Workplace Learning in Non-Profit Organizations – Three Essays

by

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Abstract

This three-essay thesis uses the systematic review of literature as the method to examine workplace learning in non-profit organizations. The first essay studies how human resource development practitioners conceptualised workplace learning and the factors informing their decisions on workplace learning in organizations. The second essay explores human resource management in non-profit organizations and the third essay analyzes scholarly literature to explore the management of workplace learning in non-profit organizations.

The essays reveal a still contested and fuzzy understanding of workplace learning being deployed by non-profit organizations to function in an increasingly competitive and marketized landscape. As the sector adapts to operating in competitive markets, formal learning of professional and managerial programs is privileged over informal learning.
Acknowledgments

As I write the acknowledgements for this thesis, I feel humbled. Embedded in this document is the hard work, sacrifices, aspirations, hope, motivation and guidance of many.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Non-profit organizations play a key role in our society. As a sub-type of the third sector (i.e., the social economy), non-profits produce and deliver services and goods that fall in the interstices between the public sector and the private sector, but often also overlap into them in varying degrees (Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2017). The non-profit sector is a major employer too. In USA, 10.7 million people were employed in non-profit organizations and the sector accounted for 5.4 percent of the nation’s entire GDP — $887.3 billion. (degree.astate.edu, 2017). In Canada, the sector employs 2 million and contributes an average of 8.1% of total Canadian GDP, more than the retail trade industry and close to the value of the mining, oil and gas extraction industry (statcan.gc.ca, 2007).

As the non-profit sector in Canada and all over the world grapples with change, the ability to learn and adjust to these changes has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational success. The human resource centric nature of non-profit organizations (Guo, 2011; Taylor & McGraw, 2006; Walk, Schinnenburg, & Handy, 2014) in conjunction with Marsick and Watkins’ (1993) submission that organizational learning occurs at individual, team, organizational, and societal levels, underlines the importance of workplace learning at non-profit workplaces. In this thesis, I examine the understandings of workplace learning among human resource managers and how they operationalize workplace learning in non-profit organizations.
Workplace learning

A blanket term for formal, non-formal, informal, and tacit learning at workplaces (Bratton, Helms Mills, Pyrch & Sawchuk, 2004), conceptualizations of workplace learning have evolved with our understandings of work, workplaces and learning. From being considered a natural phenomenon that has always existed (Van Woerkom & Poell, 2010) and as acquisition of skills and behaviors at workplaces (Fenwick, 2008), the idea of learning at workplaces evolved to a social construct resulting from social interactions and participation in work.

The psychological theories of workplace learning

Two distinct clusters of understandings of workplace learning exist: the psychological theories of workplace learning and the socio-cultural theories. The psychological theory of workplace learning was influenced by John B. Watson’s behaviorism theory (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). The objectivistic, mechanistic and positivistic theory was predicated on the assumption that learning is explained only in terms of activities that are inaccessible to direct observation (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012). This behaviorist perspective led to human resource departments breaking jobs down in terms of specific tasks and the requisite specific skills and behaviors that could be learned before joining the workforce. The codification of skills and learnings required to perform a job allows organizations to approach workplace learning as training programs meant to impart the desired skills and behaviors.

As a learning theory, behaviorism did not account for motivation, thought and cognition (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) leading to ascendancy of cognitive theories of workplace learning (Hager, 2011). Pioneering work in the area by Chris Argyris and Donald Schon, such as their
theories of single and double loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1974, 1978, Argyris 1976, 1982, 1985), was heavily influenced by organizational psychology and management theory. Argyris’s work on ‘theories in action’ (Argyris, 1982) and Schon’s notion of the ‘reflective practitioner’ (Schon, 1984) who consciously and unconsciously correct their practice by ‘noticing’, ‘seeing’ and ‘feeling’, were important developments in workplace learning theory.


Where behaviorism had identified workplace learning as a phenomenon that managers could control in routine formally, the theory of informal learning characterized learning as “experience-based, non-routine and often tacit” and centred on the organizational participant (Marsick & Watkins, 2001, pp. 15-24).

**The socio-cultural theories of workplace learning**

Where behaviorism and cognitive theories approach learning as a product independent of context with the individual as the unit of analysis, socio-cultural theories consider learning as a process privileging the social context of learning (Hager, 2011). Seminal work by Lave and Wenger (1991) on ‘communities of practice’ and ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ allowed conceptualization of workplace learning as a social phenomenon. Their theory viewed ‘situated
learning’ as a process occurring in networks of relations as the individual participates in the workplace. Criticisms of Lave and Wenger based around the fact that their description of ‘communities of practice’ is vague and that the basing of their theory on peripheral participation does not account for workplace learning when the novice gains experience and transforms into a full participant. These criticisms are addressed in Fuller and Unwin’s theory of expansive-restrictive continuum (Fuller & Unwin, 2003, 2004). The framework identifies a series of workplace features which facilitate a learning environment that affords richer learning opportunities regardless of organization type and the experience level of the employees.

There has been a marked influence of cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) on the field of workplace learning. While the origins of CHAT can be traced back to L. S. Vygotsky and Aleksei N. Leontiev (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010), Engeström’s theory of expansive learning, central to the work of advancing CHAT, has been a critical milestone in workplace learning theory. Viewing psychology to be at the limits of cognitivism, Engestrom (1999, 2001) imagined workplaces as activity systems made up of components like workplace organizational structure, policies, division of labour, and other mediating artifacts. According to Engestrom, learning occurs as performance of work within these activity systems that throws up contradictions and tensions which demand resolution. The process of resolution of these contradictions and tensions alters the state and nature of the activity system itself. Engestrom’s conceptualization of workplace learning imagines workplaces facing a constant barrage of change driving stimuli and responses to those stimuli; as the workplace changes, so do the workers.

Other socio-cultural theories try to retain elements of the psychological theories of workplace learning, such as the theory of nonformal learning by Michael Eraut and colleagues (Eraut, 2000; Eraut, Alderton & Senker, 2000; Eraut, 2004; Eraut and Hirsh, 2010). Drawing
heavily from psychology, Eraut and colleagues retain the focus on individuals as learners when they consider organizational learning as a synergistic summation of individual learnings of the workers’ “combined capability of a team ... greater than that of its members acting only individually” (Eraut and Hirsh, 2010, p. 42). Eraut (2000, 2001) describes non-formal learning as informal with three modes of learning. ‘Reactive learning’, another concept introduced by Eraut, is the learning that takes place when the learner consciously tries to learn in situations that afford little time to the learner to think and plan. Relatedly, implicit learning is the unconscious acquisition of skills and knowledge, and deliberative informal learning is a by-product of the employee engaging with work.

Non-profit organizations

Government of Canada defines a non-profit organization as, “a club, society, or association that’s organized and operated solely for: social welfare, civic improvement, pleasure or recreation, any other purpose except profit” (Govt. of Canada, 2017). The sector is growing vigorously in Canada. Non-profit organizations crossed the $100 billion mark in economic activity in 2008, and the sector’s contribution to the Canadian GDP grew by 6% when the GDP itself was growing at just over 5% (Shapcott, 2010). The overall sector GDP growth of 7.1% annually (Statistics Canada, 2015) was faster than the growth of the Canadian economy as a whole. As a result, economic activity in the core non-profit sector doubled between 1997 and 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2015). Along with this growth, the sector witnessed a radical change in the way it functions. While many organizations in the sector were working on the same or similar problems, the different solutions being promoted and spearheaded by non-profits created
a competition for clients, funding and volunteers, adding challenges and opportunities to the organizations making up this sector.

**Learning to compete**

This increased competitive landscape non-profits are operating in adds to uncertainty to their ongoing concerns and is ever changing and ambiguous. By the beginning of 1990s, technology-driven globalization of business had taken hold and organizations, both for-profit and non-profit, were searching for organizational capabilities that could offer advantage in the knowledge economy. The identification of intangible assets as a source of competitive advantage (Prahalad & Hamel, 2000) was a critical development in framing *learning* and *capability to learn* as sources of competitive advantage. The recognition that competitive advantage could be achieved through the acquisition and development of firm-specific intangible resources through learning (Moingeon & Edmondson, 1996) saw the people management of organizations increasingly focus on workplace learning.

The human resource management of organizations were now faced with creating a scaffolding of policies and practices that could support learning at workplaces at all levels and as a continuous process. Practitioner efforts in this direction (and scholarly investigations) forked into two distinct but related directions of organizational learning and workplace learning (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005). With roots in management studies, organizational learning focused on management policies, practices and organizational structures conducive to learning. The workplace learning scholarship, on the other hand, with its roots in adult learning theory and cognitive science, focused on the individual learner at workplaces. As ‘learning’ became an
increasingly critical component of management in organizations, (Marsick and Watkins, 1994; Swanson, 1995), human resource management in organizations began to embrace human resource development.

**The non-profit workplace**

The first decade of 2000s saw non-profits look towards human resource development as a means to competitiveness (Akingbola 2006, 2013, 2015; McMullen & Brisbois, 2003). As focused research into the various aspects of human resource management and development in non-profit organizations gained steam, people management in the non-profit sector emerged as a problematic issue (Hall et al. 2003; Light, 2011; Salamon, 2012). Non-profit workplaces however posed severe challenges for human resource managers due to the unique nature of non-profit workplaces. For example, Betcherman et al. (1998) and McMullen and Brisbois (2003) investigated non-profit organizations in Canada. They identified smaller size of organization, emphasis on values, a shared decision-making process, more female full-time employees, less opportunities for promotion, lower salaries and severely constrained training budgets compared to for-profit business organizations. Similarly, Nair and Bhatnagar (2011) isolated six differentiators between non-profits and for-profit business organizations – ideology, structure, accountability, ambiguity, worker motivation and commitment and leadership. Nair and Bhatnagar assert that NPOs are characterized by loose organizational structures, diffused accountability and thus dilution of accountability. The loose structure and low accountability translate into a greater ambiguity.
Apart from these characteristics, a non-profit worker’s relationship with the workplace and work is more relational than transactional (Chang, Huang & Kuo, 2015). Self-selection based on values (Fenwick, 2005) and the emotional nature of non-profit work differentiates the non-profit workforce from the for-profit workforce. While emotional labor has been studied extensively in for-profit workplaces too (Kunda & van Maanen, 1999; Lan, 2002; Kang, 2003; Miller & Koesten, 2008; Cohen, 2010), research has shown that the non-profit worker engages in emotional labor more fully and far more regularly that in the for-profit sector (Karabanow, 1999; Shuler & Sypher, 2000; Steinberg & Figart, 1999). Existing evidence shows that jobs with higher emotional labor content are more stressful (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003; Mann & Cowburn, 2005; Pugliesi, 1999). Since low employee engagement and burnout are known outcomes of job stress (Morrice, 1984; Travis, Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015), non-profit workplaces present additional challenges to human resource managers.

**Workplace learning in non-profit organizations**

This three-essay thesis investigates the understandings of workplace learning among human resource managers and the HRM literature and how they and the literature operationalize workplace learning in non-profit organizations. The first essay cuts through the contested conceptualizations of workplace learning to study how it is understood in human resource development literature specifically in non-profit settings. The results reveal a near total subscription to definitions of workplace learning emanating from the field of critical adult education. The second essay then scans the literature for the factors influencing human resource management decisions in non-profit organizations. Literature reviewed shows changes to the external environment, specifically, free market competition and the difficulty in recruitment and
retention of employees and volunteers as the primary drivers of human resource management decisions in the non-profit sector. The third essay brings the first two together to explore workplace learning in the context of non-profit organizations having to manage the ever-changing external environment and the resultant internal pressures. Confirming the findings from the first two essays, the review of literature reveals that workplace learning in the non-profit sector is oriented to competition and change, capacity building and maximizing employee engagement. Findings from the three essays are then brought together in the concluding chapter.

**Method**

All three essays in this thesis are systematic reviews and include a method section, detailing the key-word strings used to search articles, the databases searched in, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria used to focus the search. In this section, I introduce systematic review as a method and address the concern of its applicability in the field of social sciences.

**Systematic review**

A systematic review is a systematic search for, appraisal and synthesis research in an area, in conformance to guidelines provided by the Cochrane Collaboration or the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination. Four organizations – The Cochrane Collaboration, The Campbell Collaboration, The Joanna-Briggs Institute and Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, University of York supply guidelines and templates for conducting systematic reviews. The three essays in this thesis follow the guidelines produced by The Cochrane Collaboration and adapt the
PRISMA flow diagram (prisma-statement.org, 2015) as blueprints to conduct the systematic review.

The Cochrane Collaboration formally defines systematic review as a “review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyse data from the studies that are included in the review. Statistical methods (meta-analysis) may or may not be used to analyse and summarise the results of the included studies” (Cochrane Collaboration, n.d.).

The workflow begins with the articulation of a highly focussed research question followed by identification of key-words for searching databases and the databases to be included in the search for literature. The search protocol is recorded in terms of the search strings used, the time period considered, the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The systematic search is recorded in conformance to the PRISMA Flow Diagram given in Figure 1.

As a research method, the systematic review has been commented on in detail (Tranfield et al., 2003; Pittaway et al., 2004). While general literature reviews perform the function of examining published literature too, systematic reviews bring transparency, clarity, rigour and replicability to the process. That allows systematic reviews to be stand-alone research studies. According to Denyer and Tranfield, “a systematic review should not be regarded as a literature review in the traditional sense, but as a self-contained research project in itself that explores a clearly specified question, usually derived from a policy or practice problem, using existing studies” (2009, p. 671).
The systematic review is usually preceded by a scoping review to conduct a “preliminary assessment of the potential size and scope of available research literature.” (Grant & Booth, 2009, p. 101). The scoping review helps focus the systematic review by clarifying conceptual boundaries of field and the dominant themes to be investigated. This then helps crystallize the keywords to be used in literature search in a systematic review.
Scoping review

A scoping review is defined as a review of literature that “aims to map rapidly the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available and can be undertaken as stand-alone projects in their own right, especially where an area is complex or has not been reviewed comprehensively before” (Mays et al., 2001 cited in Arksey & O’Malley, 2005, p. 8). Scoping reviews differ from systematic reviews in two ways. The first difference lies in the clarity of the research question. In a scoping review the research question informing the review is broad and not narrowly defined whereas in systematic reviews, the research question is typically well defined and unambiguously articulated. The second difference is that scoping reviews cover a wider range of sources of literature than systematic reviews. One of the defining characteristics of systematic reviews is the use of stringent quality assessment to filter literature drawn from a well-defined set of sources. Scoping review studies are more tolerant to literature to be included in the review process.

The three essays in this thesis employ a scoping review and a systematic review in series. The scoping review will use a broadly defined research question and scope the academic and non-academic literature on the research question. Content analysis of the articles in the scoping review will then inform and focus the research question in the systematic review and the key-words used in the systematic search for literature.

Systematic reviews in social science

Systematic reviews are an accepted method of collating and synthesizing existing evidence in social sciences (Petticrew, 2008). However, use of systematic reviews in social
sciences has been criticized (Hammersley, 2001) as critical features of the method like assessing quality of papers in terms of randomization and scientific rigour are difficult to implement in reviews of papers from social sciences. Primarily, criticisms have centered around the adoption of systematic reviews from the field of medical sciences to social sciences without modifications (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009).

In order to factor in the need to adapt the method to the field of study, systematic review templates used in the three essays in this thesis have been adapted from similar research in the social sciences. In particular systematic reviews by Voegtlin and Greenwood (2016), Nolan and Garavan (2016) and Becker and Smidt (2015) were used to inform the review methods used in the three essays. The three studies were chosen due to their focus on subjects similar to the essays in this thesis and the fact that their methodological adaptation of the systematic review has been validated by the peer review process.
References


Chapter 2

Essay 1

Locating Workplace Learning in Human Resource Development Literature

The recognition of ‘learning’ as a source of competitive advantage (Gilbert, 2005; Grant, 1996; Livingstone, Mirchandani & Sawchuk, 2008; Lytras & Sicilia, 2005; Moingeon & Edmondson, 1995) sharpened the focus on workplace learning in organizations across all three sectors – public, private and the social economy. The decade of the ‘90s saw people management in organizations begin focusing on intangibles like knowledge, skills and aptitudes at the individual level due to the shift to neoliberal values and practices (Hall, 1992; Madhani, 2012; Prahalad & Hamel, 1999). The focus on intangible capacities of labour led to human resource development (HRD) practitioners paying attention to learning at the organizational, collective and individual levels (Lähteenmäki, Toivonen, & Mattila, 2001).

While HRD practitioners grappled with issues of management policies, organizational structures and best practices for achieving learning orientation towards organizational goals, the scholarly investigations of learning at workplaces coalesced into two distinct clusters, conceptualized as either organizational learning or workplace learning (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005). With roots in management studies, the organizational learning cluster focused on management policies, practices and organizational structures conducive to learning. The work of Senge is indicative of this tendency. The workplace learning scholarship, on the other hand, with its roots in adult learning theory and cognitive science took two routes to understanding
workplace learning. The psychological theorists like Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978) took an objectivistic, mechanistic and positivistic view of learning and explained it only in terms of activities that are inaccessible to direct observation. Their work has been influential in, and spans both organizational and workplace learning literatures. The socio-cultural theorists like Lave and Wenger (1991), Fuller and Unwin (2003, 2004) and Engestrom (1999, 2001) imagined learning as a process privileging the social context of learning (Hager, 2011).

As ‘learning’ became a critical component of people management in organizations, workplace learning became a recurring theme in HRD strategy of organizations (Marsick and Watkins, 1994; Swanson, 1995) which motivated the re-conceptualization of workplaces as learning spaces by contemporary workplace learning theorists such as Stephen Billett (2004). The recasting of employees as learners with agency (Billett, 2004) presented a significant challenge to the productivity centered discourse of HRD, which was till then basing decisions on a mechanistic, individualistic and deterministic understanding of learning. The recognition of the agency of employees and the recognition of multiple forms of learning (i.e., formal, informal and non-formal) marked a shift in the focus of HR practitioners from management of formal workplace teaching to management of broader forms of workplace learning (Ellinger, 2005; Enos, Kehrhaun & Bell, 2003; Garrick, 2012).

These new directions and changes in the area of workplace learning and HR have been, at the same time, creative and disruptive. As a creative force, they have obligated organizations to create a narrative of people-centric HR, and as a disruptive force these new directions have rendered some HR assumptions of the organization and the employee redundant. These new understandings of learning at work present opportunities for organizations to innovate their policies and practices to the benefit of all stakeholders. To that end, however, organizational
designers and decision makers need to first surmount the problem of altering their mental models about work, workplaces and learning. In this essay, I review the human resource development literature with a specific eye to identifying: 1) the conceptualizations of workplace learning in scholarly HRD research, and 2) the drivers of workplace learning identified in HRD scholarly publications. The understandings of workplace learning among HRD practitioners and researchers will inform the investigations of human resource management in non-profit organizations and to understand how workplace learning is deployed and managed by human resource managers in non-profit organizations in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

**Method**

A systematic literature review (SLR) (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009; Macpherson & Jones, 2010) was conducted using four databases; Business Source Premier, Scopus, ProQuest and ABI/INFORM Global.

**Question formulation and conceptual boundaries**

Recognizing the criticality of clearly framed questions (Cooper, Hedges, & Valentine, 1994) for establishing the focus of a literature review (Light & Pillemar, 1984), the first step was to crystallize the research questions. A scoping review of scholarly and non-academic literature was conducted to gain understanding of the issues involved from multiple perspectives and to then develop this study’s research questions. Analysis of literature in the scoping review clarified the research questions as: 1) How is ‘workplace learning’ conceptualized in HRD research studies? 2) What drivers of workplace learning does extant HRD research identify? In addition to clarification of the research questions, the scoping review helped reveal a potential problem of
ambiguities in the definition of both HRD (Walton, 2003) and workplace learning (Tynjälä, 2008). The method employed by Nolan and Garavan (2016) to overcome challenges of ambiguous definition of functional areas in the field of HRD was used to address this challenge. Faced with a similar problem, Nolan and Garavan, drawing on the guidance of Örtenblad (2010), resolved the issue of ambiguities in the definition of terms in HRD and management studies by setting out to “‘understand what is done and/or written under the heading or concepts’ and what authors ‘mean in general terms’” (Ortenblad, cited in Nolan & Garavan, 2016, p. 446).

Based on the findings of the scoping review and the guidance drawn from Nolan and Garavan (2015), the key terms “workplace learning” and “employee learning” were identified as comprehensive if not exhaustive without sacrificing the flexibility needed to capture the width and depth of the literature on the subject. Since workplace learning is a concept that has been the focus of scholarly attention in various fields and functional areas, the next step was to define the boundary within which to search for literature on workplace learning.

**Inclusion & exclusion criteria**

Three inclusion criteria were set to guide the literature search process. First, only studies that mentioned the keywords “workplace learning” OR “employee learning” AND “human resource development” OR HRD in their title or abstract or both were included. Second, only scholarly articles published in peer reviewed journals were included. Third, articles published between January 1, 1990 and Dec 31, 2016 were included in the study. The three exclusion criteria were also set. First, articles whose full text versions were unavailable were excluded.
Second, publications that were commentaries on other publications or book reviews were not included. Third, publications with irrelevant content were not included.

**Data collection**

These criteria were then used to create a database of articles on workplace learning in the field of HRD. The search for articles was conducted in four databases; Business Source Premier, Scopus, ProQuest and ABI/INFORM Global using the following search string combinations:


2. “workplace learning” OR “employee learning” (in the title) AND “human resource development” OR HRD (in the abstract).


The search as outlined in Figure 1 identified 117 articles. The database-searched articles were supplemented with 14 additional articles from the scoping review. The 131 articles were then tabulated, and removal of duplicates yielded 57 articles. The abstracts were screened for relevance to the study at hand resulting in the exclusion of 1 paper. Full texts of the remaining 56 articles were reviewed resulting in the rejection of 16 articles bringing the final article count
for the review to 40 from 12 journals. Appendix A lists the papers excluded at various stages of screening with reasons for exclusion.

![Image of systematic literature review search flow]

**Figure 1:** The systematic literature review search flow

The final sample for this systematic review included 10 qualitative studies, 12 quantitative studies, and 9 theoretical papers, 2 mixed methods studies, and 7 literature reviews. Table 1 shows workplace learning being discussed in the context of HRD from multiple perspectives using diverse methods. The geographic spread of the studies indicates a global interest in the subject.
Table 1: Theoretical, Method and Geographical Spread of the Studies

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<td>Individual</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of literature</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countries</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Korea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 lists the article count by journals represented in the final sample. On expected lines, HRD and management area dominate. Interest in workplace learning in HRD research has remained consistent since 2000 with 36 studies out of the sample (n=40) appearing between 2000 and 2016. The timing of this spurt in focus on workplace learning in the field of HRD in 2000 was no coincidence. The 1990s saw the emergence of HRD from the shadows of HRM parallel the emergence of workplace learning theories. Till the 1980s, HRD remained synonymous with developing and implementing training and development programs (Higgs, 1989) and the
beginning of the 1990s saw it begin to acquire a critical mass of its own (Garavan, 1991). By the middle of the decade, HRD had emerged as a distinct field of study (Saggers, 1994; O'Donnell & Garavan, 1997). By the beginning of 2000s, the human resource function had begun reconfiguring itself to accommodate the increasing recognition of knowledge as a mode of production superseding capital, labour and raw materials (Stewart, 2007), the recognition of various modes of learning (Marsick & Watkins, 1992), the critical examination of these modes of learning by the HR community (Garavan, 1997) and recognition of the socio-cultural context of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Table 2: *Article count by journals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>No. of Articles</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia Pacific Education Review</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Journal for Research on the Ed. and Learning of Adults</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Journal of Training and Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development International</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development Quarterly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development Review</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development Review,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Development International</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Hospitality Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Training and Development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Applied Behavioural Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of European Industrial Training</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Management Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Training &amp; Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Workplace Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloan Management Review</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 40 100
Paralleling the developments in the world of human resource management was the emergence of workplace learning rooted in organizational psychology and management theory inspired concepts of single loop and double loop learning by Chris Argyris and Donald Schon (Argyris & Schon, 1974, 1978). Marsick and Watkins (1990) gave their influential account of informal and incidental learning, self-managed learning and the learning organization. Research on workplace learning was by now of global interest with Nonaka and Takeuchi’s model of knowledge creation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) offering an East Asian understanding of what was till then a traditional Western idea. By the end of the 1990s, notions of workplace learning had expanded even further to include research and writing concerning the dimensions of formal workplace learning with planned for and predictable outcomes (Hager, 1998), incidental learning and tacit knowledge (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2000), and situated learning and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

By the first half of 2000s, traditional sources of competitive advantage (like capital, brand, the supply chain etc.) had been rendered redundant. As organizations looked to learn and innovate, employee learning emerged as a source of competitive advantage (Livingstone, Mirchandani, & Sawchuk, 2008; Lytras & Sicilia, 2005) and evidence of linkages between the people management and organizational performance became stronger (Lau & May, 1998; Singh, 2003). The academic and practitioner interest in workplace learning and HRD converged and the discourse of workplace learning coalesced into two distinct clusters; organizational learning and workplace learning (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005). With roots in management studies, the organizational learning cluster focused on the organizational structures and management practices conducive to learning. The workplace learning scholarship had its roots in adult learning theory and focused on the individual as the learner, on individual learning as part of groups, and on the social aspects of learning, such as with communities of practice and the
learning that occurs within social networks at workplaces and even within the professions, occupation types, or working-class communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Livingstone & Sawchuk, 2003; Livingstone & Scholtz, 2007). Another related development in the field was the shift of focus from individuals to groups and teams. Investigations in workplace learning shifted focus from individual knowledge acquisition to group learning, and this is evident from the significant increase in the number of studies adopting a social theories perspective (Table 3).

Table 3: *Theoretical perspectives adopted by studies in sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Article Count</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Organizational</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993-2005</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4 (21%)</td>
<td>13 (68%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2016</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>9 (43%)</td>
<td>9 (43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the first social/team learning perspectives to popularize the social aspects of organizational and workplace learning was Senge’s (1990) book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. In the book Senge emphasized that “teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in modern organization” (p. 3). As Senge underscored: “this [is] where ‘the rubber meets the road’; unless teams can learn, the organization cannot learn” (p. 228). The recognition of human relationships and networks at workplaces as key moderators of HRD interventions (Gubbins & Garavan, 2005) contributed to the increase in research from social perspectives to focus on developing social capital or as Harrison and Kessels (2004) articulate, the “asset value of human relationships” (p. 88), instead of merely focusing on the “human capital” in organizations.
Content Analysis

The content of the papers was analyzed using a template developed to extract themes around the research questions and the bibliographical data, in particular: the journal, the year of publication of the article, the geographical origin of the paper, the method used and the objectives. The thematic data extracted included the definition/conceptualization of workplace learning and the drivers of workplace learning. The template for data extraction was developed based on an examination of the templates used in existing systematic reviews of closely related concepts (Becker & Smidt, 2016; Nolan & Garavan, 2016; Voegtlin & Greenwood, 2016).

The articles were then analyzed to extract data on the thematic categories identified in the scoping review: ‘definition/conceptualization’ and ‘conditions/drivers’ of workplace learning. This was done in two ways. The first method was the use of search terms identified in the scoping review; ‘workplace learning’, ‘informal learning’, ‘formal learning’, ‘incidental learning’, ‘accidental learning’ and ‘organizational learning’. Papers were also searched for terms used as synonyms of the key search terms. If any such term or usage was found, the result was recorded under the key search term. An example of this would be the usage of ‘work learning’ (Fenwick, 2006) or ‘employee learning’ (Maurer, 2002) being recorded under ‘workplace learning’ for analysis.

The second method of data extraction involved scanning the article followed by an in-depth reading to identify conceptualizations of workplace learning that may not have been identified in the keyword search. The scanning/reading method was also the method used to extract the conditions or drivers of workplace learning identified in the papers. Reliability and validity of the review is ensured through the transparent reporting of the method employed, the search protocol, the sources and the template for data extraction.
Conceptualization of workplace learning

The papers under review were using the term ‘workplace learning’ or synonymous usages of it in varied human resource development contexts ranging from formal workplace learning in the form of training programs (Antonacpoulou, 1999; Aziz, 2015; Russ-Eft, 2002) to informal and incidental learning at workplaces (Chivers, 2011; Clarke, 2004; Garrick, 1998). An original definition, defined as one synthesized by the authors of the paper, appeared in only one paper (Garavan, Morley, Gunnigle & McGuire, 2002). Out of the other 39 papers under review, 20 did not refer to any specific definition or conceptualization of workplace learning. The 19 papers that cited a specific definition/conceptualization along with the sources of definition/conceptualization cited, and the backgrounds of the authors of the papers cited are listed in Appendix B. Out of these 19, the full text of three papers (Daley, 1997; Rowden, 2007; Tjepkema et al., 2002) cited as sources of definition/conceptualization were not available. The 16 papers that were citing specific definitions or conceptualizations of workplace learning and full text of the sources they cite were available for review and are listed in Table 4. It is evident from the data in Appendix C and Table 4 that 14 out of the 16 cited sources were from the adult education domain. Only 5 sources of definition/conceptualization (Daley, 1997; Elleström, 2001; Marsick & Volpe, 1999; Marsick, Volpe, & Watkins, 1999; Tjepkema et al., 2002) were publications in area of HRD or the management domain and even within these 4 out of the 6 listed authors are from the adult education domain (see Appendix C).

They define workplace learning as: Workplace learning represents a set of processes which occur within specific organisational contexts and focus on acquiring and assimilating an integrated cluster of knowledge, skills, values and feelings that result in individuals and teams refocusing and fundamentally changing their behaviour. (p. 61)
**Table 4: Sources of definition of workplace learning cited in papers under review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper in the review</th>
<th>Source cited for definition/conceptualization of workplace learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarke, 2004</td>
<td>Boud &amp; Garrick, 1999, Tjepkema et al., 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lans, Verhees &amp; Verstegen, 2016</td>
<td>Fenwick, 2004;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park &amp; Jacobs, 2011</td>
<td>Rowden, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowden, 2002</td>
<td>Watkins &amp; Marsick, 1992; Marsick &amp; Volpe, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowden &amp; Ahmad, 2000</td>
<td>Watkins &amp; Marsick, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schürmann &amp; Beausaert, 2016</td>
<td>Marsick and Volpe, 1999; Marsick &amp; Watkins, 1990; Marsick et al., 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas &amp; Akdere, 2013</td>
<td>Marsick &amp; Volpe, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Der Heijden, Boon, Van Der Klink &amp; Meis, 2009</td>
<td>Marsick, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>van Rooij &amp; Merkebu, 2015</td>
<td>Watkins &amp; Marsick, 1992; Marsick &amp; Volpe, 1999; Eraut, 2000; Garrick, 1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A broader Internet-based search was made to determine the academic backgrounds of the cited authors and the sites accessed to for the biographical information of the authors is listed in Appendix C. Only Karen E. Watkins had a background in HRD, organizational development and change management in addition to education. This revelation that the HRD scholarship is drawing upon definitions or conceptualizations of workplace learning from the domain of adult education is critical.
Data in Appendix C shows that the HRD scholarship favours the characterizations of workplace learning by Victoria Marsick, Karen E. Watkins and Marie Volpe with 10 out of the 16 papers referring to six papers by Marsick, Watkins and Volpe (Marsick, 2006; Watkins & Marsick, 1992; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Marsick & Watkins, 2001; Marsick & Volpe, 1999; Marsick, Volpe, & Watkins, 1999). The common element among all the six sources is the model of informal and incidental learning by Marsick and Watkins (1990). In their seminal article, Marsick and Watkins identify workplace learning as informal and incidental learning that is unstructured, employee driven and occurring outside the ambit of planned training programs. Marsick and Watkins base their model on the action science theory by Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978), which in turn draws upon theories of learning from experience by John Dewey (1938). The model also draws from Kurt Lewin’s theory of the interaction between individuals and their environment and the theory of transformative learning by Mezirow (1990). Marsick and Watkins define informal learning in contrast to formal learning as follows:

Formal learning is typically institutionally sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured. Informal learning, a category that includes incidental learning, may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner. Incidental learning is defined as a byproduct of some other activity, such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentation, or even formal learning. Informal learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization or it can take place despite an environment not highly conducive to learning. Incidental learning, on the other hand, almost always takes place although people are not always conscious of it (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, p. 12).
In all but two other publications cited by papers in the review, the original conceptualization of workplace learning as informal and incidental learning is subscribed to. The article by Marsick, Watkins and Volpe (1999), cited by three papers under review (Froehlich, Segers & Van den Bossche, 2014; Lohman, 2005; Schürmann & Beausaert, 2016), re-evaluates the basic model of informal learning to integrate the importance of context. In this paper, the authors write that informal workplace learning:

1. Is integrated with work and daily routines.

2. Is triggered by an internal or external jolt.

3. Is not highly conscious.

4. Is often haphazard and is influenced by chance.

5. Involves an inductive process of reflection and action.


Change as a driver of workplace learning and especially as the force behind the recognition of informal and incidental modes of learning has also been a recurring theme in the literature (Marsick, 2006; Marsick & Watkins, 1999). In a paper on informal strategic learning, Marsick (2006) writes that “individual learning is strategic when it helps organizations respond to their changing environment and often to proactively shape those environments. Strategic learning is recognized and utilized to move the organization toward its objectives, but to also reassess goals and strategies in light of emerging insights” (p. 63). Interestingly, this strategic nature of informal learning and its nature as unstructured, experiential, and non-institutional as identified in the paper by Marsick, Volpe and Watkins (1999) is difficult to reconcile. The paper
asserts that informal learning occurs as employees engage with on the job activities as well as off the job life and therefore “cannot be determined by the organization” (Marsick, Volpe, & Watkins, 1999, p. 4). In the context of the HRD function, this resistance to planning and control is a critical characteristic of informal and incidental workplace learning that gives rise to dualities and tensions as management theory informed HRD subordinates the individual to organizational objectives (Fenwick & Lange, 1998; Howell, Carter, & Schied, 2002).

From a critical theoretical perspective, Fenwick (2004) reflects on the commodification of labor and the resulting exploitative nature of HRD resulting from its subscription to human capital theory (Baptiste, 2001). Arguing for a critical HRD, Fenwick (2004) writes that a critical approach to the HRD function in organizations has the potential for “both individual workers’ critical assessment of oppressive or unfair work conditions and organizational improvement through action to address these conditions” (p. 203). This process of emancipation of employees from oppressive organizational practices and simultaneous organizational improvement will result from what Fenwick calls “emancipatory action learning” (p. 203) that will happen at workplaces as a result of employee participation in day to day activities. Fenwick states that in the context of organizations, learning is “collective, practice-based, and mutually constituted with/in systems of activity, discourses, objects and history” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 26). As an ardent proponent of collective learning at workplaces, Fenwick concedes that despite ample evidence against the efficacy of focusing on individual knowledge acquisition in the human resource contexts, the individual development perspective continues to hold sway. Fenwick argues that individualistic and acquisitive learning theories are “highly limited, usually apolitical and acontextual, lacking historical and sociological analysis of knowledge generation, ignoring cultural psychology and geography, and unable to account for the dynamic and often contradictory interactions of individuals with and in the turbulence of everyday activity” (p. 37)
Among the papers cited for definition/conceptualization of workplace learning are two papers by Stephen Billett (Billett, 2002, 2004) who highlights the issue of workplace affordances and the fact that learning opportunities are accessible evenly across workforces, even as social inequities are reproduced in contested workplace relations. Billett (2002) identifies employees’ individual agency as mediator of employee learning through participation. Billett writes that employees choose to engage with work and also the intensity of that engagement. Employee engagement with work and learning through work then is an interaction between workplace affordances and individual agency of the employees. Also, Billett critiques the term “informal learning” for underplaying the affordances for learning present at all workplaces and that workplaces are already always sites of learning, claiming that the term elides the agency of the learning and the purposive way that learning happens at work. The privileging of the ‘individual’ over the ‘social’ by Stephen Billet, however, is a problematic given Fenwick’s assertion that learning is “collective, practice-based, and mutually constituted with/in systems of activity, discourses, objects and history” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 26). Billet’s conceptualization of workplace learning downplays the socio-political factors that can influence the type, access too, and empowerment/participation level of workplace learning, especially given the organizational barriers and exploitations present in capitalist system.

Two papers by Michael Eraut (Eraut, 2000, 2004) were also cited for definitions of workplace learning. In a paper on non-formal learning and tacit knowledge, Eraut (2000) situates non-formal learning between implicit and intentional learning. Eraut prefers the term “non-formal” to “informal” learning, for the same reasons as Billett, and characterizes non-formal learning as “explicit but takes place almost spontaneously in response to recent, current or imminent situations without any time being specifically set aside for it. This reactive learning is near-spontaneous and unplanned, the learner is aware of it but the level of intentionality will vary
and often be debatable.” (p. 115). Eraut goes on to examine the amenability of non-formal learning to planning and suggests that, though non-formal learning can indeed be planned for, it is usually emergent in nature with employees learning along the way as learning opportunities arise unplanned in the course of their engagement with various tasks at work (i.e., in a Deweyian learning-by-doing). Non-formal learning activity then could be deliberative and planned but the recognition of learning opportunities as they arise remains, according to Eraut, on the whole reactive and unplanned. Non-formal learning then lies in the middle of a continuum with fully structured formal workplace learning programs on one end and the unplanned informal/non-formal learning on the other.

Eraut then posits that internalization of non-formal learning will require the learner to make linkages with past knowledge that results from situations where “learning is largely invisible, because much of it is either taken for granted or not recognized as learning” (Eraut, 2004, p. 249). Engagement in learning without realizing it thus results in knowledge acquisition without the individual’s awareness. Such knowledge which an individual possesses without awareness of the knowledge or its acquisition is called tacit knowledge. In the context of workplace learning, Eraut suggests that tacit knowledge is utilized by individuals in two ways. First is a tacit understanding of people at the workplace which Eraut warns can be biased. Second is a tacit knowledge of contexts that is acquired “through a process of socialisation through observation, induction and increasing participation rather than formal inquiry” (Eraut, 2000, p. 122).

Germain & Grenier, 2015 cite Ellström (2001), who uses the term workplace learning to signify organizational learning. According to Ellström, organizational learning is defined as “changes in organizational practices (including routines and procedures, structures, technologies,
systems, and so on) that are mediated through individual learning or problem-solving processes. According to this definition, organizational learning logically implies individual learning, but not vice versa. Thus, individual learning is viewed as a necessary but not sufficient condition for organizational learning to occur” (Ellström, 2001, p. 422). Moreover, Germain & Gernier (2015) cite Boud & Garrick (1998), who identify workplaces as sites of learning with two overriding objectives: first, organizational development for enhanced competitiveness; second, development of the individual as both employee and citizen. Boud and Garrick suggest that the mandate of workplace learning is far more than merely developing professional competencies. They write: “Workplace learning is concerned not only with immediate work competencies, but about future competencies. It is about investment in the general capabilities of employees as well as the specific and technical. And it is about the utilization of their knowledge and capabilities wherever they might be needed in place and time.” (p. 5)

The other publications cited for conceptualizations include Garrick (1998), who identifies workplace learning as informal learning that “is constituted through and by embedded and discursive influences” (p. 13). Garrick acknowledges the strong influence of the conceptualization of workplace learning by Marsick and Watkins on the HRD community and suggests that their focus is on ways to enhance informal and incidental learning as the reason. Illeris (2003) identifies learning as permanent capacity change in people and that there are distinct groups of learners in organizations with each group characterized by different backgrounds and learning needs and that these differences moderate the nature and extent of workplace learning for these groups along cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions. According to Jacobs and Parks (2009) the term workplace learning is not an identifier of one specific phenomenon and that it refers to “the multiple ways through which employees learn in organizations” (p. 134). The moment of learning in work settings was commented on by Lohman
(2005) who cites Jarvis (1987) to assert that learning is triggered when a mismatch emerges between a person’s learning from past experiences and a new experience. The mismatch makes it impossible to make sense of the new experience using the old learnings creating a potential learning situation. This assertion by Jarvis is mirrored by Gherardi (2000) who argues that “reflexive understanding arises at moments of breakdown” (p. 217).

In the only paper in the review that synthesized an original definition of workplace learning, Garavan, Morley, Gunnigle, & McGuire (2002) in their introductory article for a special issue of the Journal of European Industrial Training, define workplace learning as: “represent[ing] a set of processes which occur within specific organizational contexts and focus on acquiring and assimilating an integrated cluster of knowledge, skills, values and feelings that result in individuals and teams refocusing and fundamentally changing their behaviour.” (p. 66). Garavan et al. further note that the complex nature of the workplace learning discourse and highlight the distinctions between formal learning, informal learning and incidental learning at workplaces.

**Extracted Conceptualizations of Workplace Learning**

The previous section analyzed the explicitly stated understandings of workplace learning. In this section, content from the 20 papers that did not explicitly state a definition or refer to an existing conceptualization was analyzed to extract the meanings of workplace learning used by the authors. The conceptualization of workplace learning in the papers that did not explicitly define it or refer to the conceptualization by other scholars mirrors the conceptualization of
workplace learning as informal learning in the papers that did explicitly discuss the definition or conceptualization.

The informal nature of workplace learning is evident when Abma (2003) highlights the power of stories as means of informal learning at workplaces. Abma looks at stories as ‘relational processes’ that allow collective action and collective learning. Stories as tools of informal learning emerge once again in the paper on workplace learning in the pre-World War II cigar factories by Germain & Grenier (2015). The paper describes the ‘lectores’ (readers) who used to read news and stories to workers at the cigar factories to keep them entertained to maximize their work engagement and how the action of selecting lectores and engaging with the stories and news led to political awakening and social change. Transmitted stories as stimulus for reflection, critical evaluation and workplace learning was identified by Chivers (2011) in the world of investment bankers too.

As in the case of Eraut identifying non-formal learning in contrast to formal learning, a theme of implicit differentiation between informal leaning and formal learning emerges from the papers analysed in this section. For instance, Clarke (2004) in his paper on HRD and the challenges of assessing learning in the workplace differentiates between formal and informal workplace learning by their location, with formal learning being limited to the classroom, while informal learning taking place outside of the classroom. Similarly van Der Heijden, Boon, Van Der Klink & Meijs, (2009), in their paper on the employability of non-academic university staff members, identify formal and informal learning as two separate phenomena. They observe that formal learning programs remain the mainstay of HRD efforts despite ample evidence of questionable transfer of learning due to it being more controllable because of its planned content, delivery and measurable outcomes. On similar lines, Schürmann & Beausaert (2016) write that
workplace learning includes both formal and informal learning. While formal learning is planned and structured, according to the authors, informal learning which is unstructured, experiential, and non-institutionalized, occurs while employees engage with daily activities and tasks.

Another theme that emerges is the employee driven nature of workplace learning. Lohman (2005) asserts that employees are the initiators of workplace learning, investing their efforts in upgrading their skills and competencies. Garrick (1998) examines workplace learning from the perspective of employees as he studies the informal learning of two HRD practitioners. Garrick finds that it is learning from experience that characterizes workplace learning. Poell & van der Krogt (2003) also find that a lot of workplace learning is driven by workers and that workplace learning is organized irrespective of management objectives. The research by Rowden & Ahmad (2000) and Rowden (2002) identify self-directed learning, as opposed to training, as more appropriate to environments characterised by change. The changing nature of jobs in such environments translates into a need for self-directed and self-initiated learning patterns as the inflexibility of the formal, management driven learning programs are not quick enough to create the desired changes in human capital in fast changing markets.

Drivers of workplace learning

Review of the articles revealed a range of approaches to discussions on drivers of workplace learning, with papers focusing on leadership, organizational features, the role of line managers, the nature of work, and the personal characteristics of the employees. A high-level synthesis of the drivers of workplace learning by Fenwick, (2010) is representative of the conclusions of other papers. Fenwick identifies the presence of “particular individuals (guides or
mentors), events (conflict or disturbance), leaders (e.g. encouraging inquiry, supporting improvisation), or conditions (‘learning architecture’)” (p. 85).

Schürmann & Beausaert (2016) identify employee characteristic of reflecting on one’s job and reflexively learn from experience. Crouse, Doyle, & Young (2011) also identify willingness to reflect and learn. On similar lines, Abma, (2003) identifies employee characteristics like willingness to participate, realistic expectations, willingness to collaborate, willingness to respect and to use meanings that fall outside the canonized stories as well as the respect the facilitator shows are important as drivers of learning at workplaces. Similarly, Crouse, Doyle and Young (2011) posit that an employee’s own initiative, ability to prioritize learning and reflect on events, willingness to learn, and seeing the need for oneself and having an interest in it are key determinants of learning from work.

Lans, Verhees and Verstegen, (2016) extends the characteristics of individuals from employees to owner managers. They draw attention to the attitudes and perceptions of owner managers of small businesses as factors influencing learning. Lans, Verhees & Verstegen underline the importance of the social competence of owner-managers as a driver of learning in small businesses since social competence is a moderator of the owner manager’s ability to develop and use social networks and relationships for learning.

Jeon & Kim (2012) assert that the leadership characteristics of individuals in leadership positions are determinants of the learning climate in organizations. They also identify ‘open communication’, ‘innovation culture’ as workplace characteristics that drive learning. At task level, Jeon and Kim identify ‘Task factors’ and ‘task characteristics’ which together determine complexity of the task and according to the authors, more complex the task, more its learning potential.
Leadership and task characteristics are components of the work environment in an organization which was highlighted as a driver of workplace learning by Watson & Harmel-Law (2010). In their paper on workplace learning in the legal profession in Scotland, Watson & Harmel-Law write that an organizational climate conducive to workplace learning needs support for managers to develop their skills and roles as coaches and mentors. The issue of leadership and managerial support for learning and their role in creating an environment conducive to learning was identified as a key pre-requisite to learning at work by Poell and van der Krogt (2003) who characterize HRD managers as ‘intermediaries’ between individual workers looking to acquire skills and competencies and the ‘learning market’ and that it is these intermediaries who create a conducive condition for self-directed learning by workers.

A supportive environment is also identified as critical to learning at workplaces by Rowden (2002) who draws attention to the positive relationship between a supportive learning environment at workplaces and employee engagement. The critical role of organizational climate in either supporting or impeding employee efforts to acquire competencies is was highlighted by Van der Heijden (2009) who decomposes conducive learning climate as autonomy of work, communication, co-operative structures, supportive attitudes of and support by superiors, as well as time for learning. Maurer (2002) identified supportive environments in the form of developmental resources provided by company, co-worker/supervisor emphasis and support as factors positively influencing workplace learning. Chivers (2011) argues that managerial support for a conducive learning environment was subject to organizations having a strategic learning orientation and the strategy being communicated to line managers. Chivers further underscores the critical role line managers play in creating and nurturing a learning environment by saying that they need to have an appreciation for continuing on the job learning. Russ-Eft, (2002) identifies categories of elements that enhance transfer of learning in formal workplace learning.
programs including supervisor support and supervisor sanction in addition to workload and opportunity to use peer support. Russ-Eft further identifies pre-training elements, training design elements and post-training elements that enhance learner buy-in, participation, learning transfer and relapse prevention. Similarly, Govaerts and Baert (2011) citing Engeström and Kerosuo (2007) write that informal learning at the workplace can be maximized by not only improving conditions for informal learning but also by adjusting the practices of formal learning programs.

The attitude of line managers is explored by Antonacpoulou, (1999) when he writes that “unless your boss is prepared to allow you to change things, nothing will happen” (p. 28). Antonacpoulou further writes that employees will find it difficult to utilize their learnings and regress to old ways of working if their line managers do not extend them the freedom and emotional safety of trying to change by implementing their new learnings. It can then be argued that managerial attitude towards learning emerges as both a driver and a barrier to workplace learning. Crouse, Doyle and Young, (2011) extend the list of drivers and barriers. While learning with and from others, organizational and managerial support, increased resources and task/job-related issues are identified as workplace learning facilitators, lack of time, high workload, lack of money, not having implemented sufficient technology processes, accessibility and personal factors such as a lack of interest on the part of the learner were identified as barriers. Thomas and Akdere (2013) citing Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) identify ‘antilearning culture’ in organizations detracting employees from learning, reflection, and knowledge sharing. They identify collaboration and the use of collaborative technologies like social media as an antidote to the antilearning culture.

The issue of power structures at workplace was touched on by Abma (2003), who raised concerns that “unequal power constellations” (p. 237) would act as barriers to workplace
learning. This concern is reflected in the identification of ‘individual expression’ as a driver of learning by Kasl Marsick and Dechant (1997) as the extent to which team members have a voice in determining team goals, influence the team working, and express dissent. Kasl et al., further identify ‘appreciation of teamwork’ as openness of team members to hear and consider ideas of their teammates, the degree to which they are willing to play a team role and the extent of their actions for team building. ‘Operating principles’ is also a key driver according to Kasl et al., who describe it as the extent of team organization for effectiveness and efficiency, commonly held beliefs, values, purpose, and structure; and how effectively the team balances task orientation with relationship orientation.

The role of policy and practice as a moderator of learning outcomes is a distinct theme that emerges from the literature. Clarke (2004) identifies organization-wide staff appraisal, staff paid study leave, organization-wide personal development plans, and training and development policy as significant moderators of learning at workplaces. Weighing in on conditions for informal learning, Lohman (2005) makes three recommendations for HRD managers. First, HRD managers should provide for a greater amount of unencumbered to an employee’s workday. Second, HRD managers should approach work design strategically to situate employees, near co-workers in the same technical or professional areas. The third recommendation is to promote informal workplace learning by providing employees access to adequate computer technology and the Internet.
Synthesis and Summary

This systematic review reveals that HRD scholarship tends to conceptualize workplace learning as informal, unplanned and resistant to measurement and control. The drivers of workplace learning discussed in the literature group into two distinct clusters; employee engagement and workplace characteristics. The employee engagement cluster includes the attitude and perceptions of employees towards willingness to participate in work tasks and willingness to reflect and collaborate to learn from experiences. The workplace characteristics cluster covered leadership orientation, organizational climate, and policies of practices. Table 5 summarizes the synthesis of the content from the 40 papers included in the review.

Employee driven, informal, unplanned and difficult to measure

The current conceptualization of workplace learning in the HRD literature identifies it as being employee driven (Abma, 2003; Fenwick, 2008; Jeon & Kim, 2012), collective (Clarke, 2004; Fenwick, 2008; Germain & Grenier, 2015; Kasl, Marsick, and Dechant, 1997), informal (Chivers, 2011; Clarke, 2004; Froehlich, Segers, & Van den Bossche, 2014; Garrick, 1998) unplanned (Rowden & Ahmad, 2000; van Rooij, & Merkebu, 2015), and difficult to measure (Schürmann, & Beusaert, 2016; Van Der Heijden, Boon, Van Der Klink, & Meijs, 2009).

Since the primary objective of the HRD function in organizations to achieve alignment between human capital development and organizational strategy necessitates planning and control. Moreover, the current conceptualization of workplace learning is a source of dualities and tensions. These dualities emerge in the incompatible nature of discourse of formal and informal learning at workplaces (Jacobs & Park, 2009).
Table 5: Themes emerging from the literature analysis

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Synthesis of extracted data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conceptualization of workplace learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Identified drivers of workplace learning**

*Individual characteristics*

- Willingness to participate, collaborate, reflect and learn from experiences: Abma, 2003; Crouse, Doyle & Young, 2011; Jeon & Kim, 2012; Schürrmann & Beausaert, 2016

*Workplace characteristics*

- Leadership orientation: Jeon & Kim, 2012; Poell, & van der Krogt 2003; Watson & Harmel-Law, 2010
- Organizational climate: Abma, 2003; Antonacpoulou, 1999; Schürrmann, & Beausaert, 2016; Thomas & Akdere, 2013
- Policies and practices: Antonacpoulou, 1999; Chivers, 2011; Clarke, 2004; Crouse, Doyle & Young, 2011; Jeon & Kim, 2012; Poell, & van der Krogt 2003

Overall the review reveals that an unambiguous, universally acceptable definition of workplace learning is yet to emerge. However, the papers in the review converge on the broad conceptualization of workplace learning as learning from experience at workplaces (Clarke, 2004; Jeon & Kim, 2012; Rowden, 2002). There was also a definite trend towards understanding workplace learning as the function of collective engagement as groups and teams in a specific social context (Fenwick, 2008; Kasl, Marsick, and Dechant, 1997). While authors acknowledged both, formal and informal modes of workplace learning, informal learning was identified as being distinct from formal learning (Van Der Heijden, Boon, Van Der Klink, & Meijs, 2009) and...
the factors differentiating them were the location of learning, amenability to planning, control and measurement (Chivers, 2011; Clarke, 2004; Froehlich, Segers, & Van den Bossche, 2014 van Rooij, & Merkebu, 2015). The review revealed evidence of what Jacobs & Park (2009) called “incompatible level of discourse” (p. 142) between formal and informal learning at workplaces that acts as an impediment to their integration into a “cohesive understanding of workplace learning” (p. 142).

A sub-theme of change as driver of conversations on workplace learning was identified within the broader theme of conceptualization of workplace learning. Though none of the papers specifically evaluated the influence of change in internal and external environment on workplace learning, papers in the review have alluded to the issue indirectly (Germain & Grenier, 2015; Rowden & Ahmad, 2000; Rowden, 2002). Changes in the form of increasingly globalized neoliberal markets, rapidly changing technology regimes and the ever-increasing competition, alters the strategic, social, demographic, cultural and governance frameworks of organizations. In Canada, Burke and Ng (2006) identify similar drivers of change that have maximum impact in the day to day lives of workers as these changes necessitate re-skilling to stay relevant and productive in the changed environment. This re-skilling of workers in the face of change involves learning new competencies, skills, knowledges and gaining new attitudes. As Illeris (2011) notes, “Everyone must be prepared for their working functions to change constantly and radically throughout the whole of their working lives” (p. 4). The change imperative faced by organizations and employees explains the elevation of discussions on workplace learning in the context of human resource development in organizations.
Individual and workplace characteristics

The content analysis for drivers of workplace learning revealed two clusters of factors promoting or impeding workplace learning. The first cluster consisted of individual characteristics of the actors involved. Within this cluster, the employee characteristics driving, or impeding learning were identified as willingness to participate and collaborate (Abma, 2003) and willingness to reflect and learn from experiences (Crouse, Doyle & Young, 2011). These also happen to be recognised elements of employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006).

The second cluster of drivers was workplace characteristics which included leadership orientation (Jeon & Kim, 2012; Poell, & van der Krogt 2003; Watson & Harmel-Law, 2010), an organizational climate conducive to learning (Abma, 2003; Antonacpoulou, 1999; Schürmann, & Beausaert, 2016; Thomas & Akdere, 2013), and a conducive policy and practices framework (Antonacpoulou, 1999; Chivers, 2011; Clarke, 2004; Crouse, Doyle & Young, 2011; Jeon & Kim, 2012; Poell, & van der Krogt 2003). Fenwick (2010) provides a good summary of conditions and drivers of workplace learning. Fenwick identifies the presence of “particular individuals (guides or mentors), events (conflict or disturbance), leaders (e.g. encouraging inquiry, supporting improvisation), or conditions (‘learning architecture’)” (p. 85).

Incompatible discourses

An examination of the papers referenced for the conceptualizations of workplace learning reveal a strong grounding in adult and education. As a concept, workplace learning is open to interpretation from both an adult education perspective and a managerial perspective. The difference between these perspectives is that while the managerial perspective concerns itself
with the achievement of organizational goals efficiently and profitably, the adult education perspective adopts a critical, radical and emancipatory approach to workplace learning (Bratton, Mills, Pyrch & Sawchuk, 2003). While workplace learning lies at the intersection of adult education and the HRD function (De Simone, Werner, & Harris, 2000), the managerial and adult education perspectives lead to radically different interpretations of the phenomena involved. The managerial approach to learning at workplaces hived off to concentrate on achieving a congruence between the human resource development and the organizational strategy for competitive advantage for the organization. The adult education scholarship, on the other hand, developed a markedly critical stand on the treatment of workplace learning by the HRD community (Fenwick, 2004). This antagonistic stand is informed by a criticism of the HRD subscription to human capital theory and the resultant exploitative treatment of the workforce due to the subordination of individual interest for organizational interest (Fenwick & Lange, 1998; Howell, Carter, & Schied, 2002).

This conflict between individual interest and organizational interest creates dualities and tensions between aspects of workplace learning like the incompatibility of the formal learning discourse and the informal learning discourse (Jacobs & Park, 2009). HRD is a managerial function and the fact that the HRD community differentiates between formal and informal learning at workplaces on the basis of planning, implementation and control is evidence enough that the management imperative (characterized by a need to plan and control) of HRD and the informal nature (characterized by resistance to planning and control) of workplace learning are fundamentally incompatible.

Dualities and tensions drive theory building (Ford & Backoff, 1988) and future research investigating workplace learning in the context of HRD and organizational development can take
up the challenge of resolving tensions between the opposing perspectives informing the conceptualization of learning at workplaces in HRD contexts.
References


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Appendix A

Excluded papers and reasons for exclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excluded Papers</th>
<th>Reason for Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
## Appendix B
Sources of definitions/conceptualizations of workplace learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s Cited</th>
<th>Specific Paper/Article Cited</th>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix C

Academic/theoretical background of authors cited for definition of workplace learning

<table>
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<th>Cited Author/s</th>
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<th>Cited Author Background</th>
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<tr>
<td>Billet, 2002</td>
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<td>Billet, 2004</td>
<td>Germain &amp; Grenier, 2015</td>
<td>Adult Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boud &amp; Garrick, 1999</td>
<td>Clarke, 2004</td>
<td>David Boud (Adult Ed.) &amp; John Garrick (Voc. Edu)</td>
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<td>Daley, 1997</td>
<td>Lohman, 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellestrom, 2001</td>
<td>Germain &amp; Grenier, 2015</td>
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<td>Eraut, 2004</td>
<td>Froehlich, Segers, &amp; Van den Bossche, 2014;</td>
<td>Education/Continuing Education</td>
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<td>Fenwick, 2004</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fenwick, 2010</td>
<td>Germain &amp; Grenier, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garrick, 1998</td>
<td>van Rooij &amp; Merkebu, 2015</td>
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<td>Illeris, 2003</td>
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<td>Lohman, 2005</td>
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<td>Marsick &amp; Volpe, 1999</td>
<td>Rowden, 2002; Schürrmann &amp; Beaussert, 2016; Thomas &amp; Akdere, 2013; van Rooij &amp; Merkebu, 2015</td>
<td>Victoria Marsick (Adult Education) &amp; Marie Volpe (Psychology/Adult Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsick, 2006</td>
<td>Van Der Heijden, Boon, Van Der Klink &amp; Meijs, 2009</td>
<td>Victoria Marsick (Adult Educ.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowden, 2007</td>
<td>Park &amp; Jacobs, 2011</td>
<td>UNAVAILABLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tjepkema et al., 2002</td>
<td>Clarke, 2004</td>
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<td>Watkins &amp; Marsick, 1992</td>
<td>Rowden, 2002; Rowden &amp; Ahmad, 2000; van Rooij &amp; Merkebu, 2015</td>
<td>Victoria Marsick (Adult Education) &amp; Karen E. Watkins (HRD/OD/Change Mgt./Educ.)</td>
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</table>
Chapter 3

Essay 2

Human Resource Management in Non-Profit Organizations: A Systematic Review

The vigorous growth in the Non-profit sector across the globe continues in terms of number of organizations, their impact in the countries and societies where they are situated, and in terms of the work they generate from employees or volunteers. Making up a part of civil society and falling between the private and the public sector,\(^1\) Non-profit organizations (NPOs) continue to remain sensitive to broader socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic, and even ecological changes and challenges, helping bring non-profits out of the niches into direct competition with the for-profit sector, to work with or act as alternatives to public sector organizations, to collaborate or compete with for- and other non-profits, and to compete for increasingly dwindling public sector funding as globalization and neoliberal political and economic values continue to expand the world over. DiMaggio and Anheier (1990) suggest that such a state of direct competition with their counterparts in the for-profit, non-profit, and even public sector creates a situation ‘likely to be unstable’ (p. 139). Three decades later, the instability thrives as the non-profit sector, the for-profit and the downsized public sector continue

\(^1\) The degree to which they do in part depending on where and how they receive funding primarily, from market activities/earned income or from grants or subsidies (Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2017).
to transform in a landscape marked by more intense free market competition and the drive towards continuous organizational change.

As NPOs participate in this unstable and fluid environment, they are confronted with the need to transform their structures, offerings and management strategies to become more “efficient” and “responsive” to client or program needs (Anheier and Seibel 2001; Ridder, Piening & Baluch, 2012). Thus, the human resource management departments in non-profits find themselves at the epicenter of the socio-economic transformations driven by what has been termed alternately, among other terms, as neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005; Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005), austerity (Reiner, 1989; Ross & Savage, 2013), downsizing (Berman, 2014; Goulet & Frank, 2002), and market imperatives (Morris, Coombes, Schindelutte & Allen, 2007). In this essay, I systematically review the literature on human resource development in NPOs in order to analyze the influence these socio-political changes have had on human resource management decisions in non-profits.

While the legal definitions of NPOs vary by country and region, the common element in all the definitions of non-profits (also known as non-for-profits) is the lack of stockholding (that is, no private ownership) and a focus on providing service, welfare and relief to the public (i.e., the provisioning of social, cultural, or environmental goods or services to meet social, cultural, or environmental needs) without accumulation and re-distribution of earnings/profits, and with clear “asset locks” (inability to wind-up the organization for private gain) (Akingbola, 2015; Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2017; Salamon, & Anheier, 1992). Since jobs at non-profit workplaces are predominantly service jobs which by their nature are ‘high-involvement’ (Felstead & Gallie, 2004), and since monetary incentives cannot be used to motivate employees or volunteers (Depedri & Borzaga, 2005), their engagement and retention needs HR departments
to look beyond the conventional monetary incentive-based solutions. Moreover, since the nature of the non-profit sector makes human resources critical to the success of the organization—particularly concerning securing the proper skills, capabilities and employee/volunteer identification with organizational mission (Akingbola, 2015)—human resource management (HRM) acquires a critical status as a determinant of organizational success.

The importance of HRM to NPOs is magnified further by their need to implement and manage change. Globally, the non-profit sector has grown exponentially in the past two decades and continues to outgrow the for-profit sector (Kim & Bradach, 2012; Nonprofit HR, 2015). In terms of the share of economically active population, the Canadian non-profit sector is the second largest in the world (Hall, 2005). Accounting for 7% of the Canadian economy in 2015, the sector contributed $100.7 billion in 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2015), employed over two million people, and engaged over 13 million volunteers (Wright, 2015). The growth of the non-profit sector comes with a backdrop of disruptive changes in the political, social, economic and technological environment, and concurrently in the form of increased competition for and reduced funding support from governments, foundations, and private funders (Lynn, 2003; Ridder & McCandless, 2010). Recruitment and retention of employees and volunteers has also emerged as a challenge for NPOs (Ban, Drahnak-Faller, & Towers, 2003; Guo, Brown, Ashcraft, Yoshioka, & Dong, 2011). Similar to their counterparts in the for-profit and public sectors, the management of NPOs strive to achieve a strategic and operational fit between the external environment and the internal environment and Baird and Meshoulam (1988) underscore the vital role human resource management plays in achieving this fit.
Method

A systematic review of literature (SLR) (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009; Macpherson & Jones, 2010), was conducted in order to assess the influence these socio-political changes have had on human resource management decisions in NPOs. The research question guiding the literature review is as follows:

- Which are the primary environmental factors or pressures influencing human resource management decisions in NPOs?

The summary of the SLR search flow process reported on in this chapter is given in Figure 1.

![Diagram of systematic literature review search flow]

**Figure 1:** The systematic literature review search flow
Literature Review Protocol

Question formulation

The success of systematic reviews is predicated upon the clarity in framing the research questions (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009; Macpherson & Jones, 2010). Thus, a scoping review of literature on the subject area was first conducted to achieve this clarity. The scoping review of literature in the field suggests that the interplay between the unique nature of non-profit workplaces and the external environment create tensions and pressures that influence HR policy and practice significantly. The contextual perspective of human resource management (Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Martín-Alcázar, Romero-Fernandez, & Sánchez-Gardey, 2005) identify the linkages between managerial decision making and its interaction with the external environment (i.e., competition, government policies, state of the economy, and so on) and the internal environment of organizations (i.e., the nature of the workforce, organizational structure, the policy framework, and so on). Scholarly investigations of working conditions and the work environment in the for-profit and the public sector confirms that the interaction between external environment, internal environment and managerial decision making is a significant determinant of working conditions (Armstrong, & Taylor, 2014; Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Kristensen, Hannerz, Høgh, & Borg, 2005). Since the non-profit sector is subject to the same forces of change experienced by the for-profit organizations and the public sector, it is safe to assume that the working conditions and the internal environment of NPOs would be affected by the managerial decisions and the factors influencing those decisions.

In this essay, I attempt to systematically review scholarly literature on human resource management in NPOs to identify the factors or pressures influencing human resource management decisions. Articles to be included in the study were searched for in four electronic...
databases: Business Source Premier, Scopus, ProQuest and ABI/INFORM Global. The search strategy is detailed in Table 1. The emerging themes and findings of this review, along with the findings from Essay 1, will inform the study of workplace learning orientation in NPOs in Essay 3.

Table 1: Search strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>Search Term Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Source Premier</td>
<td>January 1, 1990 to Dec 31, 2016</td>
<td>&quot;human resource management&quot; OR &quot;human resource development&quot; OR HRD OR HRM AND non-profit OR nonprofit OR &quot;not for profit&quot;</td>
<td>In the title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>January 1, 1990 to Dec 31, 2016</td>
<td>&quot;human resource management&quot; OR &quot;human resource development&quot; OR HRD OR HRM AND non-profit OR nonprofit OR &quot;not for profit&quot;</td>
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<td>January 1, 1990 to Dec 31, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABI/INFORM Global</td>
<td>January 1, 1990 to Dec 31, 2016</td>
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<td>In the title</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inclusion criteria and quality assessment

Three inclusion criteria were set to guide the literature search process. First, only studies that mentioned the search terms in the title of the article were included. Second, only scholarly articles published in peer reviewed journals were included. Third, articles published between January 1, 1990 and Dec 31, 2016 were included in the study. Two exclusion criteria were also set and were used for quality assessment of papers after removing the duplicate search results. First, publications that were commentaries on other publications or book reviews were not
included. Second, publications with irrelevant focus or not about human resource management in NPOs were also excluded.

**Data extraction and synthesis**

Two themes that emerged from the scoping review were used as guides for data extraction. The first theme included the pressures and challenges on NPOs informing their HR policies and practices. The second theme encapsulated the responses by the NPOs to their pressures and challenges in the form of HR policies and practices. The synthesis of data is based on drawing linkages between the kinds of pressures faced by NPOs and their responses.

The search from the four databases yielded 46 articles with the search terms in their titles. Removal of duplicates left a paper count of 22. Five articles were excluded at various stages of quality assessment. The excluded papers and the reasons for their exclusion are listed in Appendix 1. The final paper count for data extraction stood at 17 and Table 2 lists the geographical origins of the paper and the method employed by the authors.

| Table 2: Theoretical, method and geographical spread of the studies |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---|
| **Methods**                 | Article Count | % |
| Quantitative                | 4           | 24 |
| Qualitative                 | 6           | 35 |
| Theoretical                 | 5           | 29 |
| Mixed methods               | 2           | 12 |
| **Countries**               |             |   |
| Australia                   | 5           | 29 |
| Canada                      | 4           | 24 |
| USA                         | 3           | 18 |
| Germany                     | 2           | 12 |
| Spain                       | 1           | 6 |
| UK                          | 1           | 6 |
| USA + Germany               | 1           | 6 |
The descriptive analysis of the bibliographic information of the papers included in the review reveals that earliest dated publication on human resource management in NPOs is from 2004 (Table 3).

Table 3: *Paper count by year and journal*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
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<td>Public Personnel Management</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport Management Review</td>
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<td>International Journal of Knowledge Mgt. Studies</td>
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<td>Employee Relations</td>
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<td>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</td>
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<td>Administration and Society</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The search period for the articles extended over 27 years from 1990 to 2016 and the absence of studies on HRM or HRD in NPOs from 1990 to 2003 in the databases included in the review is a significant finding. Two of the excluded papers were from this time period (Appendix A) but even if we consider them, the lack of scholarly investigations of the HR function in NPOs suggests that human resource and its management was not recognized as a key determinant of NPO success till the mid 2000s. The exclusion of NPOs as a HR research context is even more starkly visible when we compare the number of research studies on HR between 1990 and 2004 with the number of research studies on HR in NPOs in the same time period (Table 4). Coupled with the fact that only 4 studies out of the 27 under review were from journals dedicated to the social economy sector beginning in 2010, the bibliographical descriptive analysis indicates that the scholarly focus on human resource management in NPOs is relatively recent. It can be
assumed this is the case due to the wider take-up of neoliberal policies throughout the past three decades, and the new challenges brought by these policies for non-profit HR issues. Further analysis of this will be provided in the conclusions to this chapter.

Table 4: Paper count with following search terms (in title) from 1990-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&quot;human resource management&quot; OR &quot;human resource development&quot; OR HRD OR HRM</th>
<th>&quot;human resource management&quot; OR &quot;human resource development&quot; OR HRD OR HRM AND non-profit OR nonprofit OR &quot;not for profit&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Source Premier</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProQuest</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABI/INFORM</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>1543</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content Analysis

The papers under review were examined to extract factors influencing HR policies and practices of NPOs. The mission critical nature of workforce and non-profits transforming their HRM strategy in the face of disruptive environmental changes emerge as themes from the extracted data.

Workforce recruitment and retention

One major theme to emerge was the criticality of the non-profit workforce and the increasing difficulties NPOs are facing in recruitment and retention (Guo, 2011; Taylor & McGraw, 2006; Walk, Schinnenburg, & Handy, 2014). This finding is in agreement with Bacchega & Borzaga (2001, 2003), who highlight the non-monetary appeals used by NPOs to recruit employees and volunteers. Merlot and De Cieri (2012) and Mann (2006) reinforce the values and ideology-driven motivations of non-profit sector workforces and the heavy
dependence of non-profits on the dedication and engagement of their workforce to achieve organizational objectives. This assertion is mirrored in a paper on strategy and human resource management by Akingbola (2006), who cites the nature of services provided by NPOs as the primary reason for the criticality of human resources for NPOs. Akingbola goes on to assert that the nature of services of non-profits does not allow easy replacement of human resources by other capital resources such as automation. Indeed, Akingbola, in agreement with Merlot and De Cieri (2012), writes that the key driver to recruitment and retention in NPOs is the employee and volunteer beliefs in organizational values and mission.

In addition to the social mission, Akingbola (2013) identifies the institutional characteristics of NPOs as critical influences on HR policies and practices. Citing Baum and Oliver (1991), Akingbola highlights the institutional environment as a characteristic of non-profit workplaces which are under constant pressure to seek and maintain legitimacy with multiple internal and external stakeholders including employees and volunteers. In an increasingly competitive landscape this translates into tensions between performance orientation and a social orientation for the decision makers. Using contingency theory, Akingbola identifies three capability imperatives faced by the HR function in non-profits; operational, institutional and values. These capabilities are a result of the interaction of external and internal contingencies and influence HR policies and practices. In the paper, Akingbola proposes a model of strategic non-profit human resource management which seeks to integrate the HR architecture with human capital and the values of the organization. He identifies three kinds of ‘principles’ that can guide HR practices and processes: mutual, values-based and assimilative. The mutual principle is “based on the primacy of collective interpersonal objectives” (p. 224). Policies based on this principle will drive solidarity and give rise to norms that will give impetus to policy formulation based on mutual interests. HR processes and practices based on the values-based principle
“attempts to integrate the core values from an organization’s interactions and processes into the HR system” (p. 224) and reconciles tensions between social objectives of the organization and external dependencies by melding shared values with compliance and the expectations of external stakeholders. Finally, the assimilative principle lends primacy to the sources of revenue and the interactions it has with the organization and is developed when management sets out to integrate HR processes and practices to the source of revenue that has the most impact on the bottom-line.

**Change**

The shift in the non-profit sector to a model increasingly reliant on remunerated employees selected for their qualifications rather than their commitment to the mission was a response to the demands of efficiency and competitiveness from external stakeholders perceived in the literature. Apart from recruiting qualified employees, professionalization of the sector required non-profits to change their management ethos (Parsons & Broadbridge, 2004). As expected, *change and its management* emerged as another theme running through the papers under review (Akingbola, 2013b; Ridder & McCandles, 2004, 2010; Taylor & McGraw, 2006).

Ridder, Piening, and Baluch (2004, 2010, 2012) explore the increasing expectations from NPOs to transform themselves by becoming more responsive and increasing effectiveness and efficiency in meeting organizational objectives. The authors highlight the need “to enhance their legitimacy in the eyes of various external stakeholders, such as donors, government, clients, and members” (Ridder, Piening, & Baluch, 2010, p. 125), related to the phenomenon of isomorphism in non-profits, which we will address shortly. The authors argue that changes needed to achieve such a comprehensive transformation requires buy-in from employees at all levels and that makes the role of HR departments central to the organizational success of NPOs.
The globalized economic landscape has challenged non-profits to modify their structure, service offerings, and management styles. Along with challenges, however, globalization has offered NPOs the possibility to expand the scope of their mission beyond the political boundaries of their home countries. The broad emergence of multinational corporations the 1960s in the for-profit sector was a visible outcome of organizations cashing in on globalized market opportunities. Much less visible however was the emergence of a multinational and international non-profit sector emerging from developed economies (Fenwick, 2005). The emergence of multinational non-profit enterprises (MNPE) (also termed non-governmental organizations, or NGOs) was then a response to both the rapid changes in the “market” for non-profit services and the related intensification of neoliberal and IMF-sanctioned policies of austerity and the downsizing of state institutions that have affected more and more national and regional contexts throughout the world over the past four decades (Edwards, 2008). These socio-economic contexts of change rooted in neoliberalism have required NPOs to adopt modified management structures, emulating at times the HR practices of for-profit competitors. Fenwick identifies the typologies of these modified management structures distributed along a continuum:

- the ‘independent’ end of the continuum, there is little or no formal central coordination.
- At the mid-point, in federation or confederation structures, either strong centres (federation) or strong members (confederation) allocate some coordination, resource allocation and standard setting activities to the others. At the ‘unitary’ end, there is a single global enterprise, with only one board and central headquarters, responsible for resource acquisition and allocation, and programme decisions. (Fenwick, 2005, p. 500)

The complex structures of MNPEs which were adopted in response to globalization, in turn, necessitated a modification of management philosophy and practice including that of the
human resources as they “strive to reconcile multiple constituencies while managing diversity, geographical distance, political fragmentation and economic constraints.” (p. 501). Fenwick examines the HR management of one such MNPE, World Vision, a non-denominational Christian missionary service organization and finds that the MNPE was attempting to reflect its core values, such as selection of employees with similar values, designing jobs to provide a work-life balance and encouragement to employees to form relational contracts with the MNPE. Thus, according the Fenwick, the human resource management strategy of the MNPE case study was geared to maintaining employee commitment to the organizational mission and managing diverse workforces and international staff transfers.

The modification of management structures and policies was not limited to NPOs going multinational. Increasing competition for limited sources of funding and volunteers was affecting non-profits irrespective of their size and market focus (Balabanis, Stables & Phillips, 1997; Mukhtar et al., 2016; Tuckman, 1998; Warburton, Moore & Oppenheimer, 2017). While seeking funding remained the responsibility of the marketing function, maintaining workforce levels and ensuring that the workforce had the necessary skill set needed by the organizations saw the HR departments adjusting their policies. The papers under review reveal evidence of increasing proportion of remunerated employees in the workforce when compared to volunteers (Matias-Reche et al., 2009) and evidence of increased professionalization and credentialization of jobs (Taylor & McGraw, 2006).

Another tension with change was examined by Akingbola (2006) in his review of practices of NPOs to test for congruence with organizational strategy. In this study, Akingbola finds evidence of a disconnect between recruitment, compensation and labor relations in the organizational goals of non-profits. For recruitment, this disconnect translates into attracting
employees lacking the required skill sets and more importantly, the mission buy-in and more on the basis of their being professionally qualified or having a track record of market success in their previous assignments. Given the critical role employees and volunteers play in successful strategy implementation in NPOs (Ridder, Piening, & Baluch, 2014, 2010), this disconnect between HR strategy and organizational strategy has the potential to snowball into decreased employee engagement and increased turnover in NPOs (Alfes, Shantz & Bailey, 2016; Renard & Snelgar, 2016, 2017), which in turn undermines employee performance (Anitha, 2014; Owens, Baker, Sumpter & Cameron, 2016).

There is also evidence of NPOs transforming their human resource management strategy in the form of cross-sector collaborations and tensions between non-profit, public sector and for-profit organizations (Fenwick, 2005) to surmount the challenges posed by policy frameworks and competitive pressures. In their research on recent reconfigurations of human resource management in NPOs, Ridder, Piening, & Baluch (2004) show that HR management styles can be delineated into types based on what they call ‘HR architectures’ – i.e., administrative, motivational, strategic, and values-based styles, according to the authors – that reveal distinct configurations of HR management policies and practices according to tensions with external factors. Practices in administrative non-profit HRM are ones that are not professionalized according to external funding pressures, and that HRM plays a minimal role in organizational efforts to respond to market pressures. In such non-profits, HR policies and practices are configured to reducing employee costs. Motivational style focuses on the social mission and the humanistic principles emanating from the mission. In contrast to the motivational style, strategic HRM caters to the market logic and focuses on achieving synchronization with organizational objectives. Finally, the values-based style of HRM seeks to
leverage values by orienting decision making by the stated organizational mission and the way it is perceived by the employees.

**Synthesis & Summary**

The papers included in this review are diverse in terms of the types of NPOs covered, external and internal factors influencing HRM, and in the variety of issues and dimensions of HRM in NPOs, including the theoretical perspectives employed. One of the first revelations of the review was the absence of HR research in the context of non-profit organizations till 2000. By the 1990s, the non-profit sector had begun responding to the increasingly globalized neoliberal markets with changes like corporatization (Alexander & Weiner, 1998) and marketization (Salamon, 1993). While the sector had begun talking about competing by making changes to strategy and marketing, it was not until late 1990s that this wave of change spilled into the realm of human resource management when the professionalization of non-profit jobs Salamon (1999) emerged as a non-profit sector response to operating in a free market economy.

This timeline of change is confirmed in this review as a near complete exclusion of the non-profit sector from human resource related research till 2000. This finding is also in line with the general trend observed in the quest for competitiveness in the for-profit sector too where the human resource has been the last ‘resource’ recognized to be a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1995; Ulrich, 1987). Similarly, as the uncertainty of a fast-changing ecosystem and the change imperative forced NPOs to explore sources of competitive advantage, the human resources became the focus in the non-profit sector too. This is confirmed by the two sources of influence on non-profit human resource policies and practices identified in this review (Table 5).
Table 5: Synthesis of extracted data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes Identified from Extracted Data</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties in recruitment &amp; retention</td>
<td>Akingbola, 2006, 2013; Guo, 2011; Mann, 2006; Merlot and De Cieri, 2012; Taylor &amp; McGraw, 2006; Walk, Schinnenburg, &amp; Handy, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NPOs operate in globalized, competitive and increasingly knowledge-based ecosystems. Some have termed this the neoliberal turn (Harvey, 2007), increasingly pressuring public sectors and encouraging the growth of non-profits to fill the gaps left by dwindling state sectors (Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2017). This phenomenon has particularly taken place in Western Europe, North America, Australia, and increasingly the global South. The critical nature human resource plays in gaining competitive advantage in such ecosystems is well documented (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015; Ashton, & Morton, 2005; Michie & Sheehan, 2005), but so have been the challenges on the sector (Dart, 2004; Mason, 2012). While the critical nature of human resources holds true for organizations across all three sectors, the current review shows that the service-oriented, social mission-driven characteristics of NPOs make them particularly dependent on the quality, commitment, and work engagement of their employees and volunteers, and thus particularly susceptible to the tensions and challenges wrought by the neoliberal turn (Guo, 2011; Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2017; Taylor & McGraw, 2006; Walk, Schinnenburg, & Handy, 2014).
The review also reveals that recruitment and retention of employees and volunteers has emerged as a primary challenge faced by NPOs (Akingbola, 2006, 2013a; Guo, 2011; Mann, 2006; Merlot and De Cieri, 2012; Taylor & McGraw, 2006; Walk, Schinnenburg, & Handy, 2014). The increased performance requirements (i.e., getting more done with the same or less resources) among the various stakeholders of NPOs (Hinna, Gnan, & Monteduro, 2016; Macedo, Pinho, & Silva, 2016; O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014) emerges as the primary driver of demands to professionalize operations and demonstrate effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness (Akingbola 2003a, 2012; Ridder, Piening, & Baluch, 2004). This tendency at times leads to what has been called “mission drift” and risks compromising the social objectives of the non-profit (Akingbola, 2006; Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2017).

These changes to and tensions faced by NPOs and the non-profit sector more broadly have increasingly forced non-profits to place more and more efforts on attempting to retain staff and regain relevancy in the eyes their stakeholders, which involves the pursuit of legitimacy-seeking practices (Dart, 2004), buy-in, acceptance and increased participation by NPO staff and volunteers. Moreover, the increased use of temporary staff or contract workers and the subsequent high rates of turnover witnessed in NPOs add a major impediment to implementing change, bringing increased tensions to HRM planning (Burnes, 2015; Ngotngamwong, 2014; Steane, Dufour, & Gates, 2015). In response, NPOs are borrowing from the public-sector playbook of new public management (NPM) implementation and even for-profit sector strategies such as performance-based pay schemes (Chen, Ren & Knoke, 2014) to increase reliance on permanent employees. Moreover, the increased proportion of remunerated employees relied on by NPOs today is accompanied by a gradual professionalization of roles traditionally held by volunteers (Haddad, Ayala, Uriona Maldonado, Forcellini, & Lezana, 2016; Taylor & McGraw, 2006). The results of these pressures to professionalize and seek NPM or private-sector solutions
to staff-retention issues and revenue generating and grant-getting needs add additional tensions and risks to NPOs’ social objectives, which puts additional strain on meeting social objectives and risks leading even further into mission drift.

The review reveals the critical nature of human resources and the increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff as the primary factor or pressure informing human resource management decisions in NPOs. The changing external environment in the form of neoliberalism, globalization and a shrinking public sector, increased competition for funds and workforce not only within the sector but also with for-profits social service delivery firms. The non-profit sector response to the professionalization of the workforce generates tensions between the ideology driven, non-monetary incentive-seeking nature of the traditional workforce and the emerging non-profit workplaces. This tension results in decreased employee engagement, increased attrition and difficulties in recruitment. While increasing competition is an external pressure, the need to manage and respond to the external changes by modifying management structures, policies and practices emerges as the second factor or pressure influencing HR policies and practices in NPOs.

Together, these two factors are forcing non-profits to transform themselves into flexible, ostensibly more “responsive” units that make “efficient” use of their scarce resources, while serving the needs of their various stakeholders more “effectively” (Alexander, Nank, & Stivers, 1999; Anheier and Seibel 2001; Salamon & Dewees, 2002). NPOs are attempting this transformation at a structural, strategic and operational level, learning from their interactions with the for-profit sector and the public sector, while also facing challenges due to having to compete with the private sector and seek ever-dwindling funds from a shrinking public sector.
As NPOs adopt management strategies from their for-profit counterparts and subscribe to the narratives of competitiveness and efficiency, there is evidence that even though the differences in the nature of services provided and mission remain, the management of non-profits had started mimicking their for-profit counterparts in what has been termed as “mimetic isomorphism” (Dart, 2004; Helms Mills, 2003; Mason, 2012). Relatedly, Rodwell and Teo (2004) in their paper comparing HR strategies in for-profit and NPOs found no evidence of sharp differences in HRM strategies between the sectors. This result may indicate that in the process of transforming their HR strategy, the management units of non-profit workplaces have begun to increasingly resemble their for-profit counterparts, as indeed suggested by isomorphic theory. This conclusion lends further credence to the argument that the non-profit sector is transforming to become more and more “business-like” (Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner, 2016; McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram & Sullivan Mort, 2015). The phenomenon of NPOs becoming “business like” has been understood by scholars as the adoption of managerialism (Baines, Charlesworth, Cunningham, & Dassinger, 2012; Claeyé & Jackson, 2012; Ramia & Carney, 2003), adopting corporatized models of governance (Alexander & Weiner, 1998; Jarlman & Ek, 2015), and increasingly marketized relationships with stakeholders (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Maier, Meyer, & Steinbereithner, 2016).

In sum, the literature strongly suggests that the management ideologies perfected in the for-profit sector and geared to maximizing returns to the organization through high-performance work by employees motivated by monetary rewards are being transplanted in NPOs. Given the traditional tendency of non-monetary motivation of the non-profit workforce, this contradiction has the potential to negatively impact employee engagement, employee learning and intention to stay. Although being more business-like does not necessarily have to dilute the social mission,
the fundamental differences and tensions between the terms, “business” and “non-profit” run the risk of eroding non-profit values and mission drift.

In the next chapter, I explore how the key literature has addressed the orientation of workplace learning in NPOs in terms of the forces that influenced workplace learning decisions and how non-profits have been using workplace learning to respond to the changes in their external environment reviewed in this chapter.
References


# Appendix A

Excluded papers and reasons for exclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excluded Papers</th>
<th>Reason for Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Chapter 4

Essay 3

Workplace Learning Orientation in Non-Profit Organizations: A Systematic Review

The 1980s was a defining decade for the non-profit sector with far reaching changes to government regulations (Cho & Gillespie, 2006; Cornforth, 2003; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004), funding opportunities (Bielefeld, 1992; Borzaga & Santuari, 2003; Akingbola, 2006), competition (Borzaga & Santuari, 2003; Keeler, Melnick & Zwanziger, 1999; Mullins, 2006) and the style of engagement with their target customers (Andreasen, 1994; Kotler, 1979; Macedo & Carlos Pinho, 2006). These changes transformed the operating environment of non-profit organizations to become more aggressive and market centric, forcing them to learn and adapt.

The 1980s was also an inflection point for the understanding of how organizations learn (Argote, 2011). Before converging in the 1980s (Argyris, 1996; Miner & Mezias, 1996), three distinct tangents of enquiry into how organizations learn flowed parallel to each other. The psychological tangent focussed on learning and barriers to learning at the level of the individual (Argyris & Schon, 1978). The sociological tangent visualised learning as changes in organizational routines and behaviour (Cyert & March, 1992). And the ‘learning curve’ tradition led by economists, examined how characteristics of performance such as errors or costs changed as a function of experience (Dutton & Thomas, 1984). Easterby-Smith, Crossan and Nicolini (2000) mirror Argote’s pinpointing of the 1980s as a breakout decade and write: “Although
interest in the issue of learning in organizations dates back to the late 1950s, it grew up almost ‘underground’ until a sudden explosion in the late 1980s.” (p. 784)

In this essay, I review research around workplace learning in non-profit organizations since both came to the fore in the organizational studies literature over the past decades. I do so to better understand how the management of workplace learning in non-profit organizations has been understood as these organizations strived to make sense of the changes in their operating environment. I also seek to extract specific drivers and priorities that drove decision making in non-profit organizations with regard to workplace learning.

**Method**

This chapter takes on a systematic review of literature (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009; Macpherson & Jones, 2010). The summary of the approach is given in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: The systematic literature review search flow](image-url)
Question formulation

First, a scoping review of literature about workplace learning in non-profit organizations was conducted to develop the main research questions and subsequently generate the search strings for systematic database search. Despite fundamental differences in objectives between the mission and vision of non-profit organizations and their for-profit counterparts, there appeared to be evidence of increasing similarity in the understandings and use of workplace learning in both sectors (Birdi, Patterson, & Wood, 2007). This observation is confirmed by the findings of Essays 1 and 2 in this thesis. The themes extracted in Essay 1 indicate that organizational priorities, strategy orientation and policies are the drivers of workplace learning. Essay 2 situates this finding in the non-profit context by identifying the organizational policy responses to changes in the external environment, suggesting that they are key determinants of workplace learning decisions by human resource managers in non-profit organizations. Based on these findings and observations, this essay examines the purposes driving workplace learning decisions in non-profit organizations. The research questions for this essay are articulated as follows:

- What were the environmental factors that influence workplace learning decisions in non-profit organizations?
- How do non-profit organizations use workplace learning to respond to the changes in their external environment?

Table 1 details the search strategy in terms of databases accessed and the key words used to run the systematic search for this essay. The decision to access articles from two databases each from the fields of education and management is informed by the finding from
Essay 1 that human resource management professionals are drawing on definitions of workplace learning rooted in critical adult education. The following keywords and search strings were identified from the scoping review of literature exploring the broad topic of workplace learning in non-profit organizations.

Table 1: *Databases and search strings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>Search Term Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABI/INFORM</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>“Workplace Learning” OR “Employee Learning” OR “Formal Learning” OR</td>
<td>In the title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Informal Learning” OR “Non Formal Learning” OR “Non-Formal Learning” OR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training OR Coaching OR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>“Informal Learning” OR “Non Formal Learning” OR “Non-Formal Learning” OR</td>
<td>In the title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Employee Development” OR “training and development” AND “non profit” OR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>non-profit OR “not for profit” OR non-profit</td>
<td>In the title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PsycINFO</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inclusion criteria and quality assessment**

Two inclusion criteria were set to guide this literature search process. First, only studies that mentioned the search terms in the title of the article were included. Second, only scholarly articles published in peer reviewed journals were included. Two exclusion criteria were also set, and these exclusion criteria were used for quality assessment of papers after removing the duplicate search results. The first exclusion criterion set aside publications that were book reviews or commentaries of other publications (that is, not full research papers). Second, publications not specifying non-profit organizations as the site of the study were also excluded.
Data extraction and synthesis

The preliminary search using the determined search strings from the four databases yielded 37 articles. Removal of duplicates left a paper count of 30, out of which 17 articles were excluded at various stages of quality assessment. The excluded papers and the reasons for their exclusion are listed in Appendix A. The final paper count for data extraction, suggesting the limited nature still of the literature on workplace learning and non-profits, stood at 13. Table 2 lists the paper count by journal and year.

Table 2: Paper count by journal and year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Paper Count</th>
<th>Year/s</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Personnel Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit World</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1993, 2005</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Extension</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Improvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Organizational Behavior Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Protection Trends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Training and Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Economic Behavior &amp; Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>USA &amp; Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Arts Management Law and Society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is evident from Table 2, the subject of workplace learning in non-profit settings had received scant attention till 2002, with only 3 papers from the pre-2002 period. Table 2 also shows that the US emerged as the dominant site for workplace learning scholarship in non-profit organizations. This is at least partially explained by the fact that it was only until the beginning of 1980s that scholarly interest in the broader area of management of non-profit organizations emerged in the US (O’Neill & Young, 1988). Also, by the 1980s new public management
(NPM) had become an entrenched idea in public administration in the US (Hood, 1991, 1995). Since US-based scholars were leading theory development in the field of management and administration (McLaren & Mills 2015; Wren, Bedeian & Wren, 2009), and NPM was one of the primary drivers of change in the way the non-profit sector was configured (Hood, 1991; Kettl, 1997; Terry, 1998), the dominance of US-based research in the management of non-profit organizations is understandable.

It is also worth noting in Table 2 that despite the inclusion of two databases, ERIC and PsycINFO from the field of education, none of the papers included in the review featured the adult education perspective of workplace learning when focusing on non-profits. This was an unexpected result as findings from Essay 1 show that human resource management professionals are employing understandings of workplace learning firmly rooted in the critical adult education. One possible explanation for this result is that the specification of non-profit organizations in the search strings biased search results in favour of studies about management of organizations, preventing ERIC and PsycINFO to return results that could be included in the study. To test this possibility, the two databases, ERIC and PsycINFO, were searched again, without the non-profit organizations specification in the search strings. The results of this search (without the non-profit specification) is presented in Table 3 and confirms that, while workplace learning has been receiving considerable scholarly attention in the field of education, non-profit organizations as sites of learning remain largely ignored in the literature.

Table 3: Results returned with and without non-Profit specification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paper Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>17,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PsycINFO</td>
<td>42,998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content Analysis

The papers under review were examined to extract data on two specific themes. The first theme was the external drivers of workplace learning policies and practices in non-profit organizations. The second theme was workplace learning imperatives. This theme captures the learning objectives of workplace learning policies and practices in non-profit organizations. Table 4 lists the two themes and the mode of learning as identified from the content of the papers under review.

Table 4: Objective specific themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>External Driver</th>
<th>Workplace Learning Imperatives</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levinson, 1987</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Efficiency and Effectiveness</td>
<td>Formal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cosier &amp; Dalton, 1993</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Efficiency and Effectiveness</td>
<td>Formal</td>
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<td>Namaya, 1993</td>
<td>Burnout and high turnover</td>
<td>Employee engagement</td>
<td>Formal</td>
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<td>Wimberley &amp; Rubens, 2002</td>
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<td>Professionalization</td>
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<td>Schaffer, 2005</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Efficiency and Effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Risk &amp; uncertainty</td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
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<td>Competition</td>
<td>Diversity training</td>
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<td>Hine, 2014</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
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<td>Smith, Sirsat &amp; Neal, 2014</td>
<td>Competition</td>
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<td>Chang, Huang &amp; Kuo, 2015</td>
<td>Competition</td>
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<td>Carvalho, Melo &amp; Ferreira, 2016</td>
<td>Competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>DeVaro, Maxwell &amp; Morita, 2017</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Efficiency and Effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olshan, 2017</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
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External drivers, learning imperatives and preferred mode

Table 4 shows that 11 out of the 13 papers under review identified (or alluded to) competition as the primary driver of decisions regarding learning at the workplace in non-profit organizations. The response by non-profit organizations in the form of workplace learning imperatives clusters around the need to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, build capacity and professionalization. This finding is also in line with findings from Essay 2 that capacity building
in non-profit organizations is a key driver of decisions by human resource managers. The
tendency to employ full time employees and professionalization were also extracted in Essay 2
as trends in non-profit human resource management.

Table 4 also reveals a dominance of the formal mode of workplace learning. The
disregard for informal modes of workplace learning by HR managers and strategy in the non-
profit context is problematic considering the finding from Essay 2, that the non-profit sector is
heavily dependent on the dedication and engagement of their employees to achieve
organizational objectives and findings from Essay 1 that workplace learning is recognized as
being employee, collective, informal, and difficult to measure and, therefore, less amenable to
planning. This is also in tension with formal modes of learning. The discomfort with informal
modes of learning among human resource managers stems from the nature of informal learning
being resistant to measurement and at times planned organizational strategies. Given that being
able to measure is a pre-requisite for planning (Boyd, & Reuning-Elliott, 1998; Nagy & Fawcett,
nd), and the predominantly numerical nature of management control (Berry et al., 2009), it is
almost impossible for managers to factor informal learning in formal planning processes.

While the inadequacy of formal learning alone as workplace learning has been
documented (Bratton, Mills, Pyrch & Sawchuk, 2003; Kyndt, Dochy & Nijs, 2009), the value of
formal learning programs at workplace remains undisputed. Levinson (1987) records the
emergence of formal teaching and training programs as solutions for non-profit organizations.
He observes that training and development service providers were marketing learning solutions
to non-profit organizations and that “some nonprofits already make use of training and
development opportunities” (p. 80). The observations confirm conclusions made by Young
(1990) that by the late 1980s, training and development for non-profit organizations had been
recognized as a business opportunity for learning service providers. This is borne out by Levinson (1987) mentioning that he had documented “over 150 workshops, seminars, conferences, programs, and training sessions” oriented to “money – how to raise it and how to manage it.” (p. 81). Fund raising, and marketing are identified as key themes by Wimberley and Rubens (2002) who highlight universities and management support organizations (MSOs) as learning service providers for the non-profit sector. In their paper on non-profit education, training and consultancy, Wimberley and Rubens identify fund raising, marketing, leadership, management and governance to be key learning priorities of non-profit organizations. The emergence of competitive imperatives of operating in free market conditions as the determinants of policy has resulted in ‘mission-market’ tensions which I address more fully in the conclusion chapter.

**Learning ‘sameness’**

The learning themes identified by Levinson and Wimberley and Rubens as marketing, financial management, and governance, highlight learning needs similar to the for-profit sector. Cosier and Dalton (1993) agree that “nonprofits have management needs much like the for-profit sector” (p. 37) as the changing environment and increasing competition has forced non-profits to adopt strategies similar to their for-profit counterparts. Faced with radical changes to their environment and the need to evolve to match the changes, non-profit organizations are increasingly opting for outsourcing the training and development of their management staff to learning service providers. Cosier and Dalton (1993) analyse the content of one such management training program developed by National Academy for Voluntarism (NAV), the training division of United Way of America, a coalition of non-profits and charitable organizations. The program was divided into four topics: management skills, leadership and team
excellence, organizational change and strategic planning. In addition to this management
development program, NAV had programs focussed specifically on fund raising and fund
management.

An examination of the contents of the NAV management development program listed
by the authors reveals a curriculum similar to business management professionals in the for-
profit sector. The similarity of non-profit workplace learning programs to the for-profit
workplace learning programs is explained by Chang, Huang and Kuo (2015) who observe that,
“people in the voluntary sector perceived the need to be business oriented and wished to learn
business practices from the private sector” (p. 26). Chang, Huang and Kuo further observe that
the resource constraints typical of non-profit organizations lead to an over reliance on short,
modular courses which are designed and implemented in an ad-hoc fashion, without any due
diligence to ensure congruence with mission and values of the organization. This assertion by
Chang, Huang and Kuo agrees with the recognition of resource constraints as a factor preventing
non-profits from developing and implementing long term learning programs (Hull & Lio, 2006;
Prugsamatz, 2010). Furthermore, non-profit organizations have missions and values far removed
from the ones in the for-profit sector. The modular transplanting of workplace learning program
designs carries risks of contamination of the non-profit mission ethos by for-profit values. As
non-profits learn response patterns similar to for-profit organizations to challenges to similar
organizational and environmental challenges, their policies and practices begin to increasingly
mimic the for-profit sector resulting in the non-profit sector increasingly imitating the for-profit
sector (Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner, 2016; McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram &
Sullivan Mort, 2015).
Credentialization and professionalization

The imitation of the for-profit sector extends to credentialization of jobs in the non-profit sector. A spurt in formal educational programs in non-profit management offered by universities in recent years (Cornuel & Kletz, 2011; Wimberley & Rubens, 2002; Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2017; Young, 1999) has been contributing to the professionalization of the field. The professionalization of learning in non-profit workplaces has been driven by a need to increase efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness (Taylor & McGraw, 2006). The move towards professionalized workplace learning received further impetus from the emergence of the narrative of professionalization of workplace learning itself (Letiche, Boeschoten & de Jong, 2008; Watkins, 1995). Though professionalization of workplace learning is not a new idea (Watkins, 1995) and research situated in the for-profit sector offers evidence of it being beneficial (Balthazard, 2014), professionalization and credentialization of non-profit workplaces has been recognised to be problematic and has required non-profits to change their management ethos (Parsons & Broadbridge, 2004).

The move towards professionalization of the non-profit sector and the use of business management curriculum to do so was observed by Carvalho, Melo and Paula Ferreira (2016) in their paper on training in Portuguese non-profit organizations. They identify the adoption of management models, formalized performance appraisal and a formalized approach to training as indicative of a move towards professionalization. Olshan (2017) cites the lack of business training as justification of professional development programs for arts graduates in the USA. Olshan analysed the contents of four professional programs and found that the most common curriculum topics of the four programs were: financial literacy (fundraising, budgeting, finance); business management (strategic planning, marketing and promotion, communications); arts
entrepreneurship; and legal issues. (p. 236). Olshan’s findings are in consonance with findings by Cosier and Dalton (1993) and Chang, Huang and Kuo (2015) that the credentialization and professionalization-oriented curriculum being deployed in learning programs for non-profit organizations are essentially similar to the learning programs deployed by for-profit organizations.

**Individual and social perspectives**

The dominance of individual and social perspectives in conversations around workplace learning is evidenced in this study as 5 out of the 13 papers under this review approached workplace learning from an individual or a social perspective. Smith, Sirsat and Neal (2014) evaluate the effectiveness of food safety training in improving volunteers’ knowledge and behavior and found significant increases in safe food handling behaviors both at home and at work. Hine (2014) evaluates the effects of behavioral skills training on workers in a non-profit child care center and identifies individual worker performance as the determinant of organizational success. Similarly, Groff (2006) explores the impact of diversity training for employees and volunteers and, in the only instance of allusion to informal and tacit learning observed in the papers under review, Groff writes, “but it is our responsibility, as educators, to ensure we understand where our learners are coming from, what experiences they have had, and how that influences their learning in our classrooms.” (p. 34).

The social perspective on workplace learning were most evident in papers by Namaya (1993) and Allen and Morton (2006). Namaya in her paper on training for transformation highlights the need to use training programs to address the issues of burnout, high turnover, ineffective communication, low motivation, and lack of community support. While Namaya does not articulate it so, the issues she identifies are components and consequences of employee
engagement (González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006; Queen & Hess, 2017; Taris, Ybema & van Beek, 2017). Namaya observes that most training programs in non-profit organizations are ineffective at solving the identified issues as they attack the symptoms like workloads and stress at best. According to her such superficial training programs “give the illusion that change is happening” (p. 26) and goes on to present a “transformative training model” which allows workplace educators to “create effective people-centered environments, affording both paid and volunteer staff the opportunity to thrive and grow in the work they love to do.” (p. 26). A descriptive model based on the Holistic Process Approach to Community Development and Social Transformation, it engages stakeholders to critically examine the interaction between task (purpose) and maintenance (how we take care of the people within our groups)” (p. 26). For a sector undergoing radical transformations, the paper presents a model of workplace learning that contributes to reinforcing change through workplace learning interventions.

In the second paper adopting a social perspective of workplace learning, Allen and Morton (2006) examine capacity building, self-organization and the role of leadership in non-profit organizations. The authors identify the expansion of leadership beyond the leader to the group as a critical determinant of success in self-organization capacity building in non-profit organizations. Allen and Morton respond to critiques of past leadership models that suggest that partnership of all members in the system creates webs of influence rather than chains of command (Wheatley, 1999). Allen and Morton propose a framework towards self-organizing capacity to assist workplace learning professionals to develop strategies for leadership training programs that can facilitate efforts toward capacity building in groups, organizations, and communities. The framework helped design of learning programs by matching tasks and practices with identified skill gaps.
Synthesis and Summary

The content analysis of the papers under review reveal a sector striving to learn to operate in an environment of change, uncertainty and competition. They are doing so by developing their human resources capabilities that would allow the organization as a whole to remain competitive. Table 5 lists the themes emerging from the papers under review.

Table 5: Themes emerging from paper under review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging Themes</th>
<th>Papers emerging from</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1</strong></td>
<td>Competition &amp; change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levinson, 1987; Cosier &amp; Dalton, 1993; Wimberley &amp; Rubens, 2002; Schaffer, 2005; Allen &amp; Morton, 2006; Groff, 2006; Hine, 2014; Smith, Sirsat &amp; Neal, 2014; Chang, Huang &amp; Kuo, 2015; Carvalho, Melo &amp; Ferreira, 2016; Olshan, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2</strong></td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cosier &amp; Dalton, 1993; Chang, Huang &amp; Kuo, 2015; Carvalho, Melo &amp; Ferreira, 2016; Olshan, 2017; Hine, 2004; Schaffer, 2005; Groff, 2006</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 3</strong></td>
<td>Employee engagement</td>
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<td>Allen &amp; Morton, 2006; Namaya, 1993</td>
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Competition and change

The first theme to emerge from the review is the influence of changes resulting from exposure to free market competition and increasingly stringent government policies with nearly all papers under review (n=13) referring these factors as the drivers of workplace learning strategies in non-profit organizations.

Non-profit organizations have been facing an increasingly complex, dynamic, and uncertain external environment due to policy changes by governments (Abramovitz, 2015; Anheier, Toepler & Wojciech Sokolowski, 1997; Onyx, Cham & Dalton, 2016) and the ever-increasing competition for resources (Hall et al., 2003; Malatesta & Smith, 2014). These
pressures have created a need to compete to achieve organizational objectives and have motivated non-profits to learn to take up strategies oriented towards dealing with competition from the for-profit sector (Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner, 2016). Extant literature provides evidence of non-profits learning marketing (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Weisbrod, 2000), strategy (Anheier, 2000; Dart, 2004; Moore, 2000), financial management (Cornforth, 2003; Hull & Lio, 2006) and even human resource management (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010) from the for-profit sector. Little attention in the literature, however, has been paid to informal or non-formal workplace learning, which is, the broader literature on workplace learning suggests, potentially detrimental ultimately to the organizational and strategic detriment of the non-profit sector.

**Capacity building**

The second and third themes emerging from the review are ‘capacity building’ and ‘employee engagement’ as learning responses by non-profit organizations as they respond to external pressures identified as the first theme. Capacity building, defined by Schuh and Leviton (2006) as, “the ability to successfully implement and complete a new project or to expand an existing one successfully.” (p. 172) emerged from the literature review as management training (Cosier & Dalton, 1993), employee training for efficiency, competency upgrades and professionalization (Carvalho, Melo & Ferreira, 2016; Chang, Hine, 2014; Groff, 2006; Huang & Kuo, 2015; Schaffer, 2005), and business skills training (Olshan, 2017; Schaffer, 2005). Capacity building has emerged as an organizational tool that allows non-profit organizations to adapt to the change identified in first theme through workplace learning interventions. While the definition of capacity building by Schuh and Leviton may appear to anchor capacity building to
the completion of one project, the authors clarify that an organization’s “projects” are not limited to a single service delivery, but can include a fund-raising drives, public relations programs, and other non-service delivery efforts. The theme of capacity building then becomes an ever-continuing project in itself as non-profit organizations continue to continuously adjust their management policies and practices to become and remain competitive.

**Employee engagement**

Employee engagement emerged as the second workplace learning imperative (Allen & Morton, 2006; Namaya, 1993) from the papers under review. The idea of employee engagement can be traced back to Kahn’s (1990) who articulated it as ‘personal engagement’ and defined it as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active full role performances” (p. 700). Saks (2006) defined employee engagement as “a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components . . . associated with individual role performance” (p. 602). This definition integrated the cognitive (Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001; Maslow, 1970), emotional (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990), and behavioral (Harter et al., 2002; Maslach et al., 2001) dimensions of employee engagement.

For non-profit organizations, employee engagement has far greater influence on their ability to successfully achieve organizational objectives (Nathan, 2018) and current research reveals the sector is witnessing significant erosion of employee engagement (Norris, 2017). The critical nature of employee engagement for non-profits and the recognition of informal learning
as a determinant of employee engagement (Gferer, 2014), the near complete lack of focus on informal learning and non-formal learning in non-profit workplaces given

While neither of the papers (Allen & Morton, 2006; Namaya, 1993) mention employee engagement, the issues discussed in both papers are either a determinant of employee engagement like leadership (Anitha, 2015; Little & Little, 2006) or its consequence like reduced turnover and burnout (Crawford, LePine & Rich, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli, Taris & Van Rhenen, 2008).

The evolving sector

The papers on workplace learning in non-profit organizations included in the review extended over a 30-year period extending from 1987 to 2017. The literature review reveals an evolving sector using formal workplace learning as a tool to adjust, adapt and compete. Non-formal and informal workplace learning dimensions, however, have been inadequately addressed in the HRM literature on workplace learning in the non-profit sector. This is particularly problematic given the fact that informal learning is a significant determinant of employee engagement (Gferer, 2014) and as Essay 2 has revealed, the sector is finding it difficult to recruit and retain talent.

The 1980s were an inflection decade for non-profits. Deep cuts in government funding of welfare programs and a global recession saw non-profit funding shrink dramatically (Bielefeld, 1992). As funding crunch drew non-profits into commercial activities, the end of 1980s saw increasing tension between the three sectors, which contributed to a crisis in mission, accountability, and legitimacy (Hodgkinson, 1989; Estes, Binney, & Bergthold, 1989). As the
disruptive 1980s drew to a close, some non-profits had managed to adapt and remain effective in delivering on their mission and objectives while others could not (Galaskiewicz & Bielefeld, 1990). The emerging environment was so dynamic that even the successful organizations remained uncertain about their future. Millar (1991) in his article in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* captures the uncertainty succinctly in the title of the special issue, “Success in 1990; Anxiety About 1991”. The discourse emerging in the literature by that time made it obvious that non-profit organizations had to “learn” pursuing opportunities and funding in an aggressive manner – a style of functioning they were unaccustomed to. As Kim (1993) writes, “All organizations learn, whether they consciously chose to or not – it is a fundamental requirement for their sustained existence” (p. 37). Faced with the need to behave in an uncharacteristic manner, status-quo for non-profit organizations was disturbed and they needed to re-orient their learning strategies to learn in the aggressive, uncharacteristic manner.

In Essay 1, the literature clustered around two approaches to learning in organizations - management studies informed organizational learning and adult education driven workplace learning (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2005). In the case of non-profit organizations, the new aggressive learning which was uncharacteristic of them occurred as both, organizational learning and workplace learning.

Recall from Essay 1 that organizational learning comes from the ability of organizational actors to relate experience and information to routines and problems (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Mahler, 1997). In that two clusters of learning, organizational learning and workplace learning both are functions of how people reflect from their participation in teams and job-related tasks at workplaces. An understanding of how organizations learn is then a proxy for how people in those organizations learn. Understandings of how people learn, as we saw in
Essay 1, remains contested. A broad agreement that emerged from the literature reviewed in Essay 1 and Essay 2 was that the human resource is a vital ‘organizational actor’ whose individual learning gets embedded in organizational memory and expressed in terms of changes in policies and practices. Argyris and Schön (1978) write:

There is something paradoxical here. Organizations are not merely collections of individuals, yet there are no organizations without such collections. Similarly, organizational learning is not merely individual learning, yet organizations learn only through the experience and actions of individuals. What then are we to make of organizational learning? What is an organization that it may learn? (p. 9)

In Essay 1, objectives of the systematic review of literature was to assess the understandings of workplace learning in human resource development scholarship and the factors that informed workplace learning decisions by human resource development professionals. The review of literature extracted two themes. The first theme was the conceptualization of workplace learning in HRD scholarship as being employee driven, informal, unplanned and difficult to measure. While a universally accepted definition of workplace learning remained elusive, there was a definite trend towards understanding workplace learning as a socially constructed and driven process (Fenwick, 2008; Kasl, Marsick, and Dechant, 1997).

The review revealed that pressures by funding agencies, regulators and even customer groups had forced non-profits to incorporate efficiency and accountability narratives into their management (Anheier and Seibel 2001; Ridder, Pining, & Baluch, 2004, 2010, 2012). In this chapter the review revealed that the changes in governmental policies and free market competition drove the sector to professionalize (Carvalho, Melo & Ferreira, 2016; Olshan, 2017).
and incorporate for-profit management discourses (Cosier & Dalton, 1993; Wimberley & Rubens, 2002). As organizations, non-profits are learning competition from their for-profit counterparts. For non-profits organizations, the pressures of operating in neoliberal globalized markets are making their experiences (and thus learning) similar to that of their counterparts in the for-profit sector experience. As a consequence, the non-profits began mimicking their for-profit counterparts (Anderson & Dees, 2017; Dart, 2004; Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner, 2016), a point I discuss in more detail in the conclusion chapter.

This mimicking of the for-profit strategies has diluted the values of the non-profit sector (Eikenberry & Klüver, 2004) and has strained the mission orientation of non-profit organizations which Young (2005) articulates this strain as “mission-market tension”. Sanders (2015) examines the impact of this tension on non-profit organizing and finds that contradictory elements of mission and market participation are considered interdependent. Respondents in study and that the mission-market tension is considered positive with participants stating that “both sides of the mission-market tension needed to remain in play for their organization to be successful, despite the difficult decisions and trade-offs necessary when trying to satisfy both.” (Sanders, 2015, p. 218). The Sanders study further found that the way in which employees of non-profits made sense of this mission-market tension is dependent on how the tension is framed by the management in their internal communications. Sanders writes, “findings demonstrate the central role that communication plays in how the mission-market tension is understood and engaged within a nonprofit organization, as well as how such understandings and action influence everyday work” (p. 218). The study by Sanders (2015) was based on one organization and thus the outcomes may not represent the sector. However, the findings of the study point to attempts at not only normalization of the mission-market tension but also at the use of internal marketing strategies to reframe it as an asset for the organization. In light of the near absence of
studies on informal and non-formal workplace learning in non-profit organizations, the attempts to normalize subordination of the social to the market, points to definitive attempts to alter the narratives of the sector. Further research is needed to explore if the subordination of informal modes of learning is a deliberate strategy to appropriate employee agency and modify the modes of engagement with employees and volunteers in the non-profit sector. Research in this direction will serve to identify organizational mechanisms that skews learning in non-profits towards adopting for-profit narratives of organization and management.
References


Kettl, D. “The Global Revolution in Public Management: Driving


## Appendix A

Excluded papers and reasons for exclusion

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<th>Excluded Papers</th>
<th>Reason for Exclusion</th>
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Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis has included three systematic literature reviews with the aim of situating workplace learning in non-profit organizations. The study began by locating workplace learning in human resource development literature (Essay 1), then transitioned to evaluating human resource management in non-profit organizations (Essay 2), and finally addressed how workplace learning has been conceptualized and deployed by human resource managers in the non-profit sector (Essay 3).

Essay 1 is a systematic review of scholarly literature from the human resource development domain, revealed that as a concept, workplace learning remained open to interpretation to both managers and the adult education community. The study further disclosed that despite the radical and emancipatory understandings of workplace learning in the domain of critical adult education, the managerial conceptualizations of workplace learning were more strategically oriented although drawing heavily from the more critical literature. The incompatibility of the management studies discourse with its stress on control, compliance and efficiency comes into direct conflict with the radical and emancipatory adult learning discourse, giving rise to dualities and tensions evident in the differentiation between formal and informal learning at workplaces, and the inadequate treatment of informal mode of learning by human resource development practitioners. What is implied in the review from Essay 1 is that the state of workplace learning in non-profit organizations will be heavily influenced by how human resource policies and practices in non-profits attempt to resolve these tensions.
Essay 2 explores human resource management in non-profit organizations by systematically reviewing the scholarly HRM and non-profit literature. The study reveals the criticality of human resources to the mission achievement and the increasing difficulties in recruitment and retention of employees and volunteers. The review showed that the unique nature of motivations that drive individuals in the non-profit sector are in conflict with the policy changes necessitated by new public management driven narratives of competition and efficiency. The shrinking public sector, a neoliberal economy, increased competition with for-profits social service delivery firms, and increased competition with other non-profits for funding has forced the human resource management of non-profits to adopt for-profit management strategies and confirming the finding of the first study, this conflict is generating tensions for the managers and the managed.

Increasing competitive pressures and demands by funders for non-profits to prove efficiency and accountability is forcing drastic changes to the human resources paradigm in the sector. The review uncovered evidence of an increase in the proportion of paid employees compared to volunteers and a definite trend towards professionalization of the employees. As the sector responds to the various pressures brought on by the changed operating environment, the review confirms that the non-profit sector is becoming increasingly business-like with non-profits learning from the for-profit sector.

The issue of learning at non-profit workplaces was examined in Essay 3. Specifically, drivers of workplace learning and the targeted outcomes were studied. The review revealed that strategy in non-profit organizations was influenced by the disruptive changes they have been from the 1980s onwards. The learning strategy in non-profits was revealed to be oriented to modify the human resource characteristics to allow participation in the competitive markets and
comply to the demands of efficiency and accountability by funders. This modification of human resources was being undertaken in the form of capacity building through management training, employee training for efficiency, competency upgrades, professionalization and business skills training. The human resource capacity building has allowed an ingress of for-profit philosophy of performance and competition which has clashed with the traditional non-profit workplace values. Moreover, the lack of attention to non-formal and informal learning in the workplace learning literature focused on non-profits suggests a privileging of management determined learning over employee driven learning. Finally, Essay 3 revealed that this clash between the increasingly competition-oriented workplaces and the traditional non-profit workplace values has resulted in dilution of the social mission and a normalization of the dominance of market realities dictating human resource policies.

**Isomorphism**

The three studies reveal a sector grappling with change and pressures to comply with narratives of competition, efficiency and accountability associated with the for-profit sector. The studies further reveal non-profit organizations responding by adopting processes and structures from the for-profit sector and in the process appear increasingly like them in structure, policy and practice. In search of organizational structures and work philosophies suited to an increasingly competitive environment, non-profit organizations have opted for achieving *sameness* to the for-profit sector. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe this as *isomorphism* and define it as “a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions.” (p. 149). Isomorphism results from competitive pressures generated by environmental selection processes (Hannan & Freeman, 1977) which exerts
normative, mimetic or coercive pressures on non-profit organizations to gain legitimacy from the institutional environment, as articulated in the growing field of new institutional theory (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified three forces driving coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism. The first force is the differences that arise from law, official position, or control of needed resources and the coercion arising from those differences. The second force is the goal ambiguities and the resulting tendency to mimic what are considered successful models of achieving goals. The third driving force according to DiMaggio and Powell is influence consultants and experts have on organizational strategy and they argue that these three forces increase the chances of isomorphism.

Even though non-profits are mimicking the for-profit sector organizations for improvements in efficiency and effectiveness in goal achievement, the modification of non-profit workplace structures and strategy may not achieve the desired objectives. It is then a real possibility that non-profit organizations, in search of efficiency, accountability and competitiveness may end up for-profit like without any tangible gains in the intended direction. At the least, isomorphism in non-profit workspaces is responsible for creating a work environment that is increasingly similar to the for-profit workplaces.

The three essays in this thesis point to a sector in flux. The reviews show that non-profit organizations are learning from their for-profit counterparts and in doing so, the non-profit sector is behaving increasingly like the for-profit sector. Future research in the field can investigate the migration of individuals from the for-profit sector to occupy leadership positions in non-profit organizations a point of ingress for isomorphism. While many papers reviewed in three essays identified aspects of mission-market tension, none of them focused on the work conditions in the
emerging competitive non-profit organizations. In light of evidence of diminishing employee engagement, difficulties in recruitment and retention and revelations like the subordination of informal learning to formal modes of learning, future research is needed to determine the how work conditions have evolved in the non-profit sector.
References

