

ADDIE for a Technology Based Training Solution

By Sheila Brevard

May 24, 2020

Description of the Organization

Melane´ Designs is a retail business located on the west coast in Northern California, with additional locations in Canada, India, and Mexico. It offers custom-designed clothing, jewelry, accessories, one-of-a-kind custom-made-to-order shoes, and home decorative items via retail locations and online. It began operations in early 2012 and during the first four years of operation, Melane´ Designs outperformed similar retailers in the area due to growth and high margins of profitability. With fiscal year 2019 net sales of \$800 million, Melane Designs employs a total of 5,200 associates at its four locations. Growth and profitability were facilitated by operations that were efficient with minor technological advancements within store operations and distribution networks both within the United States and within its locations outside of the United States.

The mission of the company was enhanced by a strong marketing plan and the placement of an efficient management team. However, within the last two to three years, the company as a whole has declined overall in growth with low margins of profitability, mainly due to excessive lack of customer retention, and low employee production rates. Additionally, the initial focus of Melane´ Designs was primarily on transacting business within the retail store locations. However, with the increased competition from retailers that provide similar products, Melane´ Designs seized the opportunity to expand via online sales without having all of the necessary technical knowledge and skill requirements fully in place. Therefore, training that will improve the technological skills of its employees is imperative, as Melane´ Designs aims to deliver high-quality products as requested by its customers, promptly.

ADDIE

According to Harless, 1994 as cited in Ripley, 2016, the ADDIE approach, which consists of five phases, is a support tool used in the implementation of interventions which are developed through a process of analysis, design, and testing to increase the performance quality for employees within an organization. The five phases of ADDIE, as shown in figure 1, are (1) Analysis, (2) Design, (3) Development, (4) Implementation, and (5) Evaluation (HPT Manual, n.d). Components of ADDIE applied for e-learning, as shown in figure 2, will be also be applied to this plan.

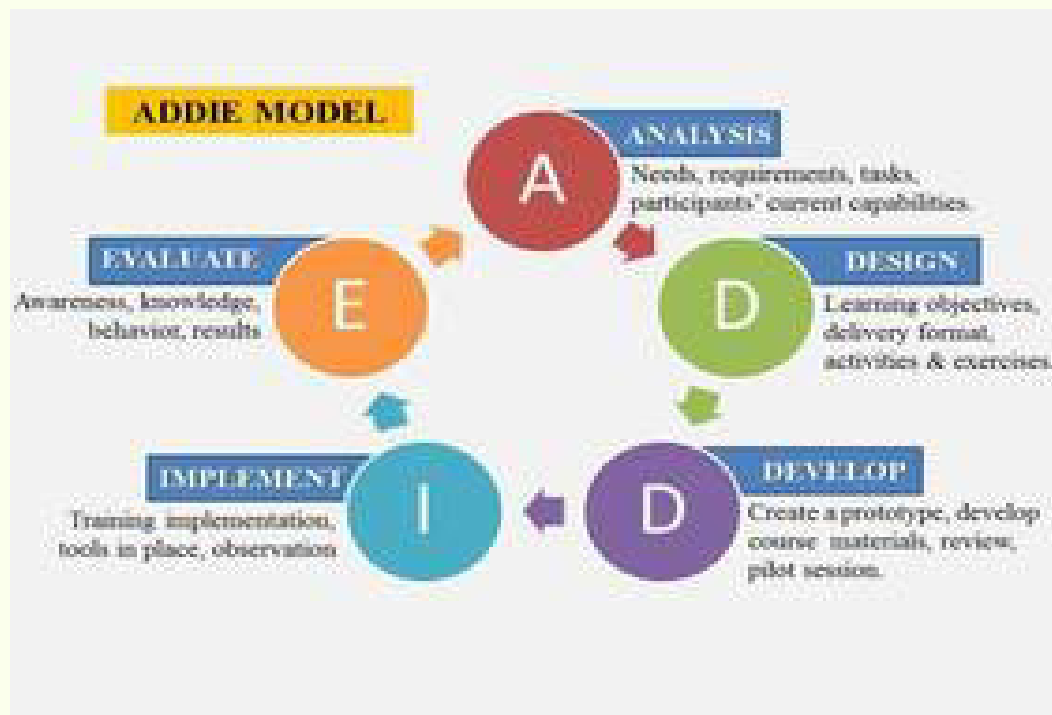


Figure 1 (Source: HPT Manual, n.d.)

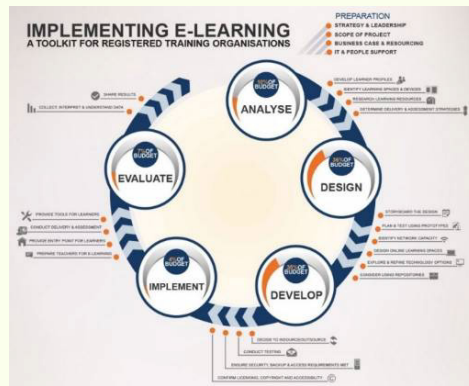


Figure 3 (Source: Bates, 2014)

ADDIE Stage One- Analysis

In the analysis stage, which is phase one of the ADDIE model, the goals and needs of Melane Designs will be examined. A series of questions to assist with identifying objectives and identify the cause of any performance problems will be asked. Identifying the cause of the performance problems will assist with determining whether or not training will address the issues that need resolving (Catherina, 2015). A determination concerning the improvement needs of employees within the departments that are most essential to the success of the organization will be made based on the information received from the needs assessment.

According to Catherina (2015), a training needs self-assessment with competency models should be completed by each employee. Therefore, employees will be asked to provide information that is detailed enough to establish qualification levels based on academic

achievements, employment history, completed training programs, and business training, as well as any specific personal information relevant to qualifying for various positions within the organization. To understand the positions of management and employees regarding the need for training, the following questions will be asked which will also further identify any performance issues and determine if any identified performance issues can be addressed through training (Noe, 2020):

1. Is training necessary to improve employee performance? One of the steps which will be taken in terms of ensuring the successful performance of each employee, is to identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) and determine whether or not each employee assigned to perform the job possesses and understands the KSAs (Noe, 2020). Training is necessary if it is determined that employees are not equipped with the necessary KSAs. Job Aids are also beneficial if it is determined that there is no necessity to develop and implement an entire training program.
2. Who will be trained? If it is determined that training is necessary, training will be developed based on the experience levels of the employees.
3. What equipment and/or resources are needed? The equipment and resources needed to conduct successful training will depend on the type of training. Melane Designs desires to provide technology-based training. Technology-based training includes e-learning/internet-based as well as distance education. Additionally, massive open online courses (MOOCs), Podcasts, Social Media, and Learning Management Systems are utilized to successfully train employees (Noe, 2020). Also, based on the specific job performance issues, software and other electrical or mechanical equipment may be needed to mirror the actual tools needed on-site in the performance

of the specific job (Bates, 2014). In this analysis phase, a technical analysis will also be conducted to establish what tools or learning devices and learning resources, including such as software and hardware are needed for the development and implementation of the training. Additionally, if there is sufficient memory, processors, drive space, hardware, software, and bandwidth to handle the training for both trainees and instructors, as well as whether or not the server and systems on-site are up to par will be determined. Also, profiles of the learners will need to be developed, including the requirements of the learner for the operation of video, audio, plug-ins, and other media (Bates, 2014). A strategy regarding assessment and delivery will also be determined.

These questions, as a component of the needs assessment, will assist with identifying any performance issues and understanding the abilities of each employee, which is important to enhancing performance and productivity within the organization (Schmidtke & Hughes, 2010). Additionally, the needs assessment will be used to determine any initial and on-going in-service training needs within the production and distribution departments, which will ensure that the goals of the organization and training are strategically aligned (Schmidtke & Hughes, 2010); and the competency models will be used to analyze the competency level and suitability of individual employees within specific project areas (Campion et al., 2011).

ADDIE Phase Two - Design

Melane Designs expects to implement systematic technology-based training that helps achieve the goals of the organization as well as fuses into the company culture and enhances the performance and productivity by focusing on the talents of individual employees (Schmidtke & Hughes, 2010), while at the request of its customers, aiming to timely deliver products that are of

high quality. In phase two, the type of training needed will be decided on with the focus on building the structure around the identified learning objectives. The training schedule will also be established in this phase, including the number of sessions and length of time for each session. Also, the format of the training as well as the technological platform will be determined.

Melane´ Designs, like many other companies is dependent on fully trained IT professionals to ensure that internal networks are operating successfully. Key questions will be asked to assist with the design of the training program and will include the question of whether or not a task analysis exists to assist with the process of designing the training program (Campion et al., 2011). Each job description will be provided to ensure that the required competencies and objectives are mastered.

Additionally, a storyboard outline will describe what content will be covered and how it will be covered, whether in text, or audio and video, along with decisions made regarding the selection of technology used. Some examples of technology to consider for use are LMS, SharePoint, video, and/or social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, and YouTube (Bates, 2014). A decision will be made to either upload the training manual into the chosen document management system along with any additional information relative to the training or provide hardcopies to the participants. A budget report detailing the costs associated with implementing training will also be included.

ADDIE Phase Three - Develop

In phase three, discussions will be held regarding how the training will be delivered and involves content creation and building the training along with additional program materials, such as job aids, projects, and other learning activities, in addition to developing the infrastructure and schedule of training. Also, the content will be chosen along with ensuring that the legality of

using any third-party materials, including the use of videos and audio. Additionally, licensing will be secured for all software and systems will be tested, ensuring that access requirements are met and security backups are in place (Bates, 2014). One major area of concern for Melane Designs is improving the technical skills of its employees, as the field of technology is growing at a fast rate (Hughes, 2017). Improving the technological skills of its employees will prevent the frequent delay of products due to the improper labeling of items within the computerized database and decreased employee production.

It is important that this training includes computerized simulations of the database and labeling system. Melane Designs lacks employees that are fully trained IT professionals that can continuously plan, coordinate, direct, and service all activities relevant to the technological network of the organization and until a full-scale IT department is developed and implemented, the decision to either outsource training or the decision to insource the training once the recruitment and hiring of qualified IT professionals is completed, will be made.

ADDIE Phase Four- Implement

Phase four is the implementation stage. In this stage, the necessary tools and training, along with all course material and supplies will be provided. Also, in this phase, all instructors will be well prepared for e-learning and ensure that all participants are clear on the objectives, standards, required tasks, and the use of the platform which will be utilized for training (Bates, 2014).

ADDIE Phase Five – Evaluation

Phase five is the evaluation stage and will involve assessing and evaluating the learners. This phase will determine if the learners have met the course objectives. It will also involve

observing or measuring any changes in the workplace, in addition to analyzing the evaluation data to determine if any revisions are necessary for the instructional course (Campion et al., 2011). Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation method, as shown in figure 3, will be used to discover the effectiveness of training and the reaction of employees to the training.

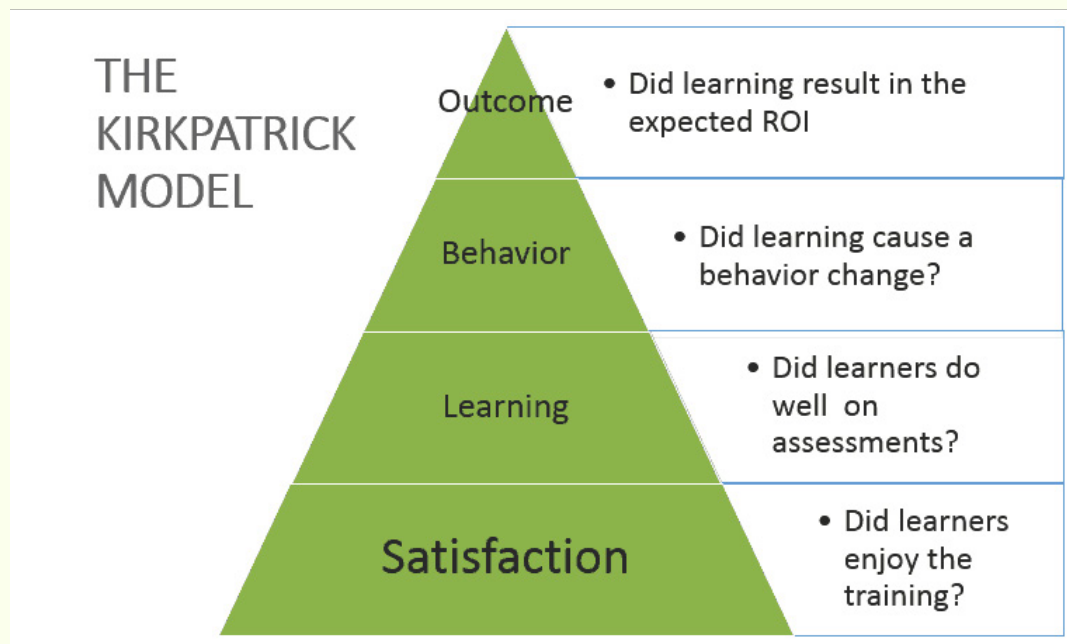


Figure 2 (Source: Rimón, 2017)

Kirkpatrick's model includes the following four levels or steps of outcome evaluation: reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Clark, 2008). Questions from the evaluation form, as shown in Appendix A will be asked, in addition to the following questions, which will be used to determine if the training resulted in a positive impact regarding the employee's individual and organizational performance (Campion et al., 2011):

Step 1: Reaction - How was the learning process for the participants?

Step 2: Learning – Were additional knowledge and skills gained as a result of the training?

Step 3: Behavior – Did job performance improve, including the ability to perform new skills learned, as a result of the training.

Step 4: Results – Are there any results that are tangible as a result of the training, such as a reduction in costs, production increases, improved quality, and efficiency, etc?

The collected feedback will be shared with top management and any questions or concerns of participants will be discussed. According to Paull, Whitsed, & Girardi (2016), any areas marked for improvement as a result of the feedback is helpful in the designing, development, and implementation of any subsequent courses.

Cultural Considerations

According to Brennan, Sellmaier, Jivanjee, and Grover (2019) technology-based training makes it possible to simultaneously train a large number of employees in several areas. The flexibility of technology-based training is beneficial to corporations and their employees, as it provides the opportunity for employees to pace themselves and access the training in comfortable settings (Khanna, Carper, Harris & Kendall, 2017). According to Stanford and Reeves, 2007 as cited in Cekada, 2012, although implementing technology-based training may be beneficial to both the corporation and its employees, it can also culturally divide, especially with members of older generations and other employees that are not computer-literate, as they may not be comfortable interfacing with a computer.

Any implemented training will have to consider cultural differences such as language barriers and technological illiteracy, as it is important when determining whether or not the use of technology in training will be successful (Noe, 2020). Also, Cekada (2012) also suggests that some members of the Boomer generation may not have any interest in utilizing technology, or

will be less willing to use or unable to use technology, especially if there is not a full understanding of the equipment. According to Chang, (2009) there is hesitance and discomfort felt amongst older trainees to participate with younger trainees in certain cultures, as a result of cultural differences. Also, considerations regarding cultural differences, such as with beliefs, behaviors, and expectations, will need to be made, to ensure limited chances of miscommunication that could affect workplace behavior and negatively affect performance (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010 as cited in Al-Bayati, Abudayyeh, & Albert, 2018).

Further, Chang (2009) posits that requiring instructors to familiarize themselves with the cultures of individuals being trained is beneficial to any organization, especially when cultural and/or demographic differences are identified. Whether it's communication between employees or managers and employees, it is crucial to the organization's success to ensure the understanding of such differences and facilitate an understanding of cultural and generational differences (Maeso, 2011). In understanding the cultural differences, the training can be designed to be both culturally competent and culturally effective (Strom, et al., 2012).

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APPENDIX A

Training Evaluation Form

Title and location of training:

Trainer: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements listed below	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The training objectives were defined clearly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Participation and interaction were encouraged.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Relevant topics were covered.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The content of the training was both organized and easy to understand.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. There were helpful materials provided.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The training received will be useful in my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The training instructor was knowledgeable about the various training topics	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The instructor was prepared well.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The objectives of training were met.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The training time was sufficient.	☐	☐	☐	☐

The training platform and equipment were adequate. o			
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12. Was there anything about the training that you most like?

13. Were there any aspects of the training that needed improvement?

14. Has the training received caused you to change your way of working?

15. Are you interested in any additional lesson topics?

16. Please provide any additional questions, concerns, or feedback below:

Review of Articles: Gender Differences in Schools

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May 17, 2020

A disparity regarding the treatment of females and males in education institutions exists as a result of the impact of gender roles which are influenced by cultural and societal beliefs.

According to Spear and Da Costa (2017), as a result of the extension of cultural and societal beliefs beyond households and institutions of education, the necessity to challenge the existing disparity is evident through the implementation of a pedagogy that is not only gender-responsive but also deconstructs and debunks culturally assigned gender roles.

Training teachers to recognize conscious and unconscious practices of discrimination within the classroom setting provides the understanding needed for teachers to unlearn beliefs and practices that are harmful to the success of all students (Halai, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Exposing students to a reversal of gender roles results in greater achievements amongst female students especially when the gender stereotype scale towards the mathematics of individual teachers is used (Nurlu, 2017). According to Spear and Da Costa, 2017, regarding cultural norms, teachers are not immune, and deconstructing gender-based inequalities is vital for both teachers and school administrators when focusing on equality for both male and female students. Spear and Dacosta (2017) posit that deconstruction can be achieved through teacher training. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the components of in-service training provided to teachers within two separate training programs known as Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and Transforming Education for girls in Nigeria and Tanzania (TEGINT) to determine if each of the programs provide opportunities for transformation by allowing teachers and all stakeholders to self-assess and engage in dialogue to promote change.

Spear and Dacosta (2017) utilized the Freire model's seven basic elements, as summarized in figure 1. The researchers discussed the Freire model as being the most appropriate model to use to evaluate the components of the gender awareness teacher training program and the in-service teacher training program. Dedicated to ensuring that transformational learning goals are met by changing the deeply-ingrained beliefs and behavioral patterns that depict gender norms, the Freire model uses seven elements which are: concept of knowledge, generative themes, codification, dialogue, conscientization, transformative change, and action/intervention (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). These elements are beneficial, as school staff and administrators, as well as teachers, can identify and evaluate conscious and unconscious discrimination practices as well as self-evaluate to understand the gender biases and stereotypes that exist in their own lives and begin to eliminate what gender biases and stereotypes exist (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). According to Spear and Da Costa (2017) using the Freire model will allow all stakeholders, including the teachers, students, school staff, administrators, parents, and the communities that the school serves to benefit from understanding the existing biases and work together to deconstruct and debunk the cultural and societal beliefs that influence gender roles.

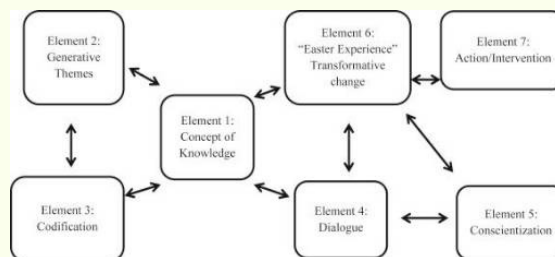


Figure 1, Source: The Freire Institute

Research Methods

The researchers utilized sources such as program documents, teaching curricula, training materials, and relevant gray literature to conduct a quantitative analysis and answer the question of whether or not each training program allows a critically conscious approach to developing initiatives aimed at achieving the goal of transformational change in the reversal of gender stereotypes. In evaluating the training interventions within the TEGINT and FAWE programs, the researchers applied each of the seven basic elements of the Freire model along with developed best practices (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). Element one evaluates the concept of knowledge. It involves teacher organizations and unions and the legitimizing and controlling of access to knowledge that is obtained (Freire, n.d. as cited in Spear & Da Costa). According to Spear and Da Costa (2017), the concept of knowledge, through a grassroots, bottom-up approach provides the capability for teachers themselves, to assist with developing and structuring the training programs and prevent the dictation of policies by other organizations or individual.

Elements two and three evaluate the contribution of all stakeholders in their creation of themes, ideas, and concepts to describe the cultural and societal beliefs as well as the likelihood of engaging in dialogue that focuses on a full understanding within a socio-cultural context (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). Elements four and five involve the evaluation of the dialogue between the participants and training facilitators as well as whether or not self-assessment activities provide the opportunity for all participants to explore the root cause and challenges of gender role stereotypes and reflect on their roles played in perpetuating and reproducing such stereotypes in education (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). Elements six focuses on the results of self-reflection and dialogue and involves evaluating the approach for dialogue regarding gender awareness training

that will facilitate a transformative experience for the participating teachers (Craig, et al, 1998 as cited in Spear & Da Costa, 2017). Element seven focuses on the creation of initiatives to promote the liberation of teachers from beliefs and practices that prevent the changing of oppressive conditions. In evaluating the two training programs, the researchers applied Freire's seven basic elements along with the best practices as listed in table 1.

Freire's Basic Elements	Best Practices
Element 1: Concept of Knowledge	•Grassroots, bottom-up approach •Involvement of teacher organizations, and/or unions
Element 2: Generative Themes & Element 3: Codification	•Presence of evaluation and research •Piloting before system-wide adoption
Element 4: Conscientization Element 5: Dialogue	•Meeting the needs of diverse teachers •Emphasis on critical dialogue •Use of self-assessment and/or reflective activities •Addressing of teacher attitudes and beliefs about gender
Element 6: Liberation/Easter Experience	•Presenting a commitment to change at all levels •An integral part of system-wide reforms •Long-term/ongoing program •Affordable in the long-term
Element 7: Praxis/Action	•Practice rather than theory-oriented •Occurring in school settings

Table 1, Source: Spear & Dacosta, 2017

Results

According to Spear and Da Costa (2017), applying the best practices framework to the document analysis is an important tool used in the designing of programs as well as program analyzations and evaluations. This research is also useful in determining the lack of sufficient components to address the issue of gender equality within each training program (Halai, 2011).

The researchers examined if and how the programs incorporate each of the best practices. Of the thirteen practices, eight were present in FAWE's training program interventions. However, TEGINT had only four of the thirteen best practices present in its training program. The researchers found that neither the FAWE nor TEGINT programs utilized critical pedagogy elements in their training programs. Further, regardless of the important role that teachers play in creating classrooms that are gender-equal, teacher participation in the development and implementation of teacher training programs was limited, due to the lack of utilizing the bottom-up approach (Spear & Da Costa, 2017).

According to Spear and Da Costa (2017), the implemented components of the teacher training program were not developed with the input of stakeholders that are most responsible for effecting the transformation change. Neither of the programs supported the involvement of unions or teacher organizations. Additionally, neither program fully addressed nor supported the needs of teachers, and only FAWE was found to address the teacher's attitudes and beliefs without gender. While FAWE's training program contained limited self-assessment and reflective activities, there were none found in the TEGINT program. Lastly, both programs had a limited presence of evaluation and research.

Limitations

The researchers found difficulty in the evaluation process, as there was a lack of literature that pertained specifically to the gender equality approach (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). Further, the documentation revealed that the teachers were not provided the opportunity to participate in-depth and offer their opinions regarding the development of training components. The researchers concluded that the teachers were seen as support only for the education that female students received and without full teacher participation and input, any transformative results obtained would not last long (Spear & Da Costa, 2017).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Educational institutions that have chosen to utilize pedagogy that is cultural and gender-inclusive are beneficial to the process of changing behaviors that lead to the transformation of the educational environment through training that equips teachers with the tools necessary to identify, understand, and transform gender inequality; especially that which is influenced by societal and cultural beliefs (Walton-Fisette, 2018). To deconstruct beliefs and stereotypes that are deep-seated requires a reversing of any hindrance to providing an education that is diverse in development and growth (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). The researchers posit that additional research focused on the examination of the methods and impacts of teacher training used as an intervention tool is needed as well as a further examination into intervention plans which support the education of females and promote an increase in gender equality. The researchers further stressed that all parts of teacher training should be explored as well as the resulting impact.

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Constraints Assessed

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May 3, 2020

Systematic training that is beneficial to the achievement of business goals and blended into the company culture is an important element of a successful business strategy. Additionally, it is imperative to focus on the specific skills and talents of individual employees when aligning training that is relevant to the strategic goals of the organization in an attempt to improve performance and production (Schmidtke & Hughes, 2010). Organizations aim to retain competent employees and provide a competitive advantage in an extremely competitive industry, as a competitive advantage fuel a company's opportunity to increase business activities, services, and products, in addition to outperforming its competition (Nabyla, 2014).

Organization Information

To outperform its competition, Melane' Designs plans to achieve this goal by developing and implementing a training program that will identify and acquire skilled employees that are both knowledgeable and also increase profit margins by creating a competitive advantage. In doing so, Melane' Designs will deliver high-quality products to the customer, promptly. To outperform its competition and ensure that the focus is on providing customers with excellent customer service, the training program will include training that will ensure that all employees are proficient with the technological operations, identify any flaws causing manual and electronic product miscalculations, and determine whether the cause of shipping delays are due to technological or human error.

Use of Technology

When developing a training program, many factors will need to be considered, including the training platform and learning objectives. According to Brennan, Sellmaier, Jivanjee, and Grover (2019), technology-based training provides the ability for an organization to train large numbers of employees with a background in a wide range of experiences to be trained at once.

The use of technology-based training is beneficial to both the employee and its employees, as it is flexible, self-paced, and can be accessed in various locations (Khanna, Carper, Harris & Kendall, 2017). Learning objectives help to determine what training is needed. It has been determined that employees at Melane' Designs need training related to the operation of technological equipment and operational procedures. The primary objective is to ensure that employees understand the operational procedures and the operation of technological equipment.

The field of Information technology (IT) has grown over the years and expanded to multiple learning platforms, including social media, simulations, games, web-based content, computer-based courses, and mobile applications (Noe, 2020). According to Brennan, Sellmaier, Jivanjee, and Grover (2019), technology-based training will allow corporations to train a large number of employees within various practices at a reasonable cost. The context of training, as well as the individual employee, is influential in how effective the training is. As a result of the increased competition from retailers providing similar products, Melane' Designs has welcomed the opportunity to expand its business via online sales and is prepared financially for the cost of training. There are no financial limitations. However, the training will be targeted to prevent any budgetary issues that may occur as a result of unnecessary training costs (Opperman, 2015).

Developing and implementing training using technology will ensure that the necessary technical knowledge and skill requirements are fully in place and allow for flexibility regarding employee scheduling. The goal of Melane' Designs is to motivate employees to be trained by fostering an environment of learning. In doing so, employees will not feel forced or opposed to training. One of the more flexible options is E-learning via the Learning Management System (LMS), which is beneficial to both the company and employee, as it is convenient for the training

to occur via online options while comfortably in a space chosen by the employee (Schmidtke & Hughes, 2010).

Organizational Constraints and Limitations

When developing a training program, it is important to understand any organizational constraints to create a program that is beneficial to achieving the goals of the organization. According to Blanchard and Thacker (2013), understanding the organizational restraints allow the organization to make well informed and critical decisions regarding the design and implementation of training programs. Melane' Designs is limited in that there are no fully trained IT professionals that are knowledgeable enough to plan, coordinate, direct, and service all technological network activities that are necessary to effectively maintain the organization's technological needs. Therefore, the implementation of a structured training program with the IT Department is necessary, as well as the recruitment of qualified IT professionals internally and externally. With the fast rate of growth in the field of technology, another area of concern for Melane' Designs is improving the technical skills of its employees (Hughes, 2017). To prevent the delay of products due to labeling items improperly within the computerized databases and also a decrease in employee productivity, the technological skills of its employees need improvement.

Training Program Proposal

The proposed training will be eight hours per day for a total of 40 hours for five working days. Each week-long training session will receive the same training materials and schedule. Also, it is important to determine whether or not the employees are equipped to participate in technology-based training. A laptop will be provided to all training participants for training accessibility purposes at their homes. The training access will also be available on-site in the

training room, for those who prefer to participate on-site. Additionally, the LMS will be utilized. The use of the web-based LMS has grown, as it provides the convenience of employers to present virtual training via the use of tools that are web-based and support the management of course materials, information, and activities. (Dehinbo & Odunaike, 2010).

To ensure that the training resources are targeted and to prevent financial waste, competency models are necessary. All employees identified to participate in the training will be asked to complete a training needs self-assessment with competency models (Catherina, 2015). According to Campion, et al (2011), Using competency models are vital in analyzing the competency levels of employees and will identify the suitability of the employee in specific project areas (Campion et al., 2011). Through a most recent training assessment, Melane' Designs has determined that a majority of the employees are equipped to participate in training via the aforementioned platform. Employees who are not equipped will be provided self-paced training for further skill development.

Conclusion

Utilizing technology is beneficial to both the corporation and its employees. However, there are additional constraints that may exist. For example, members of older generations or any employee that is not computer-literate may not be as comfortable utilizing a computer to access and participate in training (Stanford & Reeves, 2007 as cited in Cekada, 2012). Also, understanding that as a result of cultural differences, there are employees that may experience language barriers or technological illiteracy. This is important to identify when determining if the use of technology in training will be successful (Noe, 2020). Cekada (2012) suggests that some members of the boomer generation may not have any interest in utilizing technology, may be less willing to utilize technology, or may not possess the skills necessary to utilize technology. It is

also necessary to understand that all employees will not learn the same way. Therefore, a clearly defined plan that includes the specific learning objectives is necessary concerning the various types of learners.

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Assess Tools Used in Technology-Based Training

Sheila Brevard

May 11, 2020

Technology-Based Training

According to Brennan, Sellmaier, Jivanjee, and Grover (2019), technology-based training is a cost-efficient way to educate a large number of employees within a wide range of practices. A variety of learning methods that include social media, simulations and games, mobile applications, web-based content, and computer-based courses (Noe, 2020) can be utilized as an active and deliberate opportunity for either self-guided, instructor-guided, or blended learning (Beidas, Koerner, Weingardt, & Kendall, 2011 as cited in Brennan, Sellmaier, Jivanjee and Grover, 2019). According to Noe, 2020, technology-based training hours have risen to 39% within organizations of various sizes. The flexibility of web-based training is convenient for organizations, as it allows employees to independently learn within self-scheduled times and completion schedules set by the organization (Gupta & Sahoo, 2015).

According to Gronstedt (2007), the economy of today's world has greatly benefitted from the advancements in technology ranging from information and multi-media platforms to web and cloud-based applications. Types of technology-based training include internet-based training such as e-learning and also distance education. Several of the practices used to effectively train employees are Massive Open Online Courses, Podcasts, Social Media, and Learning Management Systems (Noe, 2020). These practices are commonly used by organizations to allow for onboarding of new employees, ensuring employee compliance, obtaining certifications, providing in-service training, and introducing new products or procedures (Ispring, 2019).

Massive Open Online Courses

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), created in 2006, is a training tool that provides flexibility, as it is accessible via computer and smartphones, as well as via uploaded video-

lectures and cloud-based discussion boards. According to Hoedebecke, et al (2018)., Many organizations recognize the value of MOOCs, in that, a large number of employees can participate at his or her convenience and set a goal of completion. Courses provided via this method incorporate personalized and detailed course information with numerous topics and varying levels of difficulty specific to the individual organization (Kiselev & Yakutenko, 2020), which are then accessed through platforms such as Coursera, Udemy, FutureLearn, and EdX (Hoedebecke, et al., 2018).

Advantages and Disadvantages of MOOCs

Since its introduction to the world of corporate training and as a result of its low cost (Hamori, 2018) and the flexibility and ease of accessibility via several different platforms; the implementation of the MOOC method has risen globally and multi-nationally (Hoedebecke, et al., 2018). Utilizing this method allows organizations to expand their training options which can be designed specifically for essential positions and specialized areas of employment (Hamori, 2018), as well as tailor-made for growth within various departments (Bogdan, Holotescu, Andone, & Grossek, 2017). Additionally, Kiselev and Yakutenko (2002) found that compared to traditional training methods, participants completed training assignments with the MOOC method at a higher rate.

Additionally, there is also the ability to collaborate with other students and offer courses with unrestricted accessibility (Hoedebecke, et al., 2018) and according to Hoedebecke, et al (2018), when paired with social media, participants completed training assignments at a rate of five times greater than the standard completion rate of 13%. Further, social media was found to contribute to the understanding of information within the course as well as the retaining of knowledge obtained from the training (Hoedebecke, et al., 2018). According to Srikanth (2017),

One disadvantage of MOOCs is the difficulty with tracking the employee's assignments and involvement. Also, there is no option for designing personalized courseware and assistance from tutors unless linked through social media or other social engagement platforms (Srikanth, 2017). However, one of the disadvantages of pairing with social media is the possibility of copyright issues as a result of allowing online open access (Meloy, 2013) and also maintaining an atmosphere of positivity (Pappas, 2016).

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn are large networking platforms that are being used increasingly by organizations for training purposes (Chen & Bryer, 2012). Blogs, audio/video, text media, wikis, and photos are additional technologies that also allow participants to network, discuss, share, and collaborate for organizational training purposes (Bryer & Zavatarro, 2011 as cited in Chen and Bryer, 2012). Social media platforms provide organizations the capability to promote team-building and collective learning via the creation of private groups and private virtual rooms with varying privacy levels at no financial cost to the organization (Jaiswal, 2020).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media

The advantages of organizations utilizing social media for training purposes include an increase in productivity and the use of live-streaming features to complete on-boarding. Livestreaming provides the opportunity for employees to collaborate and obtain answers to questions, share ideas, and avoid errors by gaining a full understanding of the information provided (Jaiswal, 2020). Chen and Bryer (2012) found that learning is positively enforced with the blending of an informal and formal social media learning environment.

In their study, Chen and Bryer (2012) found the blending of informal social media learning environments with a formal learning environment to be an additional benefit, as it allowed for positively reinforced learning, knowledge obtained via books was connected directly to real-world issues. Other benefits to corporations include an increase in productivity and the ability to rapidly complete onboarding via the use of live-streaming. The Livestream feature of several of the social media platforms allow for successful onboarding of new employees, which includes the ability to provide virtual office tours, immediate answers to questions, and quickly address any concerns (Simon, 2020).

One major disadvantage of utilizing a social media platform for training is the possibility of compromising the brand reputation and image. Ensuring that employees are exhibiting acceptable behavior is important, as an employee's online behavior can compromise the organization's brand image and ruin its reputation (Pappas, 2016). Monitoring social media platforms require time and attention. Depending on the workforce of the organization, this may prove to be challenging (Pappas, 2016). Lastly, according to Pappas (2016), cognitive overload may occur due to exposure to excessive information.

Learning Management Systems

The implementation of the Learning Management System (LMS) utilized by organizations to automate various components of training programs, including administration, development, and delivery, has increased (Noe, 2020). The convenience of LMS makes this method attractive to organizations that are prepared to introduce virtual training programs via tools that are web-based and provide support for course activities, information, and materials (Dehinbo & Odunaike, 2010). With the use of LMS platforms, organizations supplement

classroom training and create hybrid courses with created web content and uploaded documents relative to specific training courses (Noe, 2020).

Advantages and Disadvantages of LMS

LMS platforms which include WebCT, Blackboard, Moodle, and Desire2Learn provide the flexibility needed for geographically dispersed employees to work at their own pace to complete the training modules (Dehinbo & Odunaike, 2010). The use of LMS provides the opportunity for organizations to consolidate the training information (Omkar, 2017) and the online courses are provided with unlimited access to course materials with no time or space constraints. Also, LMS encourages social learning. Participants are free to collaborate with other participants as well as express their thoughts and questions without hesitation due to any feelings of awkwardness (Capper, 2011 as cited in Dehinbo & Odunaike, 2010). When organizations provide links to online social forums and teams, the employee receives the information needed and the organization receives the publicity needed (Omkar, 2017).

Further, organizations benefit financially, as both time and money are saved since training is conducted via the internet (Noe, 2020). Additionally, the employees and the organization can track the progress of training for individual employees to determine whether there are any additional training needs (Noe, 2020). One of the disadvantages of employing an LMS is that certain roles require the physical ability that is not only difficult to present and test online but difficult for the employee to learn online (Omkar, 2017). Another disadvantage of LMS is that different learning designs and styles may not be accommodated, which would result in the employee's inability to properly learn and understand the training materials (Omkar, 2017).

Recommendation and Conclusion

Organizational budgets and desired goals determine which platform for technology-based training will be chosen as the best option for the organization. In reviewing the approaches, it is important to note the individuals have varied learning styles and levels of computer literacy, which is a disadvantage for a variety of technology-based training (Noe, 2020). All of the aforementioned approaches provide flexibility, are cost-efficient, and can successfully operate on numerous devices. However, aside from the specific disadvantages previously mentioned, the disadvantage that is shared by all and may contribute to the lack of success for specific employees is the possibility of losing internet connections and experiencing other technological issues, the absence of direct instructor contact for learners who require direct contact, and the possibility of distractions, if employees are not disciplined enough to remain focused (Hamori, 2018).

According to Noe (2020), technology-based training is most effective in promoting a positive learning environment when employees can interact with instructors and peers, seek additional assistance, and provide feedback. Blending instructor-led training units with the components of LMS would be recommended, as it provides an opportunity for individual learners who require instructor and peer interaction to be able to participate in a blended learning environment (Noe, 2020). Also, individual learners can independently complete modules according to their own pace, which is most comfortable for the learner (Pappas, 2015). Further, in areas that involve decision making, solving problems, and leadership and management training; instructor interaction and a blended approach to training are especially important (Noe, 2020). LMS offers a well-rounded approach to training and can be designed to serve the needs of the specific organization or department securely and without relying on outside sources (Gronstedt, 2007).

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Comparing and Contrasting Technology Based Solutions

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April 12, 2020

Technology Based Training

Brennan, Sellmaier, Jivanjee and Grover (2019) posit that training that is technology based is a cost-efficient way for corporations to educate a large number of employees within a wide range of practices. Technology based training allows for learning methods that include social media, simulations and games, mobile applications, web-based content, and computer based courses (Noe, 2020). The aforementioned methods are used as active and deliberate learning opportunities and vary with being either self-guided, instructor-guided, and blended (Beidas, Koerner, Weingardt, & Kendall, 2011 as cited in Brennan, Sellmaier, Jivanjee and Grover, 2019).

Technology based training is beneficial to corporation and its employees, as it is flexible, self-paced, and can be accessed in various locations (Khanna, Carper, Harris & Kendall, 2017). According to Noe, 2020, instructor-led training is the same as a traditional training method and continues as the primary choice of training. However, the use of technology-based training is increasing and continues to increase as more corporations implement more convenient ways to train employees globally.

Technology based training also allows an organization to measure the current performance of employees in real-time, as it tracks the progress of training in terms of learned knowledge and skills (Noe, 2020). Employers are able to immediately view the calculated results and determine the effectiveness of its chosen method of training as it relates to the organization's goals and desired performance of its employees. These results are considered to be both valid and reliable based on data analytics. The use of different approaches such as web-based (online), computer-based, and blended are determined by the budgets and organizational goals and developed for addressing both the needs and gaps in the performance of employees and

organizations as a whole (Gupta & Sahoo, 2015). While there are numerous approaches, this paper will focus on the following: Computer-based training, web-based training, and E-Learning.

Computer-Based Training

Computer-based training consists of courses provided via computer-based software training packages and may also be provided via internet (Rouse, 2011) and via DVD without the use of internet (Noe, 2020). This training can also be referred to as off-line distance learning (Noe, 2020). The benefits of the computer-based training include cost effectiveness, flexibility, and standardized and consistent course information. Computer-based software training is considered to be more secure, as it can only be accessed by authorized users and has no effect on the security infrastructure (talentlms, 2015). In addition, computer-based training is manageable and produces immediate results.

Offline courses such as simulation, tutorials, drill and practice are all types of skill building activities found within computer-based training that aligns with organizational requirements (talentlms, 2015). Specifically, simulation is a form of computer-based training which duplicates real-life behaviors (US Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1990 as cited in Gupta & Sahoo, 2015) and mimics the work environment. Simulation is widely used in various fields that require client/customer interaction (Bonneau & Bordeau, 2019).

According to Corporate Learning and Development, 2011, simulation training is effective in helping trainees develop areas of strategy, processes, and also leadership. Computer-based training is best used to measure the level of progress and skills learned, through standardized tests that have proven to be objective, fair, reliable, and valid (Koller & Schwaninger, 2006 as cited in Gupta & Sahoo, 2015). Skill and progress levels are considered to be generally difficult to measure by instructors (Gupta & Sahoo, 2015). Disadvantages of computer-based training

include employees who have limited computer skills, lack of interpersonal interaction with an instructor and other trainees and limited in its ability to satisfy the learning methods of individual trainees.

Web-Based Training

Web-based training is a method used broadly within both small and large organizations. According to Noe, 2020, 39% of all training hours is technology based. Web-based training is a form of technology training that is also referred to as internet-based, e-learning, and distance education. This training is flexible and allows for learning to be independently completed according to the time and space allotted for the individual employee (Gupta & Sahoo, 2015). This form of training is especially beneficial to large corporations for its level of convenience, cost effectiveness, and flexibility (Saks & Robert, 2015). This training has several forms which include massive open online courses, podcasts, webinars, and social media creative interactions (Noe, 2020).

The best uses or applications of the web-based method includes the following: Onboarding of new employees, training in regarding sales and customer support, informational in terms of product knowledge, ensuring that employees are in compliance with set rules and regulations, and also certifications relative to specific employment requirements (Ispring, 2019). Several of the disadvantages of this method are lack of in-person social interaction, instruction is not individualized and does not address issues that may affect trainees individually, disruptions due to technological problems, and also unclear instruction or poor instructional design (Kopp, 2014).

E-Learning

E-learning is a form of training that is technologically enhanced and consists of computer-based, internet-based, and/or virtual instruction (Kopp, 2014). E-Learning is also referred to as electronic learning. The primary benefits of this method include timesaving for both employees and employers, the business strategy and objectives of the organization are supported, learners can be linked to other learners, as well as other content, peers and experts, in addition to it being cost efficient. Typically, e-learning is self-paced and absent an instructor and may include links to additional resources. Media that streams video and delivers texts and images as well as audio and animation are also included as e-learning methods (Kopp, 2014).

The advantages of e-learning include more focus on the needed training and less time spent on social interaction, flexibility, the ability to skip modules and focus on modules that are required, learning pace that is comfortable to the learner, and no issues with travel time or geographic location (Koop, 2014). According to Pappas, 2015, disadvantages of e-learning include the possibility that questions are unclear and finding solutions is dependent upon the trainee. In addition, the impersonal nature and lack of human contact may not be beneficial to trainees with a learning style that requires personal interaction. E-learning also requires trainees to be self-disciplined, motivated, and in-control, regardless of the possibility of lengthy training sessions (Pappas, 2015).

Recommendation and Conclusion

Choosing a computer-based, web-based, or e-learning approach to training employees and improving the performance of individuals and/or an organization is largely dependent upon the established and desired goals of the organization and dependent upon the budget of the organization. In reviewing the various approaches, it is evident that the individual performance or organizational problems that exist will not be solved solely by training instruction for all

learners, primarily since individuals have varied learning styles and levels of computer literacy.

Another disadvantage is the possibility of technological insufficiencies, including internet access and bandwidth. Also, the lack of personal interaction is a disadvantage in all three methods.

Computer-based, web-based, and e-learning training methods are all similar in their benefits, as they are all flexible and cost efficient. According to Noe, 2020, e-learning is most effective when interaction is included, as well as any feedback, and a positive environment of learning. A blended learning approach would be recommended, as it allows for a level of instructor and peer interaction as well as the ability independently complete modules according to the pace that is most comfortable for the learner (Pappas, 2015). Further, as Noe, 2020 suggests, face-to-face and/or blended training is especially important for areas that involve the making of decisions, problem solving, and leadership/management training.

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Evaluating Cultural Considerations

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April 27, 2020

According to Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, and Nisbett (1998) as cited in Strom, et al (2012), customs, norms, practices, and social institutions, as well as language, educational systems and other psychological processes, which are influenced by systems of belief and value orientations are defined collectively as culture. Before establishing training initiatives within an organization, it is important to understand the cultures associated with each country and the influence over its organizations. Identifying cultural influences such as race, religion, gender, disability, and customs is vital when developing a strategy for training and ensuring that the training aligns with the objectives and goals of the organization (Awang, Shafie, & Pearl, 2014; Noe, 2010). In understanding the cultures of the participants, the training can be designed to be culturally competent and effective (Strom, et al., 2012).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions consist of six cultural dimensions by which countries can be ranked. Having a clear understanding of the dimensions assists organizations with international business relations. As shown in figure 1, these dimensions are (1) Power Distance (2) Individualism/Collectivism (3) Masculinity/Femininity (4) Uncertainty Avoidance (5) Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation, and (6) Restraint/Indulgence.

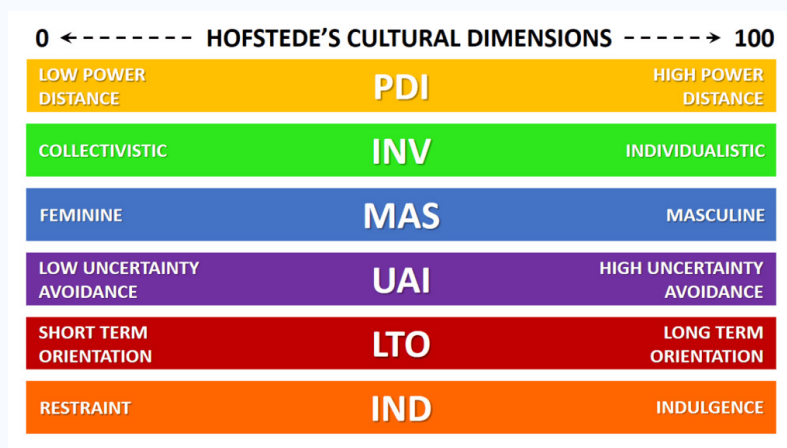


Fig. 1 (Hofstede-Insights, 2020)

Hofstede created the cultural dimensions to identify cultural differences that would potentially create difficulties with international business. Power Distance – measures social inequalities, Individualism/Collectivism – determines whether the group of individuals is valued more, Masculinity/Femininity – shows the division between masculinity and femininity in the corporate world, and Uncertainty/Avoidance deals with cultural feelings regarding uncertain or ambiguous circumstances. Additionally, the Long Term/Short Term Orientation determines whether traditions and persistence motivate culture or short-term goals and status. Restraint/Indulgence determines the extent to which personal enjoyment and satisfaction are emphasized or regulated by strict social norms (Hofstede-Insights, 2020).

Cultural Summary - China

In a case study conducted by Chang (2009), it was determined that a specific US training program was more successful when the lesson plan was translated into the native language of Chinese. By translating the training program to the native language, the attitudes, emotions, and feelings experienced by Chinese participants were conveyed successfully. Additionally, the program was user-friendly and non-English speaking participants were able to attend. Chang (2009) suggests that while many organizations are conducting international business, it is important for human resource professionals to understand the cultural practices of various cultures and adjust training programs for successful implementation and completion. Chang (2009) also pointed out the importance of understanding the acceptable behaviors of participants, which includes the types and levels of participation. In one example, Chinese participants were only willing to participate once directed to by the instructor, as it is not customary to voluntarily and randomly answer questions. When scheduling or planning training in China, it is important

to ensure that the instructor is knowledgeable and able to interact with trainees in a manner that is comfortable and acceptable.

Cultural Summary - United Arab Emirates

Islam is the state religion of the UAE, which is also a large part of UAE culture (Zoubir, 1999).

Political and social behaviors are dictated by Islamic law which is established through dietary and dress codes, as well as holidays and daily prayers. Non-verbal communication includes the use of hand gestures, eating, and shaking hands with the right hand only, as the left hand is considered to be unclean in Muslim culture. Islamic and Arabic culture heavily influence UAE values and attitudes (Zoubir, 1999) which include having good manners as well as showing hospitality and courtesy, which are highly favored in the Arabic culture (UAE-Embassy, 2020).

One of the areas not considered a virtue is the issue of punctuality, as it is not considered to be important to Arabic people (UAE-Embassy, 2020). Commonly, business meetings are started later once all parties arrive (Zoubir, 1999).

According to de Waal and Frijns (2016), social structures and organizations are greatly influenced by ethnicity and family, culture values and religion, and also language. Although women and men are granted equal rights under the constitution, according to religious views, women continue to be segregated from men. In terms of government and organizations, the family influences the social structure, as the head of the family holds the majority of power and authority (de Waal & Frijns, 2016). Socially, groups of individuals are identified by religious beliefs, language, and ethnicity. Religion plays a very large role in the social structure, as it identifies individuals belonging to specific groups within the population, including those that identify with Islamic religion and the specific prayer times and values which are different than

other religions (de Waal & Frijns, 2016). When planning or conducting training in the UAE, it is beneficial to consider Islamic prayer times when planning and scheduling training times.

Cultural Summary - Mexico

According to Goh (2013), Mexican society is considered hierarchal with different social classes and ranks that its citizens are accepting of. Culturally, the family is very important and while men and women are afforded equal opportunities, women primarily remain as caretakers of the home and for the family (Li, 2012). Culturally, women are encouraged to stay at home while the men work. Unlike the UAE, while Mexico's primary religion is Roman Catholic, political and social behaviors are not dictated by religion. However, according to Hise (2003), the country is controlled by the government and in addition to trafficking, the even greater issues include the drug cartels and drug wars, as crime and violence related to drugs has escalated over the years. When planning or scheduling training in Mexico, it is especially important to identify areas of safety.

Comparisons with Hofstede's Dimensions



Fig. 2 (Hofstede-Insights, 2020)

China and America

China's economy and continued potential for growth is one of the largest in the world. In comparison to American culture, there are similarities and a few differences, as shown in figure 2. Power distance shows that culturally, there is an expectancy and understanding of normalcy with regard to accepting significant inequalities between both the supervisors and subordinates within the organization (Hofstede -insights, 2020). While American culture is considered to be more individualistic, Chinese culture measures high as being collectivistic and along with being collectivistic, the business culture of China is long-term oriented, taking as much time as needed to reach goals (Stone, 2012).

Some of the similarities include the masculinity of both American and Chinese cultures as both are success and achievement-driven as well as highly competitive (Stone, 2012). More of the similarities include familial matters, such as dedicating more time to work than family. Both America and China share lower scores pertaining to uncertainty and avoidance, showing more of an acceptance of situations that are ambiguous with rules that are allowed to be broken or flexed (Stone, 2012).

Mexico and America

Mexican and American business cultures have similarities, as both measure as culturally masculine. According to Goh, 2013, the masculine business culture is indicative of having a work ethic that is high where individuals place more importance on living to work rather than working to live and the competitiveness of both cultures leads to achievements and success being highly sought after. Additionally, long-term orientation is similar between both American and

Mexican cultures, which is indicative of believing in fulfilling obligations and maintaining traditions (Taylor, 2012).

Indulgence scores, indicative of satisfying the urge to have fun rather than keeping rigid social norms are higher for both American and Mexican culture (Goh, 2013). Also, the power distance is low for the United States compared to Mexico and another difference is that Mexico is considered collective, which has in-groups that are loyal, take care of each other, and preventing shaming by avoiding making offensive remarks. Certainty is preferred in Mexican culture and there is an expectation of punctuality and precision (Goh, 2013).

UAE and America

The UAE has a level of power distance far greater than that of America and shows that equality is not regarded as being highly important within the UAE. Having and showing respect for individuals in authority or of higher social standing is also important within the culture of the UAE. For example, just as Middle Eastern women are required to show respect to their husbands and elder male family members, respect must also be shown to any co-workers or supervisors that are male (Yassien, 2010). There is a significant difference regarding uncertainty/avoidance, with UAE having a higher score, as there is a certain level of skepticism regarding situations that are unpredictable (Yassien, 2010). As with Mexico and China, America also shares the similarity of masculinity with the UAE, which again is indicative of competitiveness and the drive for success. Indulgence is another similarity and as Yassien, 2010 points out, coffee and cigarettes or cigars are often used equally to conclude business meetings and when socializing and enjoying time with friends and family.

The Use of Technology in Training

Brennan, Sellmaier, Jivanjee, and Grover (2019) posit that technology-based training allows for a large number of employees within a wide range of practices to be trained at one time. Technology-based training is beneficial to corporations and their employees, as it is flexible, self-paced, and can be accessed in various locations (Khanna, Carper, Harris & Kendall, 2017). Although utilizing technology may be beneficial to both the corporation and its employees, it can also be a cultural divider, as with members of older generations or any employee that is not computer-literate may not be as comfortable interfacing with a computer (Stanford & Reeves, 2007 as cited in Cekada, 2012).

Also, understanding the cultural differences, including language barriers or technological illiteracy is important when determining whether or not the use of technology in training will be successful (Noe, 2020). Cekada (2012) also suggests that some members of the generation of boomers may not be interested in using technology, less willing to use technology, and even unable to utilize technology, especially if the instructions are not easily understood. As Chang, (2009) found, as a result of cultural differences, older Taiwanese participants were uncomfortable participating with younger trainees. However, as Chang indicated, a way to help make training less uncomfortable is to have local instructors learn the programming, interact with participants, and develop his or her style of teaching (2009).

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