this institution. But of course there are other day to day issues that as a managing director he is dealing with so even though it is been a year since I had that training the opportunity to really have an in-depth discussion with him on the knowledge I have obtained has not really occurred. She continued to give an account of the challenges she experienced in transferring what she learned to her colleagues as follows: I think another thing is my colleagues, people at my level, when you want to transfer knowledge to people at your level it is also difficult because everybody has different KPIs, they have different tasks they have to perform, so people don’t necessarily give you the time of the day to listen to what you have learned and how you can achieve your goals, because really their aim is not to make you achieve your goals; their aim is supposed to achieve their goals which is the problem…The focus on teamwork is difficult.

Kweku said he received his training in Italy in program adaptation in Africa and he was supposed to transfer his newly acquired knowledge and skills to other employees in the organization but while trying to transfer the training he faced some roadblocks. He narrated that the culture, let me say in terms of like: based on my age and the people around, like when I came back I supposed to work with [named the organization]. Because, most of the data, they generate it. But when you go there, that institution has a lot of old people there. So like, going about it was
not easy. He stated further that, *the age difference, in terms of like you are a young guy, coming to show them to do this, they feel like they know more than you that kind of thing.* Kweku continued to say that there was an underlying resistance among the seniors in the organization who he was supposed to train because of his age. He described this experience in this way, *the age difference was the main thing. You a young person coming to show they, the old people who have been in the system for a long time...But this was a new thing that have been brought about to make their work easy for them...The old ones, they feel their systems were working...But just that, that age gap is what really affected us...*

Kojo told his story of receiving his training in the UK in *strategic management* so he can transfer his newly acquired knowledge to his organization. He described his attempt to transfer his training in his organization as *we don’t know it all and Ghana as a country didn’t originate the issues of management and for that matter strategic management and so that is why the opportunity was given for me to go and learn it elsewhere where we deemed that they were more specialized knowledge. Therefore on my return, as a learning country and institution, I was ready to teach my colleagues and my subordinates what I studied or my encounter with the various trainers in Britain.* Kojo passionately shared the story of his experience with transferring training to his organization and the steep resistance he faced due to the culture of his organization headed by a manager with an absolute power. He told his story this way, *the culture of my organization, I would say prevented me or was a major block to my transferring this knowledge I gained from the training, because at that time I had the managing director who imposed what he thinks is right and who feels that he has it all. And so irrespective of what experiences others had he will not give you the needed room to, he will not take on your suggestions so if there was anything, it was more with the organization than the national culture.*
He synthesized the cost of attending this training and yet he was forced to leave the organization before the organization could yield the benefits of their huge investments on his training in this way, the total cost of my training in Britain was close to, I think about four thousand pounds. And yet about three months after I returned, because of the absolute power of the managing director, when he takes decisions not many can influence it, and his true show of authority, I had to leave the organization before the organization could get any returns on this investment they made in me….Kojo summed it up this way, …the reasons for my departure were the doing of the managing director who had too much power.

The following sections present the findings of this study based on the two research questions explored in this qualitative study.

**Research Question 1**

*What cultural and contextual factors in Ghana affect the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context?*

With regard to research question one, the first factor identified to affect the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context centered on cultural factors in Ghana.

**Cultural Factors**

Participants identified how the cultural factors in Ghana affected their transfer of training endeavors.

**Sometimes it is the Culture that Would Prevent You**

Sixteen participants (94%) representing a majority of the respondents reported that one of the major factors impacting their transfer of training is cultural issues. Some of the statements participants made concerning these follow. Kwesi said…”the culture that stood in my way of implementing my solution is the culture of not been open to change.” Afriyee stated “the
Ghanaian culture context itself is not productive.” Likewise, Aku conveyed this view by saying that…”Sometimes it is the culture that would prevent you from trying to introduce or integrate that kind of skill; so if there would be any prevention, it may be the culture that would.”

Furthermore, Kweku stated…“here our culture, it is difficult to transfer knowledge to somebody older than you.”

As a Society, the Way We Have Been Brought Up, You Know That Your Bosses Are Never Wrong

The second factor identified was the issue of power and hierarchy. Twelve participants (71%) reported power and hierarchy as a factor. In the African context, hierarchy is viewed as unconditional obedience to instructions and directives and it is reflected in decision making in the context of an uneven power relationships between management and ordinary workers.

Power consciousness and asymmetrical relationships. The impact of the asymmetrical power relationships between employees and managers has significant implications not only on the transfer of training but also on performance and OD related endeavors. For example, managers who use and/or dwell on excessive power relationships (autocratic or monocratic leadership) create what Amega described as “drawing a wedge” between managers and employees, Dzifa described as the “power gap” between managers and employees, Adjoa noted as “being difficult to approach” your supervisor due to an imbalanced power relationship and hierarchical status difference, Asamoah described it as: “Over here they behave like demi-gods and I think it always brings a gap between students and the teachers and I think we need to break some of those barriers,” and Dede stated likewise: “we are too power conscious and it takes us nowhere!”

Additionally, these participants stated that these types of hierarchical power relationships stifle communication and flow of information between managers and employees, and also affect
the ability to transfer training to the job. The following are some of the statements participants made regarding this issue and thus provide further details of their experiences: Kwesi said, “So I experienced these problems as a result of the power structure we have in Ghana where the bosses are very important and very powerful and you cannot wrong them.” Afriyee said... “we are a hierarchical organization or hierarchical society.” Amega said... “So the cultural dimensions, the respect for hierarchy is an inhibiting factor in our culture in Ghana.” Esi stated that person was her senior in terms of hierarchy so it was like, “it puts you in a shell and you are not able to really do what you want to do, so these are the cultural problems that we face, especially for the gender issues where you know sometimes it is very difficult.”

Another participant Kojo corroborated this prevailing culture condition by stating that in his specific organization, the “issues of power clearly hindered the ability for the organization to actually get the returns on their investment in my training in the western world! Because, the owner of the business had so much power he took decisions, which caused me to leave the business...” He continued to express how this managerial leadership style affected him and his ultimate decision to leave the organization in this way: “So the issue of power and managerial power really hindered any benefits or the most benefits that the organization should have got from my training...” and the he added that, “when he takes decisions not many can influence it, and his true show of authority, I had to leave the organization before the organization could get any returns on this investment they made in me.” Afriyee also confirmed the existence of the issues of power by saying that, “So in terms of hierarchy and power, there is a power-play no doubt about that...”

A sub-theme identified to correlate with this category (power and hierarchy) was the nature of the power relationships and interactions participants had with their “bosses” and how
they exerted or exercised their power and positionalities. The following are how participants described these relationships. Yaw said, “If your boss is there, there is an assumption that your boss knows more than you.” Kwesi said, “because everyone is afraid to wrong the boss...That was also another challenge. So people would give you excuses, I have to deliver this report to my boss on this date and the bosses would also insist that the report has to be delivered to them.” He continued to say that this happened “even though they know this training is very important and has to be done.” Furthermore, Kojo said that, “So I experienced these problems as a result of the power structure we have in Ghana where the bosses are very important and very powerful and you cannot wrong them or offend them just any how because you fear the consequences.” Aku also said that, “As a society, the way we have been brought up, you know that your bosses are never wrong.”

Esi said, “If you go for a meeting your boss is there you are not able to, or supposed to talk.” Dede corroborated these stories by sharing her own encounters with the issues of managerial power and these affected the working relationships and her ability to deliver new things in her organization by stating that, “in the western [culture], it is a bit different, you can address your boss by his first name. Those things are different. In Africa you dare not! ...Here, it’s either your boss who suggested it or forget it.” She continued to say that, it is especially so, “if they are not in tune with you. So it’s different, it is totally different...I give something to my boss with my left hand and he will shout at me that that is disrespectful, yeah, it’s Ghanaian culture. It is disrespectful. How dare you!”

Esi similarly shared the difficult experience of dealing with bosses, having voices heard at meetings, and how the Ghanaian culture manifests this condition:
So we have those challenges, I mean as I indicated earlier sometimes when you go for a meeting depending on which of your bosses are there because you know, sometimes you know, it is a bit difficult to make suggestions, and then also the culture in Ghana, you know, we are not equal, women and men, so women in top management positions or like senior management where I find myself, usually if we do make suggestions sometimes it is not taken, you know, because they see, but the same suggestion if it is made by a gentleman…

Afriyee noted that. "If you don’t have that great relationship with your subordinates or your boss, you cannot have any break through."

In Ghana We Respect the Elderly and We Tend to Take the Decisions of the Elderly

The third factor discovered was the issue of respect for seniority, the elderly, and age. Seven participants (41%) identified these as a factor that affects the transfer of training to their organizations.

Use of first names and titles. The findings showed that in Ghana the use of first name is seen as disrespectful. Also the failure to address seniors with their titles like Mr. is also seen as disrespectful. For example Adjoa described how she was reprimanded by the supervisor for not addressing the superior in the culturally accepted manner. Adjoa stated that: “When I addressed…one of my superiors as hello, say xyz, I got an e-mail and he copied the HR and so on and said why did you write hello? I am not your co-equal, you have to write dear.” She continued to share her struggles and thoughts about how this had an impact on her by saying that: “So these kinds of things stifle communication because already you are thinking what are the ways not to offend xyz? But in a typical Ghanaian environment you can’t address your elders with their first names, you have to call them
Madam or Sir.” She further stated that, “so you know in such situations it’s difficult to approach someone because already you are seeing the person as a Sir, how do you talk to a Sir?”

Similarly, the findings indicated that the use of first names and titles like “Mr. and Ms.” do not allow trainees the comfort to speak freely and to propose ideas or apply newly acquired knowledge from training especially to those who are older than trainees or in a senior position. For example, Asamoah expressed this concern as follows: “In Ghana here, we are made to respect hierarchy or elders, and usually people are afraid to challenge their superiors. But sometimes you can voice out but then if the head does not decide to pick it, there is nothing you can do.” He went on to say, “until the time they see maybe what you’re saying, there is a need for it, and then they come out to support your plans or ideas.” Asamoah thought, “Sometimes….it’s may be the lack of knowledge on the part of some of the supervisors as to what exactly you can use that knowledge for.”

Esi also said, “We revere our elders, I should say, that is one thing, so in a lot of Ghanaian companies then you will hear Mr. this, Mr. that. In speaking my mind I make sure that I add the issue of respect and age” and she continued to say that, “so if I am talking to my boss… One of the things I would say is that, you know in the Ghanaian culture we are like you have to respect your elders.” She added that, “If you go for a meeting your boss is there you are not able to, or supposed to talk, I mean that kind of thing.”

Amega pointed out that, in Ghana there is respect for the elderly, “so mentioning of a first name is not even common…you have to go by the person’s full name adding Mister Title. It sounds disrespectful when you call your supervisor or an elderly person by their first name in the Ghanaian culture even at the workplace…” He continued to say that, “Because there is always
the restriction that you have to be formal and you have to look in quote “respectful towards your supervisor by mentioning title, adding mister to show respect...”

Akin to Amega’s assertion, Yaw also helped to contextualize the situation by saying that, “In Ghana we respect the elderly and we tend to take the decisions of the elderly people and that is reflected in the work that we do. If your boss is there, there is an assumption that your boss knows more than you.” He continued to highlight the dynamics of the Ghanaian culture by stating that: “When you are home you think your parents know more than you. That is reflected in the organization. If you are a young man, you have to study this culture to make your ideas acceptable.” Furthermore Yaw stated that, “Your ideas may be great and practicable but you have to learn the culture and respect it before you can have your ideas or knowledge accepted. Your ideas should not be antagonistic to undermine the ideas of the seniors.” He cautioned that, “If not, then your ideas will be thrown away or not accepted.”

The findings showed that in Ghana, respect for age was a prominent culture issue that impact the transfer of training. The challenge that trainees face in transferring training is even greater when there is an age disparity between the trainee and the recipient of the training transfer in the organization. In other words, if the trainee is younger than the fellow employee/peer (the recipient of the transfer) or if he/she is in a senior position, the challenge of transferring that training to them is harder. Kweku described this difficulty as follows:

The culture, let me say in terms of like, based on my age and the people around, like when I came back I was supposed to work with..... Because, most of the data, they generate it. But when you go there, that institution has a lot of old people there.
So like, going about it was not easy… The age difference, in terms of like you are a young guy, coming to show them to do this, they feel like they know more than you, that kind of thing… The age difference was the main thing. You a young person coming to show them, the old people who have been in system for a long time. But this was a new thing that have been brought about to make their work easy for them.

But just that, that age gap is what really affected us… that hindered the transfer.

Yaw confirmed this information by stating that: In the Ghanaian culture if somebody is young people don’t take them seriously, or take their advice very seriously, unless his ideas or knowledge is proven well. He continued to express how he navigated through this culture issue by saying that: “I faced that difficulty initially, but I was able to overcome that by using strategies of respect and understanding of the local culture.”

**Me Ba Ha Che Syndrome: someone has stayed in there for 30 years, he doesn’t want to move.**

In Ghana, there is a common cultural terminology in organizations that is used to identify seniority and solidify positionality and power, which is called “Me Ba Ha Che.” The current western trained employees tend to be younger and more educated hence there may be an underlying generational divide and cultural clashes between these group of employees and the employees who have been working in the organization for many years (i.e. the “Me Ba Ha Che” group), but may have either less education or were locally educated. In the same vein, the western trained employees may be viewed by those with seniority as threats to the security of their positions, hence the solidification of the “Me ba ha che” tradition. Participants stated that this cultural norm hinders the transfer of training as indicated by the following participants. Dzifa established that this culture
phenomenon exist in organizations but she was fortunate not to encounter this by stating
that, “So fortunately we don’t have the whole “I have been here for 50 years, for 25
years syndrome which they say “Me ba ha che” (I have been here very long!). Aku also
corroborated the prevalence of this culture practice by saying that there is that “kind of
hierarchy where I have to sit for 30 years and manipulate the system and nobody will
come...” She went further to highlight this issue by saying that, “There are certain
sectors in Ghana where due to bureaucracy, someone has stayed in there for 30 years, he
doesn't want to move and you would not be allowed to impart any knowledge you have
learned. Once they allow you the person feels threatened.”

Esi also described similar experience with this issue as follows: “It is like they don’t want
anybody to come and take their little niche, you know, come and take over, so I had a lot of
challenges I must say. Even taking over from, creating this department created some challenges
for me...” She went on to say that, “initially they thought the department was going to take over
their roles and activities so for some time it affected what I had to do because it is like whoever
was in charge of the....was my senior in terms of hierarchy so...” She summed it up vehemently
as: “it puts you in a shell and you are not able to really do what you want to do.”
Likewise, usually those who occupy senior positions in organizations due to long years of
employment are not willing to give in to the transfer of training or new ways of doing things that
the trainee might have acquired from their training abroad. Also, these seniors might feel that the
trainees (who are mostly younger) are too young to be transferring new knowledge or skills to
them. For example, Adjoa narrated her experiences in this way:

Secondly, the whole I’m older than you, so you are a new person you’ve come
from England are you’ve come from the western world with your degree, your
fancy degree, and you have no experience, and I’ve been working here for 30 years so you cannot be my boss or you’re my boss but I won’t respect you.

Adjoa continued to express disagreement with this culture practice by saying that, “It doesn’t work like that, you don’t need to be a 100 years old before you can lead someone. So some of these things need to change.” Adu also expressed his concerns about the hesitations on the part of seniors in the organization to open up to new knowledge, or help the junior employees in this way: “But … We haven’t, people are not accommodating in terms of bringing new ideas. Maybe the person is senior to you, so why is the junior person bringing an idea to me and why should I help? He continued to elucidate the great effect of this by saying that, “I mean, so it is difficult bringing things, new things up because you might not have the necessary push…”

**Africans, We Mystify What We Don’t Know**

The findings also revealed that a transfer inhibitor associated with the culture is how the trainee is viewed and how he/she is labeled, as well as, how the knowledge being transferred is viewed. Not only does the trainee have to navigate and overcome structural and managerial issues such as having the appropriate systems in place to support and facilitate training transfer, managerial support, and opportunity to apply training, but also the trainee has to face disdain rooted in cultural practices and perceptions where there is a tendency to mystify what is unknown of unfamiliar.

Aku described this cultural phenomenon as follows: “But in Africa, the culture is, we are a little bit complacent, we don’t like to, we wouldn’t risk anything.” She continued to suggest that, “If we want to find something in the hole, a white person will jump in there and dies, the second person will, and then the third one will jump in there and find something… An African
A man will not jump in there and die. Aku stated further that, “I think they have a view to always want to know something beyond what they already know, that is the culture they have. What we have is, this is what we know you will do with it. Africans we mystify what we don’t know. She also said that, “even when reading about it we will be mystified, we would say this is not possible.”

As noted above, a cultural practice that is related to the mystification of what is unknown is not only the way that foreign (western) training is viewed but also how the trainee is viewed and labeled. This perception and the connotation associated with the labeling is often negative. Specifically, trainees with training from the west who attempts to transfer training or effect changes in the organization are viewed as “Too Know.” For example, Aku was unequivocal in explaining this as follows:

But if it comes to person relationships between you, your boss or your colleagues, most of the time when you have people training from outside coming back to Ghana, they are called Too Know (you think you know too much). But what they [trainees] are saying is right and because it is not done here or that is not the way or not practiced here, you tend to say it once or twice and then you stop because you don’t want to continue because you don’t want to hear that you think you know too much.

Similarly Afriyee echoed this experience by sharing his story as narrated below:

So the impact, people will call you- you are Too Know…, Too know here means you know it all and trying to brag your thoughts around, which is not necessarily the case but they are just trying to help improve the system. And as human as you are, if you feel, if everybody is dissociating themselves from you then you will
feel lonely. It is only very strong people who have the will to go around, to go to the land, it is not everybody who have that will to stand by their convictions to the end. It is very difficult, so a lot of people cannot take resentment, disappointment, or scorn, or etcetera, so they fold back or they, they just crawl back and say I am not God or I am not Jesus.

**We Work Like a Family and Form Closer Bonds**

The fourth factor discovered was the extended family system. Three participants (18%) reported that the extended family system as extended into the organization impacts transfer of training. This is because a trainee who learned leadership skills that includes assertiveness may experience difficulty practicing assertiveness as part of change in the area where it is most needed. The Ghanaian culture is embedded in the extended family system and this is carried into organizations and manifested in the working relationships. People form bonds at work as part of the extended family system.

*Formation of closer bonds due to the extended family system.* The findings also showed that due to the personal bonds formed in the workplace it may sometimes make it more difficult to take corrective actions against fellow employees based on what was learned from training. To demonstrate this experience, Dzifa said, “*In the African context, because of the extended family system people come to work and suddenly do bond with people, they become like family, so sometimes even when people have to change the way they think and the way they do things*…” She went on to say that, “even to criticize the person is sometimes difficult, because the level of professionalism has changed, set back a bit” and added that because “*now it is more you are like a family so correcting your brother and sister is a bit different from speaking to a total stranger and say you got it wrong, make sure this is done right*…”
Similarly, Afriyee corroborated Dzifa’s statement when he said, “The Ghanaian culture…first and foremost it is all about friends and family. So people are not held to account…So in that context, the Ghanaian culture itself allows for people not to be productive…Nobody wants to talk.” Also the organization is viewed as part of the extended family and this in itself affects the transfer of training due to that family bond, therefore bringing any foreign ideas would be seen as disrupting the smooth family tradition in the organization. Asamoah corroborated this by saying that: In Ghana, “how the family is setup, sometimes can be translated to the way the organization is setup. So, those family systems are also in the organizational systems.”

Dede also described how the working relationship is in the organization in this way: “We bond differently. We are more of family here...” Esi also noted this familial relationship in her organization by commenting that, “You know as for Ghanaians we are so friendly that irrespective of our personal challenges and things we work as a family.”

Akin to the experiences of Dzifa and other participants, Afriyee also said that the Ghanaian culture creates the conditions where to criticize people becomes difficult because of the nature of the social and familial relationships societally that are also characterized in organizations by saying that, “Because you accept whatever excuses people tell you because of our social system we are caring people so nobody wants to rock the boat.”

Dzifa shared her story in which she viewed the extended-family system as being both positive and negative by stating that:

But…the extended family…has some good parts of it,…today I am sitting here because I have a mother-in-law…help me take care of my kids…an aunt who…help
take care of my kids so I am not...distracted with family issues because I have a lot of support. But also...because of demand from the extended family system people get very distracted very quickly than anything...You can be on your way to work and you receive a phone call that your auntie has been hospitalized; you are the one who have to help out pay the hospital bill or somebody’s funeral thing you need to contribute. So those little things eventually affect the final output of the employee.

Kwame also shared his positive experience with and view of the extended family both at the individual and organizational levels as follows:

Sometimes you would see the extended family coming in and therefore you will see the closer bond. For us, for me as an organization what it does for me is it helps a lot. I give a loan to someone and he is having challenges, sometimes you have the family members coming in to support in order for you to get your repayment. Because they wouldn’t sit down for their family member who has been in an unfortunate situation of taking somebodies asset and not returning it. And that is where I think it also helps us. The extended family thing is good.

Sometimes when you are down they are the people who can lift you up.

To Change the Status Quo Doesn’t Go Down Well with People

The fifth factor identified to affect the transfer of training was resistance to change. Eight participants (47%) reported that the culture of resistance to change affects the transfer of training to the job. Dzifa described this issue as follows: “Anything that is very different from what they are used to...anything that wants to change the status quo doesn’t seem to go down well with people.” She continued to make an important point that: “They would rather prefer that you keep things the way they are and not touch them
at all. So there is also that resistance to change generally.” Adu also noted that, “When we are trying to change the system a bit, the people are resisting, they don’t want change.” He expressed how this practice makes it hard to effect change in the organization this way: “It is difficult, it is really difficult if you want to change the system and people are used to certain system for a long time...We don’t want to change, we are too static...”

Kwesi also highlighted this issue by stating that: “The only issue is, it is a new thing that has come in so everyone is not willing to leave what they are already comfortable with. I experienced that kind of resistance...the culture of not been open to change...” He continued to say that, “the only issue we/I had when I was training the users/the end users was the issue of resistance to change...the inability to embrace change.” Dede said, “You know change, we are not good with change. Nobody wants change. So, when you are very comfortable in doing something one way and you’ve been asked to realign yourself to do it a bit differently...” She continued to say that, “you think about, will I be able to do it? Is it right? Is it not right? So, it’s a bit difficult.”

Adu said...”We don’t want to change, we are too static in terms of our innovation.” Asamoah echoed this sentiment by stating that, “and if people think those changes are going to affect their way of doing things negatively they want to reject it.” Afriyee said, “Unlike the local Ghanaian company which would like to stick to status quo whether they are dying they stick to the status quo.”

However the transfer of training which essentially involves changes in the way employees perform their duties, can be much more acceptable if they see its great benefits
in terms of how it will actually improve how they perform their jobs (if it makes it much easier). This was highlighted by Afriyee when he shared his story as follows:

So you need to sell the intangibles, benefits that will come from doing things differently. So that is the only way you come out of the cultural barrier. If there is nothing beneficial or tangible that you can lay hands to, the cultural barrier will kill you. The way the foreign context can move the Ghanaian is, if you are able to show that what we are bringing on the table improves livelihood and productivity of the people around, if they can see an improvement in their social life, their quality of life, or they have more income, more disposable income, then that is the proposition that they will buy. But if it does not come with any tangible benefits then it will die on arrival!

**It Takes a Long Time to Change the Mindsets and Attitudes of People**

The sixth factor found to affect the transfer of training was attitudes and mindsets. 5 participants (30%) reported that attitudes and mindsets are factors that potentially impact the transfer of training. Considering that attitudes and mindsets are interlinked to culture, they consequently impact resistance to change.

*Local attitudes and mindsets.* Local attitudes and mindsets affect the transfer of training in the sense that as a result of the predominance of certain indigenous practices that are not supportive of change in relation to conventional modern management and OD practices. These include the resistance to change attitudes and the view of trainees who are trying to bring change as “Too Know,” as well as the negative reception given to trainees who may be young in age. As Kwesi explained into details below, the culture of resistance to change is not best practice and that
Ghanaian workers, professionals, and leaders must open up to change or embrace change to facilitate the transfer of training from western countries to organizations in Ghana:

I am not very sure that this cultural resistance to change is best practice anywhere. So I think to certainly transfer western training into any organization in Ghana effectively it means we have to, as Ghanaian workers and professionals we need to look at the best practices across the world and know that companies are supposed to evolve, they are supposed to grow, they are supposed to be acceptable to change, open up to new things every single day. . . . And we must sometimes even change the whole process, so I the Ghanaian as a worker or the Ghanaian as a professional has to change his mindset that is the first step . . . So these Ghanaian managers who have this experience and are aware should be able to push it down that even you don’t really have to rise through the ranks to get to the top to realize that, but even at the bottom you need to open up to new things.

Several participants’ gave statements that described these cultural issues further. Kwesi stated that…“we want to still maintain that attitude or that culture and then tailor the western training to suit it.” Esi said…“In Ghana basically, especially with the public sector we have a problem with our attitudes toward work. Ghanaian attitudes to work is very different from the western country.” Furthermore, Adu shared his experiences and insights into the problem below:

I will say may be the mind-set, we need to change our mind-set and the way we do certain things. Individually, that is where we should start from. Most of us received our training from the western world but then we don’t seem to put it into the proper context. So I will suggest may be individually, we need to try and change our perceptions about things and the way we relate and disseminate information… and
that, we learn it but sometimes it is difficult implementing them…It is a bit difficult to change things overnight with what you have learned and trying to transfer knowledge, it takes time because of the structures that we have in place and culture as I said plays a bigger role and it takes a long time to change the mind-set of people.

**There is No Systematic Way of Doing Things…We Don’t Do Things Timorously**

The seventh factor identified was time management. Five participants (30%) identified time management as a factor impacting the transfer of training. The lack of managing time effectively in completing a task is an ongoing issue. The following are some examples of what participants said that confirmed this issue. Esi said, “We don’t do our things in a timely and effective manner.” Similarly, Adu said, “A complex problem where individually our own attitude towards work and we not respecting time… Some Ghanaian attitude of time and not being diligent in their work… in the context of our culture where we don’t value time that much.” He suggested that, “probably we should take a second look at it.” Kofi also identified this problem in this way…“The culture in Ghana where people don’t really respect time.”

In the preceding section, I presented the cultural factors this study found to affect the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context. The following section presents the contextual factors discovered to affect the transfer of training in Ghana from this study.

**Contextual Factors**

Twelve participants (71%) indicated that contextual factors affect the transfer of training. The following section presents statements from participants that support these. These factors are examined on three levels: National, Organizational and Individual.
National Level

Participants shared stories about how conditions at the national level affected their transfer of training endeavors.

You have Issues with the Simple Things like Electricity Supply…Water Supply

Lack of infrastructures. Another transfer inhabitant identified in the findings of this study is the issue of the lack of infrastructure that supports the transfer of training. Aku shared her experience with this problem as well as her insights on how it affected the transfer of training as follows:

A typical example,…let's talk about medical, you have been trained outside on so many ways to diagnosis…, but if you come back to Africa, the main component that is the machine that you need to use even to teach the skills or impart it in your organization is not there…

Frimpong also described this condition this way: “You go to other areas and things are not the same, you have issues with the simple things like electricity supply continuously, water supply continuously, information flow from certain areas do not come easily.” He went on to say that, “You want to take quick decisions, you want to achieve certain things within some time frames and you have to wait and wait for people to get back to you before you are able to act, but this is completely outside the organization, it is not within.” In a similar vein, Dzifa described the challenge of transferring training to Ghana due to the lack of adequate and foundational understanding or knowledge of relevant western concepts as the basis for transferring training. What was lacking is parallel to what Minbaeva, Pedersen, Björkman, Fey, and Park (2003) described as the absorption capacity (employees' ability and motivation). To this end, Dzifa stated that: “The differences, the level of education, the level of skills, the level of knowledge, and also the uncertainty in the general environment,
all those things ultimately affect the ability to.” She continued to explain that, “If the skill and knowledge base was equal to what it is in the west then people already even know the basics of what you are going to transfer to them. So it is very easy…But people here don’t have that knowledge base…” She summed it up this way: “So it is very difficult…”

**The Economy is very volatile that people’s salaries erode very quickly so when they come to Work even the Ability to Remain Focused on the Task ahead is very difficult**

Regarding the ways in which this contextual issue affect the transfer of training, the following are comments made by participants that shed further light on this issue. Dzifa elaborated this contextual issue as follows:

The institutions themselves are very backward, and then they have not modified their methods from training, they haven’t incorporated new things, so the people themselves coming into the organization have that deficit, and that deficit is reflected eventually in their output and their fear of change. Also the economy is very unstable in Ghana…the economy is very volatile that peoples salaries erode very quickly so when they come to work, even the ability to remain focused on the task ahead is very difficult. People are virtually saying if I go back to the market next week are the prices going to be the same, is my kid’s school fee going to be the same?

In addition Dzifa noted that: “The consumer protection is very poor in this part of the world so people increase prices arbitrarily. There is no systematic way of doing things.”

She concluded that, “So people carry on all those concerns into the work and then it really breaks their focus on how much work you can get from them whilst they are like that.”
A related component of the contextual issues is organizational factors or factors in the transfer context itself. The next section describes the factors affecting the transfer of training at the organizational level in Ghana.

**Organizational Level**

Organizational structure was identified as a sub-category of the contextual factors. Internal policies and practices of organizations such as HR practices can affect the transfer of training. Dzifa passionately expressed how the HR policies and practices of the organization affected her ability to transfer training to the organization, and further noted that too much emphasis on KPIs inhibited her training transfer endeavors because peers (*contemporaries*) were focused more on achieving KPI’s to earn promotions rather than obtaining the training (KSAs) she was trying to impart to them. In the same vein, she blamed the lack of colleagues’ cooperation in receiving training transfer on the individual performance appraisal policies of the organization. However, she noted also that when it came to her subordinates (employees who she supervised as their “Boss”), it was easier to transfer training to them due to the organization’s culture of “respect for your boss” and thus respect of hierarchy. Dzifa described her experience into details as follows:

I think another thing is my colleagues, people at my level, when you want to transfer knowledge to people at your level it is also difficult because everybody has different KPIs, they have different tasks they have to perform, so people don’t necessarily give you the time of the day to listen to what you have learned and how you can achieve your goals, because really their aim is not to make you achieve your goals; their aim is supposed to achieve their goals which is the problem with the whole performance appraisal system, it is quite individualistic.
The focus on teamwork is difficult….But on my contemporaries, my colleagues, and then up above, there have been more of the time of the day, it is not really a priority for them to sit down and say this is what you have learned…

Participants narrated how organizational culture affected the transfer of training in multiple ways.

**Our Organizational Culture allows us to promote and Use what we actually Train in**

*Because we’ve a good training budget helps us to actually implement our training.* The culture and structure of the organization which include management style, HR strategies, and HRD practices have impact on the transfer of training, based on this research data. The findings show that in cases where the culture and structure of the organization is productive and supportive, transfer of training was reported to be successful by participants. For example, Amega described his experience as follows:

> In the context of my organization it rather helps us. It’s easier for us because of the human resource practices that we’ve in place and when you go for training and you put in this request it should be based, targeted…so when you are evaluated on those action plan you have put in, to see whether you have actually been achieving something new out of the training. So our organizational culture allows us to promote and use what we actually train in. The culture of my organization, I would say is very productive. Because we got a good training budget it helps us to actually implement our training, and most of the things we do are implementation of action plans resulting from trainings.

Afi provided additional insight into this issue by stating: “*I would say that to a large extent the organizational culture has been helpful in the sense that the work that we do...* ”
On the other hand, some of the participants indicated that unproductive organizational culture, structure, and practices, do not facilitate transfer of training and that there is a need to transform in order to achieve transfer of training. For example, Adu also said, “We need to look at our systems that we have, the structures need to change for us to have this open kind of way of impacting knowledge.” He went on to say that, “So for me, we need to have a total transformation from an individual point of view and also the whole of the organizational structure in terms of transferring knowledge.”

Participants highlighted existing issues in their organizations that must be resolved to facilitate a conducive working environment and the transfer of training and Dzifa helped to explain an example of this situation into detail below:

And I think why in Ghana things are left undone is the lack of a tracking system. Nobody seems to have any template on most things…And also we don’t have a good reprimand system. I think the tracking should say that if people are bleaching deadlines, they are not cooperating on issues, there should be one set of good tracking system to be clear when people miss deadlines. There should be a reprimand system as well. Because in the west there is a tracking system; there is a clear transparency, and objectivity in tracking people to do their job. The timeline is easier, but in a case where things are not clear, there is a lot of subjectivity that is where the cronyism, the favoritism, all those things come into play, and then it makes driving change become a very complicated process instead of just clear strategy: this is where you want to go; this is how we are going to go; this is how it will take us there!

Participants described how the organizational structures and sometimes practices affected
the transfer of training. Afriyee described this as follows:

Unlike the local Ghanaian company which would like to stick to the status quo whether they are dying, they stick to the status quo….If you have a traditional Ghanaian company, maybe the entrepreneur or the owner of the company all his life has worked in Ghana, has not worked in a western world before, and he is used to a certain way of doing things. And in terms of Ghanaian structure the board or the corporate governance is not all that effective for a wholly owned Ghanaian company; the corporate governance is not that strong. So he is the one that takes all the decisions. So if you propose a change, he can rubber stamp it that it will not go. So whatever you learned has gone to waste because of one person. Unlike the other multinationals where there are diverse people who will say ‘ok, let’s give this thing a try’ because of past experience. So that is a distinction between a Ghanaian owned company and a multinational. That does not mean that some Ghanaian companies are not embracing change. Some are, but [the] majority are still in the medieval ages if you ask me.

Adjoa provided an additional experienced by stating that, “I left a traditional African or Pan-Africa company because I used to work with a Pan-African company, mostly a Ghanaian company before I left, and with those ones you do whatever your superior tells you to do even if you find that it wouldn’t go well.” She went on to say that, “so I think I prefer..., my current organization and how we do things.”

Adu described how the internal organizational structures and protocols are bureaucratic and difficult to navigate, and an employee would have no other choice but to follow these structures even to transfer training:
…but if we don’t have these institutional structures where we respect the time and bureaucracies in the system, then we need to work on those things where people are not motivated enough to do their work… I will still refer you to the structures of the public service. It is more of seniority than competence. So it is difficult to just come from somewhere and say because of your competence, your competency you want to be the director here. It is difficult. It doesn’t work that way. You need to go through the system to get to where you are. So we have the reporting structures. So it’s difficult for, the only thing you can do is to just, if you’ve been given a task to perform, you just do it... So, but they don’t respect the kind of structure maybe the private sector would have, where they declare every vacant position for people to vie before, where you can show your competence to earn that position. Our structures are not like that….So, you can only transfer your knowledge through a particular structure but not through any meritorious system… we need to look at our systems that we have, the structures need to change for us to have this open kind of way of impacting knowledge. So for me, we need to have a total transformation from an individual point of view and also the whole of the organizational structure in terms of transferring knowledge.

Asamoah said that, “It is just that sometimes, the processes you know, public institutions there is a little bureaucracy and red-tapeism...how the family is setup, sometimes can be translated to the way the organization is setup...When the head says this, you cannot challenge...”

Dzifa shared light on this situation by saying that:
But on the negative side, as I said, the organizational culture of, in that individualistic appraisals, we do individual appraisals so then everybody is looking at their appraisals and what “marks” they can get because their appraisals are used for performance related bonus, for promotion, and then the teamwork part of it is not given as much focus as the individual’s roles in achieving the task. So in that sense that sort of gap is there, not a gap, a wall was created so everybody was in a bit of a silo doing their own, so that organizational culture on appraisal and performance was a bit limiting.

Aku also indicated that the contextual differences between Ghana and western countries make it impossible to transfer certain trainings. She made this observation this way: “I would say that the environments are different. There are some skills or information or knowledge that you can impact, there are some you can’t because we live in different environments.”

Participants indicated that how change is managed in an organization impacts the transfer of training.

The change management process need to be well thought of. Afriyee explained how the transfer of training can be much more effective if the management of the change in relation to the transfer of training is efficient:

The change management process need to be well thought of, not in somebody’s mind, it must be well thought of and well written down. What you are coming to do, you need to analyze the pros and cons of whatever you are coming to implement, the change, the impact, then you have your mitigation plans thought of already. Occasionally you might have one or two deviations. But if the change
process there are so many issues that you have not thought of then the change will fail. But if you have a lot, about 90% of the thought process right, then the 10% you can manage it. Then people now understand because whatever issues they bring up there is a solution you have for them already. But in the change process if people raise issues and there is no solution that leads precedent that they should resist the change. But if every issue they raise up there is a probable solution at hand for them then they have no option but to say let’s give it a try. Once they say let’s give it a try then you are on a path of success. If you don’t manage the change well, whatever good ideas, or whatever new things you learn you cannot implement it.

The findings from this study indicate that if the trainee’s organization is a multinational or international organization, there is a lessening of the dominant effect of the local culture. This is because expatriates embody their own cultures (mainly western) and therefore it serves as checks and balances. This is especially the case if expatriates occupy managerial positions. At the same time, the managerial structure and policies have impact on the degree to which the local culture is watered down or has effect in the organization.

**The Fact that we have Mixed Races or Mixed Culture at the Office Somehow has diluted the Effect of the Ghanaian Nest or the Fact that we locally would be Resisting Change**

The findings from this study showed that the transfer of training is affected by the type of organization: whether multinational or locally owned company as described by participants as follows. Afriyee stated that:

- I work with a multinational organization and so there is a mix of both local and expatriates, it makes it easier to transfer those knowledge. The organization itself is change oriented so that allows you to overcome, come about with the hierarchical
stuff that the Ghanaian culture brings. We have a lot of expatriates in there, people with different culture, people with different thinking. We don’t only have Ghanaians in the organization. For me that is the beauty, that is the game changer.

With respect to organizational structure and policies, Afriyee stated, “So we are very flat structure, so the issue of hierarchy does not come into play. And we all, there is deliberate effort to challenge upwards, challenge upwards so that hierarchy does not come...” He continue to say that, “So hierarchy, the organization have created that room to take away the hierarchy irrespective of who you are anybody should be able to approach you for you to have a conversation, if that is not the case then it is a performance issue.”

Kweku explained into details how the managerial structure of his organization minimized the effect of the Ghanaian culture and inclination to resist change as follows:

Where this cultural situation we have in Ghana is dealt with is because somehow it is an International company…so we have people across cultures in the same office, so, and then you will see that a lot of Europeans are part of our daily work. And even a lot of people in management positions are Europeans so somehow we don’t experience,…one of the reasons why we were able to overcome the resistance, because of the mix in culture, people who are from countries where change is easily embraced they are usually part of our daily work so you would notice people have to, we have to comply especially because most of those guys are from Europe are in management positions, you have to behave like them. So as much as naturally our people would like to resist some changes, because of this mix in culture they are not able to do that for so long....the fact that we have mixed races or mixed culture at the office somehow has diluted the effect of the
Ghanaian nest or the fact that we locally would be resisting change, it diluted that problem.

Kweku further stated that:

Because of the structures that we have…where once it is a top-down decision from the group head office down to our local offices you can only shout but you can’t do much, you can say we won’t do it but eventually you don’t have a choice. So that also helps me in implementing or somehow forcing the people whether they resist or not, try to use it. Because what we had to do eventually was to report the extent of usage of this new tool on daily basis, and this report is circulated in the whole group, so if you are not using this new tool you will see your diagram or your batch at red on daily basis.

Frimpong noted that, "I work in a very international company, a very multinational company...and the culture here is very multicultural and so you would expect that you have diversity and inclusion, people understand different cultures and they are able to work together and harmonize team efforts and stuffs like that...”

Adjoa described how the multinational structure of her organization creates a more flexible working environment that fosters the sharing of ideas, communication, and facilitates collaborative working relationship as follows:

My current organization…, it is based, it came from England, so their mother group is in England, they have a branch in in America and some other African countries, so it’s kind of almost like working in England, luckily there are no bureaucracies, everyone is a decision-maker so my supervisors at work give me the chance to bring out my own ideas and so on… it actually encourages you to bring out your ideas,
do your own work, take it to your supervisor to say ok it’s good enough or you can
add this and that. I think it hasn’t stifled my growth in anyway. However, this
wasn’t how it was before I left in a traditional African or Pan-Africa company.
The next section presents the factors that the findings of this study identified to affect the
transfer of training at the individual level.

**Individual level**

Participants told stories identifying how factors at the individual level affected the
transfer of training.

**Make Everything very Basic for Everybody to Understand**

The trainee’s innovative adaptation of their newly acquired knowledge, skills, and
abilities to make it suitable to the Ghanaian context and thus acceptable to their peers
and/or managers is also important to the success of the transfer of training. For example,
Asamoah shared how he adapted training to the basic level to foster understanding and
positive receptivity from fellow employees in this way:

> They tried bringing it sometime back, but maybe the way they went about it,
people kind of like rejected it. But am trying to make everything very basic for
everybody to understand. So I guess probably that is why I got everybody more or
less accepting it….this days, they have seen that, oh no, what I am bringing out is
rather going to enhance the work they’re doing, so I will say, they are rather
embracing it.

Afi also described the importance of understanding the transfer context and the recipients of the
training transfer in the local context, and adapting training to fit the local context to facilitate
transfer as follows:
Going to learn there, you learn from different facilitators from different backgrounds and may be the way they see things is not always the way it would apply back home. So knowing where I am coming from and the kind of people I work with, naturally I would have to apply it back, sometimes you know to be able to articulate my point and make them appreciated. So you would not come back and say that oh I am the latest “burger” in town, I have gone to learn this and that then you come and download on the people, No! You have to get their buy in, they have to understand whatever you have gone to learn. They have to know what is in it for them, you know, so that together as a team you can move forward. So in actual fact I take the culture context into whatever, I put it into perspective in trying to transfer the training I had there. Because before I went for the training we had ways of doing things…

The following section examines the findings of this study in relation to the second research question that was explored in this study.

**Research Question 2**

How can Ghanaian trainees transfer or integrate Western-based training to the Ghanaian context effectively?

With respect to research question two, participants reported that the design of the training programs and the trainer’s competencies impacted the training of transfer and proposed that trainings should be designed to accommodate the challenges they face in their organizations. This is examined next.
Western Training Should Be Tailored To Meet Challenges in Ghana/Africa

*Design of training programs.* The findings revealed that the design of training programs is also a factor impacting the transfer of training. Considering the significant difference between western countries and Ghana in terms of culture, context, values, norms, and practices, participants reported that it is therefore necessary to consider these factors in the design and delivery of training. Aku cautioned us to keep in mind that not everything from foreign contexts can be transferred to the Ghanaian context by stating that: "*There are things happening in the outside world that can never be brought here, no matter how good or bad it is, because of the environment it may not be accepted.*" Likewise, Yaw provided a great insight into what is needed in the design of western training to facilitate the transfer of training most effectively to Ghana’s culturally sensitive context. Specifically, he said,

> In our organizations, we are not only interested in the science, but the art/experience is what is needed the most. This means you must also master the act or practice so you can transfer the knowledge and skills you acquired from a western country more easily and effectively. You must be able to combine theory you learned from the western country with the practice in the transfer context to attain effective results. I combined both the theory and practice by understanding the local community and culture. The practical aspect of the western training is very important. [Named the organization] is much concerned with the practicality because they mostly deal with people and so the Ghanaian culture is much implemented on how best people’s scientific knowledge can be transferred/transformed to the local context. Also the western training lacks some entrepreneurial spirit or acumen. Because every Ghanaian would like to see the
practicality and not just the theory. And I believe that should be included in the western training. The Ghanaian believe in sustainability. They leave things for family members and the community. These was lacking in the training. We must be able to transfer knowledge so it can be sustainable. It requires proper monitoring and evaluation which is lacking.

The following participants described their experiences as follows: Kweku said, “I think that in some scenarios it would be necessary to tailor the training so the Ghanaian keeps his culture, what he is comfortable in doing.” Amega stated “I would say that trainings should be tailored more...to meet specific challenges that we meet in Ghana because of our culture.” Dzifa stated: I think another thing is this western trainings we have to be able to modify them or tailor [to] make them to fit the African context. Because there is that gap of some things are very western-like. I took my corporate governance training in the US and it talked about how the board composition has to be transparent. It should be people of high repute; people who are qualified. That is good on paper but in the Ghanaian context people think of political lineages, ethnic issues. Those are issues people take into consideration before appointing people; …That means in our context there has to be some more of a tailor making it to fit the context of where we are.

Participants narrated experiences that support the need to contextualize international training programs so they can meet the unique challenges that trainees face in their transfer context, specifically Ghana, and also to help promote the transfer of training to this context.

**Preparing the Trainer for the Context of Those of Us from Africa**

The second factor identified to affect the transfer of training is the trainer’s cultural and contextual competency. The trainer’s knowledge and sensitivity to the cultural and contextual
challenges of the trainees as well as the context of their organizations was reported by participants to be a transfer factor.

Amega pointed out that:

> We are relaxed on certain aspects, we are soft on it, and so such trainings if we are to go strictly by the principles and objectives actually of the training I think that then the, those trainers training us should also have an idea as to the specific challenges that we face in our working environment, people that we interface with that meet us, the kind of things they do or we do with them so that they can also highlight those challenges during the training periods, so it should be tailored…

Dzifa explained that training transfer can be enhanced if the trainer has good background knowledge of not only the trainees but also their organizations as well as the real issues they face in these contexts, so he/she can provide trainees with the most relevant training. This participant believed that since they register for the training several months in advance, the trainers have ample time to gather relevant information on trainees and their organizations before the training session begins. This participant expressed this thought as follows:

> …because we register for these courses way in advance, sometimes it is three months ahead of schedule, it is six months ahead of time schedule, so they know where you are coming from, they know the organization you are coming from, the role you play in that organization, I think instead of just telling us what they have prepared for everybody, because in this training I was the only one who was from Africa on this course, and I found out that the trainer didn’t have enough information, even the institution when I said [named the organization] he didn’t
know about it, he hadn’t made any effort to research about it so he couldn’t really
give me, very good guide on what he thinks the issues are. So I think preparing
the trainer for the context of those of us who come from Africa for such training
would be very helpful.

Fifteen participants (88%) responded with what they thought were ways western training can be integrated better into the local Ghanaian context. Frimpong reported that:

To succeed locally, [they] need to be localized, they need to be very hands-on,
understand how the people think and how they believe and [what] their belief
systems are and adapt to the change locally in order to drive success. The learning
institutions [need] to tell people to develop research in local areas, hands-on; this
is applicable to Ghana. This is how we can develop because, yes it’s good to study
abroad, but it is also very important to make sure that what you learn can be
practicalized, people can relate to it on [a] day to day basis and they can take
decisions based on what they have learned around their environment and this will
create a very positive impact on their environment.

What the organization needs to do. Dzifa proposed that for western training to be transferred effectively into the Ghanaian context, organizations should make it a part of their strategic discussions as well as part of their daily organizational plans and operations as follows:

When the organization’s strategy is being planned the whole strategy process
should involve a discussion on how to incorporate what has been learned in the
western side with what we are doing every day because I mean the world is one
global village and you cannot continue to do things the way we want them to be done.

Dzifa stated that one of the most important things this participant captured from the training that is transferrable to the Ghanaian context to facilitate the transfer of western training is a good tracking system. She made this known as follows:

Some parts [of the training] are transferable, like I said the basic thing is the tracking rate is transferable. I think for me a tracking system was one of the really key things I picked up from the whole western training.

It is necessary to understand the cultural differences and challenges between the training context and the transfer context in order to know how to design training that harmonizes these differences to facilitate transfer of training. Several participants provided information to this effect as follows.

**In Africa you may face some Roadblocks because your Boss may be offended**

*Cultural differences between Ghana and western countries.* The difficulty of transferring western training to the Ghanaian context is evidenced by the cultural differences in values, beliefs, norms, and practices between Ghana and western countries. In western countries assertiveness is culturally sanctioned. In Ghana, assertiveness may be viewed as disrespectful when it involves power and hierarchical differences and positionalities as in the case of managers and subordinates. For example, Aku illustrated her experience on this matter in this way:

I would say that if your boss is not doing something right, sometimes it is difficult to tell your boss that…So if you are trained to be assertive, you are trained to, OK, to come up, be innovative, be creative, in Africa you may face some roadblocks because your boss may be offended…so those might be the little
prevention…There are times that your boss might come up with some strategies that you know would not work…May be if you trained to be assertive, to come out and let your boss know that this is not right, I think we should do it this way…in Africa, if you are not careful, it could cost you your position or your job. So if you realize your boss is not the type that would take positive criticisms or ideas you just keep it in there. You know it would not work but you just wait till it crashes.

In confirmation of Aku’s statement, Esi said, if she is talking to her boss, and “want to tell him something or make a suggestion which may not go down well with him, I would have to phrase it in such a way that my boss would not be offended.” She continued to say that, however,...”if I was speaking to somebody abroad I would just tell it as it is: those things you are doing is not good!…but in Ghana you will be like: Oh Sir, I think if we, do it this way, you know, in this way, what do you think Sir?”

Aku stated that: “I would say that the environments are different...Human beings themselves would not prevent you from sharing, but sometimes it is the culture that would prevent you from trying to introduce or integrate that kind of skill.” She went on to say that, “It may not work in the setting because the organizational structures, there are protocols and ways we do things. So if there would be any prevention, it may be the culture that would, but not the information itself or human beings trying to prevent you”... and that “People buy their way into positions that you don’t see in the western world.”

Another factor associated with how organizational structure, policies, and practices can affect the transfer of training was identified by participants as motivational programs.
We need to work on those things where people are not motivated enough to do their work. Participants identified these as a transfer factor and Kojo described this as follows:

One thing that was paramount in that training which could be integrated was the need for due regard for employees. Because in every organization the employees are, though they are not owners of the organization but they are also stakeholders, therefore major contributors to the success or failure of the organization. And so there is a need, and for that matter there is a need for the employee to be acknowledged, and motivated so the employee can continue to work for the attainment of organizational goals. That I think is crucial.

Adu also stated that, “We need to work on those things where people are not motivated enough to do their work. So it is a problem…” He continued to state that, “also may be the motivation, our welfare issues are not really taken on board so there is no motivation to work. So they are things that we need to work on generally in all these aspects.”

Summary

This chapter examined the findings from this study to answer the two research questions that were explored in this study. Analysis of the first research question identified factors that affect the transfer of training in Ghana. These factors are cultural and contextual in nature and include the extended family system, respect for age and seniority, management of time, attitudes and mindsets towards work, prevailing power imbalances, hierarchical dynamics, and the culture and proclivity to resist to change. The cultural factors are deeply ingrained into the social fiber of the Ghanaian society and manifested in organizations. In Ghana in particular, the culture of resisting change is solidified by the cultural beliefs and practices which are not easily amenable to change. And to bring something that is totally foreign to change their ways of doing things
causes sudden destabilization, social/cultural turbulence, which is a great transformational experience and therefore needs culturally sensitive HRD strategies and approaches including culture sensitivity, contextual understanding, and patience.

The exploration of the second research question discovered that the training program itself was a transfer factor and the need to modify western training to fit the local context of Ghana. In the same vein, the results showed that participants expressed the need for trainers to have knowledge of not only the cultural dynamics of their transfer context or native country, Ghana, but also the organizational/business practices of their organizations. Furthermore, the management of change was also identified as important to the success of training transfer to organizations. Meaning management has to possess best OD strategies to manage changes associated with the transfer of training as it involves a controversial transformation of the way people traditionally do things. The section below presents a chart and a figure illustrating the findings from the study, and a narrative on the findings diagram.
The next figure contains a broader depiction of the cultural and contextual factors affecting the transfer of training in Ghana at the national, organizational, and individual levels, as well as the training program/trainer.
Based on the findings of this study, the factors affecting training transfer were categorized into four axes as shown on the table below. This is followed by a descriptive narrative.

**Classification of Impact Factors on Training Transfer in Ghana Narrative**

**Axis 1. Country of Ghana.** Within the context of Ghana are cultural and contextual factors that affect the transfer of training. These factors: collectivism, extended family system, respect for seniority, elders, and age
Axis 2. Context of Organization: Within the context of the organization are internal cultural and contextual practices that may impact the transfer of training to the job. These factors are power structures (hierarchical issues and power dynamics), opportunity to use, managerial support, peer support, resistance to change, mindsets and attitudes toward work, view of organization (such as extended part of family).

Axis 3. Trainee/Employee: The trainee is shaped and impacted directly or indirectly by the factors in Axis one and two such as the aforementioned cultural and contextual dynamics at the national and organizational level. Consequently, the transfer of training is affected and so are the outcomes.

Axis 4. Transfer Outcomes/Results: The effectiveness of the transfer of training is dependent on the degree to which these multiple cultural and contextual factors at both the national and organizational levels impact the trainee. The trainee’s ability to adapt to and or navigate through these challenging dynamics can also reflect a positive or negative outcome.

In sum, the factors in Axis one affect the factors in Axis two. The factors in Axis two not only affect the factors in Axis three but combines to affect the factors in Axis three. The final results at Axis four (transfer outcome) is affected by a combination of all the preceding factors in Axis one, two, and three. Thus, there is a trickle-down effect in relation to the outcome of transfer of training in Ghana, whether positively or negatively. In the next chapter, I will further examine the findings of this study in relation to the existing body of research literature on training transfer, HRD and OD. I will indicate where the findings from my research either support, differ, or unique from the existing research literature. Finally, I will explore the implications of the significance of my study for theory, practice, and future research. The section below contains a chart and a figure depicting the findings from this study.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative study aimed to explore the potential cultural and contextual factors that may impact the capability of Ghanaian trainees’ to transfer training obtained from Western countries to their organizations in Ghana. The following questions guided this study:

- What cultural and contextual factors in Ghana affect the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context?
- How can Ghanaian trainees transfer or integrate Western-based training to the Ghanaian context effectively?

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Analysis of the data from this study indicated that significant cultural and contextual issues existing in Ghana affect the transfer of training to this context. With regard to research question one, the study identified factors that impact the training transfer process to include, but not limited to, the extended family system that transcends to organizations, respect for age and seniority, attitudes and mindsets towards work, asymmetric power positionalities and hierarchical dynamics, as well as a culture of resistance to change. Given that these factors are deeply rooted into the social fabric of the Ghanaian society, it is manifested in organizations and all together affect the transfer of training. With respect to research question two, the findings revealed that the training program itself was a transfer factor and the need to modify western training to fit the local context of Ghana. These include a need to tailor training programs to
reflect the context of trainee’s organizations. Also, the results showed that participants expressed the need for trainers to have knowledge of the cultural dynamics of their native country, Ghana.

**Conclusions and Discussions**

This study demonstrated that substantial cultural and contextual factors in Ghana and conditions in organizations affect trainees’ abilities to transfer training either positively or negatively. These cultural factors include indigenous cultural practices such as an asymmetric power relations (imbalance of power) between those in leadership positions and subordinates, extraordinary emphasis on hierarchy, high levels of respect for age, seniority, die hard attitudes and mindsets, resistance to change, and extended family system; as well as the view of the organization as an extension of the family. These cultural beliefs and practices are deeply ingrained in the Ghanaian context and are part and parcel of the local lifestyles transcending from homes to businesses. Unlike the Western countries, in Ghana the line between personal (family) and professional (business/organization) are usually either undefined, indistinct or permeated and diluted by the force of the local culture.

The first conclusion drawn from these findings is that: *power distance permeates organizational life whether through hierarchy or asymmetrical power relationships or family and age differences and these must be addressed to facilitate the transfer of what is learned* from training. It also supports the existence of two of Hofstede’s (1991, 2001) five dimensions of national culture, namely power distance and collectivism. Not only are these cultural factors pronounced in the Ghanaian society in general but these are also manifested in organizations in Ghana. The findings from this study only showed that there may be some indication that the Ghanaian culture may reflect a long-term value orientation. For example, Yaw indicated that the Ghanaian culture supports sustainability and that people leave things for their family members
for the future. He described this as follows: “The Ghanaian believe in sustainability. They leave things for family members and the community…” The findings from this study also concurs with Trompanaars and Hampden-Turner's (1997) findings that African countries like Ghana orient to a synchronous time culture as it was evidenced that in Ghana time commitments and plans are susceptible to changes so easily as people view plans and commitments in flexible terms. The concept of time is not viewed in a strict and mechanistic fashion as in the west. The common tendency in the Ghanaian culture is to treat time with flexibility, whereby the focus is on interpersonal relationship as opposed to the task-oriented view of time as prevalent in organizations in western countries. Western countries like the US orient to a sequential time culture (Trompanaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) (time is viewed as a monetary commodity/transactional commodification of time, task-oriented, and interpersonal relationship is secondary).

Also, it supports Javidan, et al.’s (2005) assertion that “Since individuals and organizations are part of their societies, it is plausible to expect them to reflect their national culture in their thinking, practices, and values” (p.5) as well as Lim and Wentling (1998) who claim that cultural differences were discovered to substantially impact transfer of training in international settings. Baldwin and Ford (1988), Clarke (2002), Lim & Morris (2006), Gaudine & Saks (2004), Merriam & Leahy (2005) all indicated that not only does the lack of the opportunity to use new learning impacts transfer of training but also the lack of an alignment between the training content and the trainees’ work roles affect training transfer. The findings of this study supports these assertions.

The findings of this study support Newstrom (1992) and Tracy et al. (1995) claim that a negative and non-supportive transfer climate was a barrier to transfer. Similarly, the findings
concurred with Daley (2002) claim that the lack of reinforcement within the practice context was a barrier to the transfer of training. Daley (2002) found that the culture of an organization which can be cohesive, segregated, or fragmented, and the political dynamics of these different structures impact training transfer or the application of training related skills to the job. By the same token, this author indicated that the level of autonomy the trainee had to navigate the organizational structure was a transfer factor, and this claim was supported by the findings of this study. In Ghana, there is high power and hierarchical distance relationships between managers and trainees which reflects a segregated power structure that create a wall between leaders and their subordinates. Likewise, the trainees don't have the level of autonomy that supports the sharing of ideas as was revealed in the findings of this study.

The study found a correlation between what Laker (1990) described as Far transfer (dissimilarities between training context and the application context). Specifically, there are dissimilarities between the training context (a western nation with an individualistic culture orientation) and the transfer context of Ghana (an African country, with a collectivist culture orientation) that create a transfer issue from the onset. Moreover, western countries are industrialized and endowed with advanced technological systems and processes that are very well established, and conducive to modern management, OD practices, and other robust business operations. Ghana, on the contrary, is a developing country that does not have the level of technological advancements and sophisticated systems and processes that are also well established to support and facilitate the transfer of training from the west. The existence of these underlying issues of infrastructural discordances were corroborated by participants such as Aku and Dzifa. However, this study differ in terms of context. While Laker (1990) and other studies on Near and Far transfer were conducted within one geographic locality that is often
homogeneous and typically a western context, this study involved two different geographic regions of the world (Ghana/Africa and Western countries). Therefore, in as much as the concept may be applicable to Ghana, the contexts in this study are different and must be viewed from that aspect.

The findings of this study indicate that when it comes to transferring training from Western countries to African countries like Ghana, stakeholders must carefully consider the cultural and contextual differences, hence the findings does not concur with Goldstein’s (1986) proposition under the “principle theory” that argues that it is possible to design training contexts without worrying too much about their similarity to the transfer context, as long as it is possible to apply fundamental principles. However, the findings from this study shows that for transfer of training in the Ghanaian context to be successful, it requires the accommodation of the cultural and contextual factors in Ghana and/or the transfer organization. Therefore focusing only on the underlying principles is likely to produce local resistance that would consequently lead to negative transfer.

The findings from this study support Vaara, Sarala, Stahl and Björkman’s (2012) argument that substantial cultural differences may also impede the transfer of potentially valuable KSAs and that “incompatibilities in the beliefs, values, and norms may turn out to be significant impediments to successful knowledge transfer” (p.7) as “cultural differences prompt social identity building that leads to ‘us versus them’ thinking and thereby creates the potential for social conflict” (p.1). This is exemplified in the way senior employees disdain trainees with western education and KSAs who attempt to transfer training to their organizations. It is also evident in the “Me ba ha che” culture. Furthermore, it is manifested in how younger employees are not accorded the necessary respect, cooperation, and the opportunity to apply training, and
are also viewed as “Too Know.” Understandably, the senior employees view them as potential threats to their positions, power, niche, traditional culture, and preferred ways of doing things.

A second conclusion in this study is that *national culture constrains or outweighs organizational culture, however some nuances and exceptions exist.* The findings of the study support Adler and Gundersen (2007), Hofstede (2001), and Johns (2006) conclusions that national culture constrains and/or outweighs organizational culture. However this researcher also discovered there are nuances or exceptions in the case of Ghana, hence that assertion should be viewed on a case by case basis. I make this claim because of five factors. First, the data showed that in locally owned organizations, the effect of the Ghanaian culture is understandably more pronounced. Second, in international or multinational organizations, the manifestation of the Ghanaian culture is subdued due to the fact that these organizations are primarily western-based, hence have the propensity to orient to western style management, OD practices, and culture. Thirdly, when these organizations have expatriates as managers, they dilute the effect of the Ghanaian culture as the culture and employees are diverse. Fourth, if the management is made up of westerners or expatriates, it serves to control the local culture effect. Fifth, if a sizable number of the managerial leaders of the organization received their education and training in the west, the effect of the local culture is diluted because they tend to exhibit a blend of the local culture and the cultures of their nationalities (western). Additionally, the data indicates that when those in managerial positions receive western training or education they tend to be much more receptive to the transfer of western training, values, or practices to their organizations. Adler and Gundersen (2007) observed that one factor that may explain this is a mixture of targeted hiring strategies or practices and the self-selection of employees that may create a harmonized foreign workforce that are receptive to their (western style) corporate culture.
A third conclusion that may be drawn from these findings is that transfer of training in Ghana is subject to the same dynamics of any other organizational change and is greatly affected by the degree of change required by the system, by those in power and how they manage and use their power, and by resources available to support implementation. This study demonstrates clearly that while training is about individual learning – transfer moves to organizational change--since to implement what is learned in the organization requires something and someone to change. As Poole and Van de Ven (2004) stated, apart from the ceremonious instrument of change, an organization might utilize, there is another, more indirect, impetus to individual change, that is the continuing managerial conduct toward subordinates. “Every employee has some amount of interaction daily, some level of professional relations, with one or more relevant supervisors and this relationship hold the potential to spur individual change.” This include the level of autonomy given to employee, feedback, and supervisor support and reassurance (p. 41). No significant organizational change is attainable unless there is a change in individuals’ attitudes, behaviors, and thinking to support and drive the needed change (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). Likewise, “change in the individual organizational member’s behavior is at the core of organizational change and, therefore, any successful change will persist over the long term only if, in response, to changes in organizational characteristics, members alter their on-the-job behavior in appropriate ways” (Porras & Robertson, 1992, p. 724). Goldstein (1991) also identified the significance of conditions in the transfer context that includes managerial actions that can engender successful transfer endeavors. These supportive managerial actions include providing the necessary resources to ensure transfer of training such as the provision of the opportunity to apply training on the job and training aids. Huczynski and Logan (1980) noted, while many organizations are prepared to allocate substantial resources to
assisting their staff obtain new skills and knowledge, they often neglect to help them in utilizing this new learning back into their job context. These are the reasons why I argue that the impetus of organizational change (Milgrom & Roberts, 1995; Jones, 2010) through training is characterized by the appropriate management of organizational resources (power, human capital, etc.,) by organizational leadership.

In Ghana, due to the deep rooted culture and a part of which is to resist any attempt to change indigenous cultural practices, this makes the change process complicated and more difficult. Just as participants noted, the cultural practices of seeing the organization as part of the family makes people bond very closely, hence when they are required to change they resist it because they prefer to maintain the status quo. Thus to introduce organizational change (Milgrom & Roberts, 1995; Jones, 2010) in Ghana, requires an astute strategic and culturally sensitive change management approach. As one participant indicated eloquently, in bringing about change in the Ghanaian context, the change process must be well planned and executed, taking into consideration the pros and cons of the change process and then have solutions for all issues that may come up. Without this tactical approach from the onset, the intended change “will die on arrival.” Also, in order to implement change successfully, the opportunity to use must be present, as well as the necessary resources that support the process. However, in the case of Ghana, these may be lacking in many organizations. Just as participants noted that sometimes they are trained to implement a new system, but the machine required to implement it simply isn’t in their organization. Others commented on the fact that when the needed resources were available such as a good training budget and productive HR strategies, it facilitated the application of training on the job. Also when HR aligned training to performance appraisals and evaluations, as well as organizational change goals, it facilitated the implementation of the
change much more effectively.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that the tailoring of western training to meet the cultural and contextual challenges that trainees face in their work context is critical. Based on this findings I concluded that there are at least four essential conditions that must be addressed to enhance the transfer or integration of western training into the Ghanaian context effectively, in relation to the second research question. The first is at the internal level which is the organizational level. *The transfer context has to be ready and receptive to receiving the training transfer.* Metaphorically speaking, *the ground has to be fertile to host the seed.* From the onset, the organization must have a good strategy to foster the transfer of training back to the work context. This requires a change of the mindsets and attitudes that propagate the culture of resistance to change. There has to be productive managerial and structural support for the transfer of training in the organization, and this must trickle down from top management to lower level employees. HR managers and supervisors must align training to relevant tasks that also support the opportunity to utilize KSAs (Blume et al., 2010), and there must be motivational programs (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Yamnill & McLean, 2001) that recognizes and rewards positive transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Bennett, Lehman & Forst, 1999). As Gegenfurtner, Veermans, Festner, and Gruber (2009) noted, motivation to transfer is necessary for the transfer of training to materialize. In the absence of the necessary motivation (Kontogiorghes, 2002; Pugh & Bergin, 2006) newly acquired training KSAs may not be applied to the work context.

The second approach which is external to the organization is the training program and the trainer. *This requires the program’s/trainer’s understanding and accommodation of the cultural*
and contextual dynamics of the trainees’ organization such as the type of organization (multinational or local), the culture of the organization, the modus operandi, the degree of autonomy the trainee has within the organization, the managerial leadership style, and HR policies and practices. With this information, the training design (Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons, & Kavanagh, 2007) can be tailored to meet the specific challenges of the trainees. For example, if a trainee comes from an organization that has an autocratic power structure, then the training should include strategic ways to negotiate through this power structure to deliver training into such system following the appropriate leadership channels to get hierarchical support. If the trainees’ organization exemplifies the indigenous culture where there is family-like workforce, then the training should include for example, how to present training to the cohesive group that reassures them that traditional ties will not be broken as a result of this.

The third approach is to get the necessary information on what the trainees/participants needs are. The best way to gather all the relevant information pertaining to the trainees would be to conduct a pre-training and post-training survey. This means conducting a pre-training survey of the potential trainees or a representative sample of the trainees prior to the training and then based on the information gathered, the training content can be adjusted accordingly to meet the specific needs of the trainees. The list of the survey questions/questionnaire should include: the type of organization, leadership style, power structure, organizational culture, policies and practices, etc., With this information in hand, trainers can design the training that reflects the contextual needs of the trainees. As scholars like Baldwin and Ford (1988), Blume et al. (2010) have all noted, if there is misalignment between training design and the transfer context, transfer of training may not be successful. By the same token the identical theory (Thorndike & Wordsworth, 1923) argued that when the training context is similar to the transfer context,
training transfer is facilitated. Merriam and Leahy (2005) rightly stated that, the more realistic the training interfaces and experiences to the actual practice environment and the needs of participants, the more likely transfer will be fruitful. Similarly, near transfer enhances training transfer than far transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Holton & Baldwin, 2000; Laker, 1990). Hence, the closer the mirroring of the western training to the organization context in Ghana, the greater the probability that transfer will occur.

The post-training survey would provide the program designer/trainer with information that would help in the design of the next training session. The list of questions to be asked should include: How did the training meet trainees’ expectations, how transferrable/applicable was the training, how would trainees managers and peers receive this training, what recommendations or suggestions do they (trainees) have for improvements of the training, etc., It is recognized that the training program cannot accommodate all the contextual issues in Ghana, some of which are outside the control of the program, such as the endemic electricity problems and the unfavorable economic conditions, however, it can offer alternative techniques such as how to improvise and deliver training transfer in the absence of these social amenities or under such capricious conditions. For example, if trainee cannot use PowerPoint to deliver training lessons due to the lack of electricity, he/she can use alternative resources like paper copies of training manuals or materials.

The fourth approach is to 1) align theory to practice, and thus 2) to facilitate the transfer of the theoretical knowledge from training to practical situations in the transfer context of Ghana. As Gould and Miller (2004) stated, the training content must address both the theoretical and practical aspects alongside the attainment of knowledge and skills. The training should not
only be based on theory but must also infuse its practical application in the real life of the Ghanaian trainees. As a participant eloquently indicated, the Ghanaian context values the practicality of western training because they primarily deal with people in their cultural context and therefore the Ghanaian culture/climate supports how best an individual’s scientific knowledge can be transferred effectively to the local/indigenous context. As Haskell (2001) asserted, there is an underlying acknowledgment that education and training is often too theoretical, as a result there is a deficit in the incorporation of the learning that takes place at training to have positive impact on the job through transfer. And it follows true that if there is a good alignment between training theories from the west to the actual practical situations in the transfer context of Ghana, training transfer would be enhanced.

Considering the high culture context of Ghana, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context depends also on the adaptive skills of the trainee. This individual characteristic (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Holton, 2005; Tracey, Hinkin, Tannenbaum, & Mathieu, 2001; Lim & Morris, 2006; Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons, & Kavanagh, 2007) is an essential part of the transfer process and outcome. The trainee must have the cultural and contextual awareness, the willingness to do so, and the capacity to adapt western training to this transfer context to gain the support of supervisors/managers and peers. This conclusion concurs with Robertson and Downs (1979) claim that the ability of the trainee to learn, synthesize, and link training to the work context drives training transfer positively.

In sum, a complicated condition exist in relation to the transfer of training in the Ghanaian context. There are multitudes of factors that come into play including, but not limited to, cultural contentions on one hand, and contextual dynamics on the other hand,
as well as the training program and trainer’s effectiveness. Thus, there are rather complex social, political, economic, and structural dynamics that must be carefully and critically examined vis-a-vis the transfer of training in Ghana. What this study found illuminates part of these complex phenomenon and should not be viewed as providing a single answer to this intricate problem of training transfer in the context of Ghana.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH, THEORY, AND PRACTICE

The findings of this study are significant as they have important implications for research, theory, and practice as described below.

Implications for Theory

This study offers an opportunity for deeper exploration and pragmatic theory development on the issue of how cultural and contextual factors in the transfer context, specifically, in the Ghanaian context that is currently lacking. This could generate new research and theories and thus contribute to the cross-national, cross-cultural, and international HRD knowledge base on the transfer of training to organizations in SSA countries like Ghana. The adult learning and training knowledge base would benefit from understanding the dynamic cultural contexts where both learning/training and transfer take place. Additionally, with the understanding of how trainees from Ghana construct knowledge, make meaning of, and apply learning/training in their cultural context, adult educators, trainers, and researchers can develop culturally sensitive adult learning theories relevant to adult learners in the Ghanaian context.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study informs international/cross-national training and development scholars, HRD practitioners and theoreticians, as well as international training program
designers/developers about the special needs of international trainees from countries like Ghana, so they can better design training programs that accommodate cultural and contextual needs to facilitate training transfer. Cultural and contextual factors of the transfer context nationally and organizationally impact the ultimate outcome of transfer of training. Therefore, for training transfer to be well understood, managed, and facilitated effectively, organizations, international HRD practitioners, and scholars must study the cultural and contextual dynamics of the transfer context. In the same vein, having the requisite knowledge of whether employees in a specific culture context orient to Long-term vs. Short-term culture has important implications for management and organizations. This is in view of the fact that long-term orientation is associated with “values oriented towards the future, like thrift (savings)” (Hofstede, 1993, p. 90) and retirement incentives, while short-term time value orientation (Hofstede, 1993) is associated with stimuli that give immediate gratification such as salary increases, bonuses, and promotions. This relevant information would help organizations and their HR make the appropriate decisions on personnel matters in this culture context, to ensure that employees receive suitable appraisals and incentives to facilitate positive view of the organization as aligning HR practices to their cultural needs, thus a motivational factor that could engender appreciable performance outcomes.

As Hofstede (1993) noted, “To understand management in a country, one should have both knowledge of and empathy with the entire local scene” (p. 90). Similarly, it would be necessary for international organizations from the western world operating in normative orientated cultures like Ghana where the concept of time is viewed as not absolute, flexible, and thus susceptible to change, pursue a strategic operational framework where there is a respectable balance between the task-oriented time values from western countries and the time flexibility values in the Ghanaian context, as well as integration of relationship building, while ensuring
that tasks are completed in a reasonable amount of time. This study provides multinational organizations operating in Ghana a guide to facilitate the education and training, or the preparation of their expatriates for foreign contexts like Ghana to avoid cultural conflicts while making their experiences more productive.

Two particular issues raised by a participant was the lack of a good tracking and reprimand system as they believed if a good tracking and reprimand system was put in place, it could help organizations track poor performance, institute adequate and well-balanced reprimand systems, and stop the traditional subjective as opposed to objective responses to performance related issues. Therefore, organizations in question are encouraged to institute effective tracking systems that could even help track the transfer of training performance issues, as well as determine to what degree the transfer of training is effective. The results from this tracking system could help organizations make informed decisions for training transfer improvements, performance improvements, and related appraisals and rewards incentives. This could be very beneficial to OD as it will increase the motivation to transfer newly acquired KSAs.

It is evident from this study that due to the Ghanaian culture, especially with respect to the extended family system, the organization is viewed as an extension of the extended family and consequently the related expectation that the organization will address the individual and or family needs of its employees. This supports the assertions made by both Aryee (2004) and Budhwar & Debrah (2002). This is in addition to considering their family circumstances when making personnel decisions (Aryee, 2004). Likewise, Budhwar and Khatri (2001) reported that collectivistic and high power distance countries traditionally put greater emphasis on recruitment criteria, such as attributed status and socio-political affiliations, than on hard criteria like knowledge, skills, and abilities. This was evidenced in the findings in this study as participants
such as Dzifa reported the subjectivities, cronyisms, and favoritisms involved in decision makings such as recruitment, promotions, and appraisals.

From this researchers’ observations, it would be very productive if subjectivities are excluded in the makings of such important decisions to make this process fair. It should be based on individual performance and merit. Organizations should reevaluate this practice as it appears to be based on an individual’s subjective perceptions that could be biased or unfair, especially considering the common practice of favoritism, tribalism, and cronyism as discovered in this study.

This researcher acknowledges that culture is a complex social phenomenon and in the case of Ghana it is deeply rooted in almost all aspects of Ghanaian lives ranging from the home, community, to organizations. Hence, any suppositions and assumptions should be avoided and proposals should be critically evaluated and threaded carefully. It must also be acknowledged that not all cultural practices (e.g. nepotism, tribalism, cronyism, favoritism, and promotions based on kinship ties or political affiliations) are productive and must be eliminated or transformed if possible. Issues like resistance to change, time management, extended family systems, attitudes and mindsets, power and hierarchy, seniority and age, could be dealt with at the organizational level by education and training within the domain and merits of productive Ghanaian culture context.

Management could ensure that there is an alignment between performance behaviors and organizational policies, practices, mission, and goal attainment. The lack of a concrete alignment between acquired training and work roles is counter-productive to training transfer (Lim & Johnson, 2002). Managers and HR/training department of organizations should work closely together to align training to task performance upon trainees return. They should provide the
necessary opportunities, support, and logistics for trainees to transfer their newly acquired KSAs. They should be proactive at addressing the issue of the lack of peer support when trainees attempt to transfer training to the job. If trainees must transfer what they learned to a particular group of employees/peers or department, managers and HR/training department should set this up efficiently through proper communications, announcements, and timetables, and also provide adequate logistical support services and supervision. If possible it should be made mandatory and attached to appraisals, rewards, and recognitions. This would encourage peer collaboration, support, and participation in training transfer initiatives in their organizations.

One of the important findings from this study is the importance of writing reflective reports/feedback on training experiences. Specifically, managers/supervisors and HR should consider implementing a program whereby when trainees return they are asked to write a report about their training/learning experiences, and identify at least five important things they think should be implemented in order of preference with the most important on top of the list and the justification for each. These suggestions should include pragmatic changes that could improve five key areas: policies, processes, practices, productivity/performance, and preferences. Completing these recommendations could have important implications for organizations.

Organizations spend several thousands of dollars to send their employees especially from Ghana to Western countries for training. If these trainees return to Ghana and are not able to transfer what they learned, it defeats the purpose of the training and it is counterproductive to organizational development, as well as a negative return on investment. As one participant reported, the total cost of sponsoring their training was about 4,000 pounds, yet he had to leave the organization before they could earn any returns on their investment, due to his inability to transfer what he learned. On the other hand, participants who reported that their organization/HR
aligned training received with task performance or opportunity to transfer training on their jobs had a very positive outlook of not only the training but also their organizations. This meaningful approach could be a strong catalyst to motivation to transfer and consequently return on investment, retention and OD. This is necessary because the inadequate opportunity to perform newly learned skills on the job was one of the highest inhibitors to the success of training transfer to the work setting (Clarke, 2002; Lim & Johnson, 2002; Gaudine & Saks, 2004; Lim & Morris, 2006).

Organizations should consider a good balance between culture values and practices on one hand, and policies that enhance performance, on the other hand. For example, instead of the current practice of high asymmetric power relationships between managers and subordinates, they should consider an open and consultative relationships based on mutual respect (but within a delineated understanding of each other’s roles, responsibilities, and official positions without crossing the line or as Dede said, “not crossing ranks.” It should be one that opens up communication channels and an interactive relationship so employees/trainees do not feel intimidated or as some of the participants put it: drawing a wedge or wall between managers and subordinates, and that stifles communication and free flow of important information and ideas. It may be in the interest of organizations to institute and monitor better time management policies and strategies because it will enhance performance outcomes and timeliness of productivity. At the same time multinational organizations should be conscious and sensitive to these cultural and contextual dynamics so they can avoid cultural conflicts while operating their businesses or organizations in countries like Ghana.

For example, Ghana is one of the SSA countries that is not only collectivist but also where position of leadership or authority/power is highly dependent upon age, gender, or status
Evidently, the cultural dimensions of some SSA countries are likely very different from or conflict with western managerial practices (Budhwar & Debrah, 2002; Wanasika, Howell, Littrell, & Dorfman, 2011). These include a deep respect for the elderly due to oral traditions where age is closely associated with wisdom and relationships between different age groups are highly revered (Beugre & Offodile, 2001) and generally paternalistic (Linquist & Adolph, 1996).

Having a good knowledge of the general cultural backgrounds (see table 5 for the cultural characteristics of Ghana) and learning needs of trainees from this context is important. As participants indicated, it is their desires that training programs incorporate those needs and that trainers have basic cultural competencies as it would enhance trainees’ positive outlook of the training, comfort to learn in the foreign environment, and the motivation to transfer what is learned. As Ziegahn (2001) noted, although there are some general categories of difference between cultures, there are many ways that instruction can be designed or redesigned to become more culturally sensitive.

Considering that trainers from Western countries generally orient to their individualistic cultures as opposed to trainees from Ghana, who orient to collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1997), a trainer from the west might not possess the requisite cultural competent skills to understand the needs of trainees from a collectivist society such as how they absorb and process information, how they interpret, construct, rationalize and make meanings of acquired knowledge. This could create a misfit which is likely to have negative impact on their training experience and consequently limit or inhibit the transfer of training. Hence, it will be beneficial to the transfer process, if trainee’s organizations require trainers to undergo some form of culture specific training. Culture-specific training pertains to information about a specific culture and strategies
for interaction with individuals from that culture (Brislin & Pedersen, 1976).

This researcher proposes that trainers or educators of adults become more sensitive to cultural differences in the training context by first examining the cultural values that underlie their preferred methods of teaching and that diversifying teaching methods should be a dynamic, interactive process with learners that enriches all of adult learning (Ziegahn, 2001). For example, on the first day of the training (introduction phase) it would be helpful to use storytelling in which the trainer allows the trainee to share his/her cultural and contextual experiences and manifestations from his/her organization. This approach would make the trainees feel much more comfortable and welcomed into an unfamiliar/foreign training environment. This need was also reported by Kwame. The trainees should also be allowed to share what their feelings and expectations were when they learned about their selection to come to the western country for training, what their learning expectations for the training are, what cultural and contextual issues matter most to them, and discuss any cultural shocks or challenges they may have experienced.

Furthermore, it would be essential to present a case involving cultural dilemmas in contexts similar to the trainees’ organization in Ghana, and ask trainees to collectively solve these problems. Billet (2005) correctly amplified the significance of these types of instructional strategies when he posited that the use of questioning, problem solving and scenario-building to extend learners’ knowledge to novel situations are techniques for facilitating learning transfer. Similarly, Merriam and Leahy (2005) reminded us that when prior learning is connected to new learning, transfer is facilitated. In addition, the more the training experiences reflects or mirrors the actual working conditions as wells the needs of the participants, the more likely transfer will be effective.
For example, it would be very helpful if the training programs include strategies on how to communicate effectively within the hierarchal power structure in Ghana with respect to interactions with upper-level managers or seniors so they can be more receptive to the application/transfer of training. In the same vein, trainers should consider teaching communication techniques that would generate peer support and overcome the culture of resistance to accepting changes, without being seen as “Too Know” as participants reported. For example, the training can include strategies trainees can use to highlight to their peers the great benefits of the change in relation to the transfer of training to their jobs. As some of the participants reported, if the transfer of training means changing the way they do things traditionally, they would resist it unless they see the benefits of that change. It would also be a good idea to consider teaching trainees effective change management strategies (suitable for indigenous and high culture contexts like Ghana) to especially those in upper-level positions so they can transfer these techniques to their local organizations. This may facilitate the transfer of training to their organizations as it is likely to surmount the issue of resistance to change. This and other recommended strategies can be taught as a separate and specialized training session in collaboration with trainees’ organizations. Teaching strategies in how to overcome and navigate the internal cultural barriers to the transfer of training could facilitate the transfer of training process in these organizations. If the training is aimed at improving certain skills in a specific culture, especially those that have a deep rooted culture like Ghana, then the training program should be clinically and strategically centered on the cultural and contextual factors associated with and relevant to that setting.

This researcher reiterates that one of the most promising approaches to ensuring the transfer of training to the context of Ghana is the culture fit model. This model generally posits
that both the socio-cultural environment and the organization context influence internal work
culture and HRM practices. Specifically, this model advocates a fusion of the best indigenous
practices in the African context with the best management practices and models from Western
countries (Beugré & Offodile, 2001; Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, Deller, Stahl, &
Khurshid, 2000). An integration of this model into training designs would facilitate the transfer
of training in the context of Ghana specifically, and Africa in general.

Furthermore, this researcher recommends innovative ways of teaching how to facilitate
and build teamwork when training Ghanaian employees especially those in
leadership/managerial positions. Teamwork is a vital part of achieving high reliability in
organizations (Baker, Day, & Salas, 2006) and it is also associated with mutual trust
characterized by a shared belief that members will protect and support the interests of their team
(Sims, Salas, & Burke, 2004). This assertion embodies one of the main cultural characteristics of
a collectivist culture like that of Ghana where there is shared belief or expectation that members
of a team/group will support each other reciprocally (Aryee, 2004; Budhwar & Debrah, 2002).
For example, the training could be focused on how to enhance Ghana’s “collective” culture
orientation synthesized with modern western management teamwork models that can be
transferred effectively to their local organizations in Ghana. As employees collaborate in a
mutually supportive manner, the organization benefits (Parker, 2011) by virtue of the natural
predisposition of collectivism inherent in the Ghanaian culture.

In view of the fact that Ghanaian employees view their organization as part of their
extended family, consequently, they would develop a deeper sense of unity, interdependence,
fellowship, common group identity and interest, as well as commitment to the accomplishment
of the team’s and the organization’s goals as a whole. This would contribute to the development
of employees’ morale and sense of family, and thus fulfilling their “work-life-culture balance” as suggested by Dzifa. This could translate into increased sense of satisfaction with the organization, leading to improved performance, retention, and to achieving OD. Another recommendation is to focus training African managers to inculcate a participative management style (Parker, 2011) as Kofi and Yaw highlighted, whereby he/she leads by encouraging participation, communication (an open door-like approach), and facilitating the brainstorming of innovative ideas from all employees. This would help move employees along to attain organizational goals, rather than the existing strict paternalistic and high power distance cultural norm. As noted similarly earlier, within this proposed managerial framework, the manager would retain his/her hierarchical position within the Ghanaian traditional organizational structure without feeling his/her authority threatened or undermined as Aku reported, however deliberations and decision makings would be collaborative with employees as team partners within the spirit of collectivism in the organization.

Lastly, the trainees’ organizations should closely examine the factors identified in this study to facilitate the transfer of training in Ghana such as supportive work environment, collaborative peers and leadership so as to solidify these positive factors as they are repositories for motivation to transfer, job satisfaction, retention, attaining return on investment, and OD. As a result, HRD practitioners, Western trainers, program planners and developers, scholars and multinational organizations outside and within Ghana would be much more successful operating in Ghana if they understand these unique cultural dynamics, and design training programs, HRD and management approaches and practices to fit these high cultural context. In the same vein, it is essential that local organizations review the factors in their organizations that inhibit their employees’ ability to transfer training effectively, and take corrective measures to remove those
barriers so they can facilitate and earn the benefits of the transfer of training to their organizations.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD

Not only does the study contribute to the knowledge base of HRD but also it contributes to organizational development in African contexts like Ghana, and cross-cultural studies. HRD, OD, and IHRM scholars in SSA countries can use these findings as a guide to collaborate on research studies on the transfer of training from western countries to specific regions of Africa. By so doing training programs can be designed and tailored to meet the specific cultural and contextual dynamics and demands of a specific African country. This approach would help expand the field while contributing to the breaking away from the current limited research on the continent of Africa in general. It is these researchers’ hope that multinational and/or international organizations like the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank can fund these types of research endeavors to make them more fruitful.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study offers an opportunity for further exploration of how cultural and contextual factors in the transfer context affect training transfer in regions like Ghana; and hopefully could generate new pragmatic research discoveries, theories, and programs to improve the transfer of training to organizations in SSA countries. This is because Africa needs these types of research studies to help it flourish in the era of globalization, innovation, and advances in technology, to boost its economies, small and large scale business enterprises, indigenous industries, and locally owned businesses operating internationally, through the effective training, development, and management of their workforce. In view of the fact that the findings from this study revealed that in multinational organizations in Ghana, the presence of expatriates subdue the effects of the
indigenous culture, it will be helpful to explore the extent to which this is happening. Also, it would be helpful to explore whether or not the transfer of western training in Ghana are been evaluated inside organizations. More specifically, to explore whether management or HR evaluates transfer of western training on the job and/or what internal mechanism or programs are being used by trainee’s organizations to evaluate the performances of trainees once they return to their jobs, and thus understanding the effectiveness of their transfer of training.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the purpose of the study, the two research questions that guided this study, and examined the findings of this study. It revealed the findings and analyzed it in relation to the conclusions drawn from this study. The findings indicated that multiple cultural and contextual factors exist in Ghana that affect the transfer of training to the Ghanaian context. It then explored the theoretical and practical implications for the field of international HRD, OD, as well as cross-cultural training transfer research, and knowledge base. It gave recommendations for best practices for understanding the dynamics of transfer of training in the Ghanaian context, and finally presented areas of potential future research and their benefits to international training transfer studies and practice in the context of Ghana and Africa.
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