

From Universal to Contextual: Hybridizing the Watkins and Marsick Model for Moroccan Artisanal Cooperatives

De l'universel au contextuel : Hybridation du modèle de Watkins et Marsick pour les coopératives artisanales marocaines

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Abstract

In this article, a meta-analysis is conducted to assess the application of the Watkins and Marsick model to artisanal cooperatives, highlighting its limitations in diverse cultural contexts. Based on a systematic review of qualitative and mixed-methods studies, an integrative model is proposed, tailored to the Moroccan context. This model is structured around four pillars: community-based learning, collective leadership, organizational memory, and environmental connectedness. The analysis advocates for cultural hybridization as a means to enhance the resilience of cooperatives by combining global innovations (e.g., digitalization) with local traditional practices (e.g., oral knowledge transmission). This contextualized approach addresses socio-economic challenges while preserving artisanal authenticity, offering an operational framework for social economy organizations.

Keywords: Meta-analysis; Cooperatives; Organizational Learning; Integrative Model; Watkins & Marsick.

Résumé

Cet article propose une méta-analyse des applications internationales du modèle d'organisation apprenante de Watkins et Marsick, en se concentrant sur les coopératives artisanales et les organisations d'économie sociale. À travers l'analyse critique d'études qualitatives et mixtes, nous mettons en évidence la pertinence partielle du modèle dans des contextes culturellement distincts, ainsi que la nécessité de son adaptation. En mobilisant plusieurs cadres théoriques complémentaires (capacités dynamiques, culture organisationnelle, institutionnalisme sociologique), nous proposons un modèle intégratif mieux adapté aux spécificités des coopératives artisanales marocaines. Ce modèle repose sur quatre piliers : l'apprentissage communautaire continu, le leadership collectif d'apprentissage, la préservation de la mémoire collective et la connexion proactive à l'environnement. L'étude souligne l'importance d'une contextualisation culturelle des modèles organisationnels et offre des pistes opérationnelles pour renforcer la résilience des coopératives dans un environnement socio-économique en mutation. Ces résultats invitent à repenser l'apprentissage organisationnel à partir d'une perspective hybride, intégrant modernité et traditions locales.

Mots clés : Méta-analyse ; Coopératives ; Apprentissage organisationnel ; Modèle intégratif ; Modèle intégratif.

Introduction

Moroccan craft cooperatives are an essential socio-economic pillar, preserving ancestral know-how while promoting the inclusion of rural and periurban populations. These structures, often rooted in collectivist traditions and informal practices, contribute to the vitality of the handicrafts sector, which accounts for nearly 20% of Morocco's non-agricultural GDP (Amrani & Saïdi, 2020). However, their sustainability is being challenged by multidimensional challenges: accelerated technological change, increasing demands for competitiveness in globalized markets, and tensions between cultural preservation and process modernization. In this context, organizational learning emerges as a critical lever to strengthen their resilience, agility and ability to innovate without sacrificing their authenticity (Bouasla, 2017).

Watkins and Marsick's (1993) model, an essential reference in the study of learning organizations, offers a structuring framework for analyzing and stimulating collective learning dynamics. However, its applicability in contexts marked by strong cultural and institutional specificities, such as that of Moroccan cooperatives, remains little explored. Indeed, this model, initially designed for formalized Western organizations, presupposes an organizational culture open to individual empowerment, egalitarian collaboration, and the systematic formalization of knowledge—dimensions that come into tension with local Moroccan realities characterized by a pronounced social hierarchy (Hofstede, 2011), a predominance of orality in the transmission of knowledge (Zghidi & Zghidi, 2018) and often informal governance (El Abboubi & Kandoussi, 2019).

This article therefore proposes to question the relevance of a direct transposition of Watkins and Marsick's model in this singular context, while developing an appropriate integrative framework. Three objectives structure this approach:

- Synthesize empirical studies that have applied or adapted this model in various contexts,
- Analyze the theoretical and practical limits of its presumed universalism in the light of Moroccan realities,
- Propose a hybrid model articulating the universal dimensions of organizational learning and endogenous socio-cultural logics.

This raises the central question: **How can the Watkins and Marsick model of the learning organization be hybridized to reflect the cultural and operational specificities of Moroccan artisanal cooperatives?**

To do this, a systematic meta-analysis of qualitative and mixed works was conducted, covering an international corpus while paying particular attention to studies conducted in emerging

economies. This methodology makes it possible to identify intercultural convergences and divergences, thus shedding light on the adjustments necessary for effective contextualization. The analysis also draws on a theoretical hybridization mobilizing complementary frameworks—dynamic capacity theory (Teece, 1997), sociological institutionalism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and epistemology of the South (Santos, 2018)—in order to grasp the complex interactions between modernity and tradition.

Structured in five sections, this article first explores the foundations and limitations of Watkins and Marsick's model, before presenting the methodology of the meta-analysis and its results. A critical discussion highlights the challenges of institutional hybridity, leading to the proposal of an integrative model anchored in four pillars: community learning, collective leadership, collective memory, and proactive connection to the environment. In conclusion, this research underlines the imperative to go beyond universalist approaches to promote organizational innovations that are both globalized and rooted in local rationalities.

1. Theoretical framework: Towards an integrative model

1.1. The Watkins and Marsick model

The model of Watkins and Marsick (1993), a founder in the field of learning organizations, offers a structuring framework for understanding how organizations can develop a collective capacity to generate, share and institutionalize knowledge. Structured around seven interrelated dimensions, this model aims to transform structures into dynamic entities, capable of adapting to socio-economic and technological challenges.

The seven dimensions of the model

1.1.1. Continuous Learning

This dimension promotes a culture where experimentation and critical thinking are valued. Marsick and Watkins (2003) emphasize mechanisms such as formalized feedback, adaptive training, or spaces for debate (e.g., monthly workshops in a ceramic cooperative to test new techniques). However, in contexts marked by orality (e.g., transmission of artisanal knowledge in Morocco), excessive formalization can conflict with spontaneous traditions.

1.1.2. Collaboration

This dimension promotes a culture where experimentation and critical thinking are valued. Marsick and Watkins (2003) emphasize mechanisms such as formalized feedback, adaptive training, or spaces for debate (e.g., monthly workshops in a ceramic cooperative to test new techniques). However, in contexts marked by orality (e.g., transmission of artisanal knowledge in Morocco), excessive formalization can conflict with spontaneous traditions.

1.1.3. Knowledge-sharing systems

The model distinguishes between formal tools (databases, technical sheets) and informal tools (oral histories, mentoring). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) refer here to the "spiral of knowledge", where tacit and explicit knowledge are enriched. In Morocco, orality dominates (e.g., transmission of Berber carpet patterns by imitation), requiring hybrid solutions such as audiovisual archives.

1.1.4. Empowerment

Conger and Kanungo (1988) define empowerment as the delegation of decision-making power to stimulate engagement. In craft cooperatives, this could mean the creative autonomy of the potters or participation in strategic decisions. Nevertheless, patriarchal structures (e.g., presidents elected for life) often limit this autonomy, calling for collective empowerment via village assemblies (jemad).

1.1.5. Connection to the environment

Daft and Weick (1984) emphasize the importance of proactive interaction with external stakeholders. A Moroccan basketry cooperative, for example, could combine market intelligence (analysis of tourism trends) with local partnerships (reed suppliers). This dimension feeds continuous learning by integrating external signals.

1.1.6. Learning Support Leadership

Bass and Avolio (1994) advocate transformational leadership, capable of inspiring and allocating resources to learning. In traditional cooperatives, where leaders are often designated by seniority, training leaders in collaborative practices becomes crucial to promote innovation (e.g., reverse mentoring with young people).

1.1.7. Systemic Integration

Senge (2006) advocates the alignment of processes for a holistic view. This includes integrating learning into performance indicators (e.g., evaluating training participation) or reviewing workflows. A Moroccan cooperative could, for example, synchronize its innovation workshops with seasonal production cycles.

Although robust, the model is criticized for its assumption of universality (Örtenblad, 2013). In Morocco Craft coopératives, three major challenges are emerging:

- ❖ Rigid social hierarchies: Empowerment and participatory leadership collide with patriarchal norms.
- ❖ Primacy of orality: Formal systems of sharing are struggling to replace traditional transmissions (e.g., workshop demonstrations).

- ❖ Informal governance: Collective structures (jemad) are difficult to coexist with standardized processes.
- ❖ These limitations underline the need for a hybridization of the model, integrating local logics:
- ❖ Replace individual empowerment with collective mechanisms (e.g., decisions taken in assemblies).
- ❖ Combine digital tools (e.g., multimedia databases) with traditional channels (e.g., craft storytelling).
- ❖ To promote distributed leadership, relying on both the old and the young trained in modern methods.

In short, Watkins and Marsick's model offers a valuable framework, but its effectiveness depends on a cultural recontextualization, articulating modernity and traditions to respond to the complex realities of Moroccan cooperatives.

However, in order to overcome the limitations of Watkins and Marsick's model, it is necessary to mobilize complementary theoretical frameworks, stemming from organizational learning and sociological institutionalism.

1.2. Complementary theories mobilized

In order to overcome the limits of the universalist model of Watkins and Marsick (1993) and to adapt the approach to the specific context of Moroccan craft cooperatives, a plurality of complementary theoretical frameworks is mobilized. This conceptual hybridization makes it possible to grasp the complex dynamics related to culture, local resources and institutional pressures, while offering levers for a contextual adaptation of the learning organization model.

1.2.1. Organizational Learning Theory (Argyris & Schön, 1978)

The theory of double-loop learning allows cooperatives to move beyond inherited routines while preserving their cultural cohesion. It sheds light on the tensions between innovation and tradition, particularly in the face of the introduction of digital technologies into craft practices. Concrete examples, such as the pottery cooperatives of Fez, show the importance of collective reflexivity in building hybrid solutions.

1.2.2. Resource-Based View – RBV (Barney, 1991)

The RBV values intangible and cultural resources as the foundation of a sustainable competitive advantage. In Moroccan cooperatives, traditional know-how and social networks play this role. However, their informality requires contextually adapted formalization (certifications, labels) to avoid their dilution without distorting their authenticity.

1.2.3. Dynamic Abilities (Teece, 1997)

The Dynamic Capability Framework emphasizes organizational agility in the face of an uncertain environment. Craft cooperatives need to identify opportunities, mobilize their resources, and reconfigure their processes to remain competitive. Local assemblies (jemad) play a role of adaptive governance, reconciling speed and inclusion.

1.2.4. Organizational culture (Hofstede, 1980)

Moroccan cultural dimensions (strong hierarchy, collectivism) influence learning and governance practices. The promotion of orality and the low participation of young people and women require adapted mechanisms, such as intergenerational circles or culturally contextualized digital tools.

1.2.5. Sociological Institutionalism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)

Cooperatives are subject to isomorphic pressures between institutional standardization and identity preservation. The concept of institutional hybridity makes it possible to integrate external requirements while respecting community values. This translates into dual governance, between compliance requirements (certifications) and local practices (village decisions).

The articulation of these theoretical frameworks offers a multidimensional analytical grid to adapt the model of Watkins and Marsick. It promotes an enriched reading, where reflective learning, the valorization of local resources, organizational agility, cultural dynamics and institutional constraints combine to build contextualized cooperative resilience. This integrative framework thus makes it possible to go beyond universalist approaches by proposing a path of transformation rooted in Moroccan realities.

1.3. Rationale for the integrative approach

This theoretical plurality justifies the use of an integrative approach, particularly adapted to the specific context. Indeed, the adaptation of Watkins and Marsick's (1993) model to the specific context of Moroccan craft cooperatives requires an integrative approach, articulated around three theoretical and empirical pillars. This requirement stems from the complexity of Moroccan organizational dynamics, characterized by the non-linear interaction of cultural, institutional, and socio-economic factors.

The arguments presented below, which are firmly rooted in the scientific literature and supported by empirical case studies, fully justify this methodological position. They underline the need to go beyond universalist models to design analytical frameworks that are sensitive to the hybrid and situated realities of craft cooperatives, at the crossroads of tradition and modernity.

1.3.1. Interdependence of dynamics

Innovation within craft cooperatives cannot be reduced to a linear or isolated process; It emerges from a systemic interaction between cultural resources, organizational structures, and leadership practices. Teece (1997), through his theory of dynamic capacities, insists on the need to continually reconfigure resources — both material and immaterial — in order to cope with changes in the environment.

This logic is convincingly illustrated by the case of the pottery cooperatives of Fez, where the adoption of eco-efficient kilns reveals an interdependence between:

- ❖ Mobilization of traditional knowledge (cultural resource),
- ❖ The establishment of collaborative spaces for experimentation (organizational structure), and
- ❖ Transformational leadership capable of reconciling cultural legitimacy with the desire for innovation (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The complexity of this process is reinforced by the spiral of knowledge proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), according to which innovation results from the dialectic between tacit knowledge (transmitted orally) and explicit knowledge (formalized and shareable).

In the Moroccan context, these dialectic encounters structural tensions, particularly related to the predominance of orality and the weak formalization of knowledge. These constraints call for the implementation of hybrid mechanisms to ensure the continuity of learning and avoid its fragmentation (Edmondson, 2002).

Therefore, an integrative approach is needed to model these interactions by taking into account the diversity of technical, social and symbolic dimensions that underlie organizational learning in craft cooperatives.

1.3.2. Multiple levels of analysis

A holistic understanding of organizational learning dynamics requires a multi-level analysis, in accordance with the theoretical scheme proposed by Coleman (1990), which articulates the interactions between the micro (individuals), meso (groups/organizations) and macro (institutions/systems) levels.

- ❖ Micro level: individual behaviors

Individual attitudes, such as resistance to change frequently observed among older craftsmen, can be interpreted in terms of cognitive and emotional mechanisms, including those described by the theory of double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978). The latter insists on the

importance of questioning established norms and routines, a sine qua non condition for the emergence of a critical reflexivity that promotes innovation.

❖ Meso level: collective structures

Forms of collective governance, such as jemad (village assemblies), embody deep-rooted cultural norms, characterized by pronounced collectivism and high hierarchical distance (Hofstede, 2011). While these informal structures support community cohesion, they also pose challenges in terms of integrating standardized procedures and modernizing management practices.

❖ Macro level: institutional influences

Institutional constraints, such as certification requirements imposed by international markets or development agencies, refer to the normative isomorphism described by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). These external pressures require strategic adaptation, which is often complex to make without compromising the cultural and community authenticity of cooperatives.

The integrative approach thus makes it possible to articulate these three levels of analysis, revealing the way in which public policies (macro) influence the organizational structures of cooperatives (meso), which in turn shape individual behaviors (micro), and vice versa (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012). This systemic reading is essential to understand the logics of organizational learning in all their complexity.

1.3.3. Cultural Contextualization

The mechanical application of organizational models designed in formalized Western contexts is largely unsuited to the Moroccan context, which is marked by cultural, social and institutional specificities. As Hofstede (2011) points out, Morocco is distinguished by a high hierarchical distance (IDP = 70) and a low index of individualism (IDV = 46), reflecting a preference for centralized decision-making structures, social relations based on loyalty, and a significant weight of orality in the transmission of knowledge.

This prevalence of orality has a double face:

- ❖ On the one hand, it promotes contextual adaptability. For example, Berber carpet patterns are frequently adjusted to local tourist preferences, testifying to an appreciable cultural plasticity.
- ❖ On the other hand, it limits the sustainable capitalization of knowledge, hindering its structured intergenerational transmission and exposing cooperatives to the risk of dilution of skills (Zghidi & Zghidi, 2018).

To overcome these structural limitations, Santos (2018) proposes an epistemology of the South, calling for the recognition and valorization of local rationalities, often marginalized by dominant normative frameworks. In the same vein, Battilana and Dorado (2010) put forward the concept of "institutional tinkering", which consists of hybridizing modern devices (e.g., databases, digital platforms) with endogenous practices (e.g., community decisions taken in *jemad*).

This contextual hybridization can be seen in initiatives such as the introduction of audiovisual archives, intended to document craft skills while respecting traditional oral forms of storytelling and teaching. Such a strategy makes it possible to preserve the cultural richness of cooperatives while facilitating their upgrading to the demands of the contemporary world.

1.4. Theoretical synthesis

The proposed conceptual model is based on a critical integration of four complementary theoretical frameworks, making it possible to grasp the complexity of organizational learning dynamics within Moroccan craft cooperatives. This multidimensional architecture aims to articulate the structural, adaptive, cultural and institutional dimensions of collective learning in a hybrid context.

❖ Watkins and Marsick's (1993) model: an adaptable structural base

The structural dimensions of the model — such as continuous learning, knowledge sharing or learning leadership — provide a universal framework for organizational transformation. However, their operationalization in Moroccan craft cooperatives requires a critical rereading, because of the pervasiveness of oral traditions and structures that are not very formalized (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Örtenblad, 2013).

❖ Dynamic capabilities (Teece, 1997) : strategic adaptability

Dynamic capability theory sheds light on the ability of organizations to respond to uncertainty, reconfigure their resources, and innovate without breaking their identity. In Morocco, such as hybrid forms between ancestral knowledge (e.g., Berber weaving) and modern technologies (e.g., online sales platforms) (El Abboubi & Kandoussi, 2019).

❖ The Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 1980): Between Hierarchy and Collectivism

Cultural anchoring, including high hierarchical distance (IDP = 70) and low individualism (IDV = 46), profoundly influence learning styles, governance and knowledge transmission. This context generates resistance to empowerment, but also collective resources based on solidarity and loyalty (Zghidi & Zghidi, 2018).

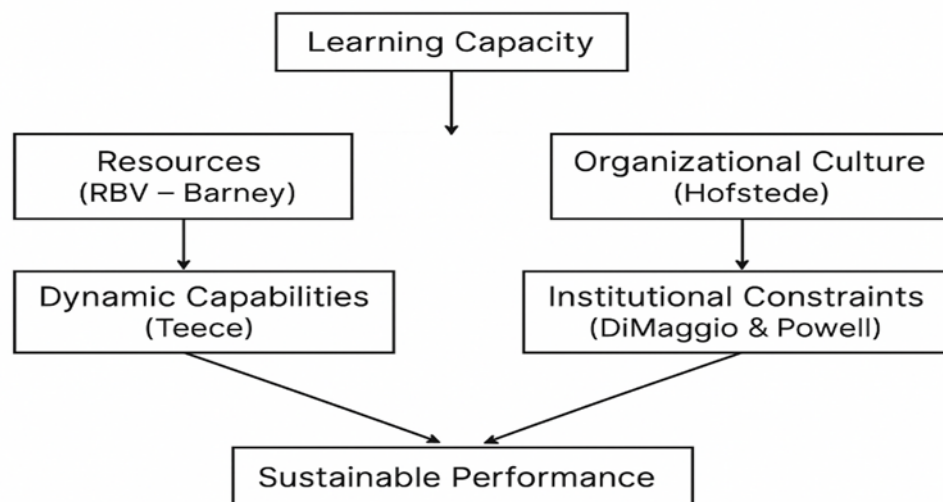
❖ Sociological Institutionalism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983): Between Conformity and Identity

Cooperatives face isomorphic pressures, oscillating between international standards of standardization (e.g., certifications, traceability) and the concern to preserve cultural authenticity. This tension calls for an institutional hybridization (Battilana & Dorado, 2010), illustrated by forms of community governance such as the jemad.

This integrated theoretical architecture makes it possible to model the hybrid reality of Moroccan craft cooperatives. It highlights the importance of a strategic balance between tradition and modernity, between local logics (orality, community governance) and global requirements (digitalization, performance).

This framework is part of a dialogical approach, drawing on the contributions of the epistemology of the South (Santos, 2018) to legitimize local rationalities, while also mobilizing tools derived from universal references. In sum, it constitutes a flexible but rigorous analytical framework, adapted to the economic, social, and cultural challenges of the Moroccan context.

Figure N°1: synthetic diagram of the multidimensional theoretical architecture



Source: developed by the authors

Building on these theoretical foundations, we conducted a systematic meta-analysis to assess the applicability of the model in the Moroccan context.

2. Methodology of the Meta-Analysis

2.1. Study Selection Criteria

The selection of studies was based on rigorous criteria aimed at maximizing internal validity and thematic relevance. Research that explicitly applies the Watkins and Marsick model or proposes adaptations of its dimensions in organizational contexts has been included. Emphasis

was placed on studies on cooperatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social economy actors, in order to align the corpus with the subject of this research. Purely quantitative methodologies have been excluded, as they do not allow for an in-depth exploration of the processual dynamics of organizational learning. On the other hand, qualitative (interviews, case studies) or mixed approaches were favored, as they offer the necessary granularity to analyze social interactions, governance mechanisms and underlying cultural logics.

Once the selection criteria had been defined, a literature search strategy was deployed on three academic databases.

2.2. Search strategy

Data were collected through three major academic databases – Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar – recognized for their exhaustiveness and the quality of the indexed sources. A combination of bilingual keywords (English and French) was used to cover the theoretical and empirical dimensions of the subject: "Learning Organization", "Watkins Marsick", "cooperative learning", "organizational learning" and "social economy". Temporal filters have been applied to ensure that knowledge is updated, while including foundational work necessary to understand the evolution of the model.

2.3. Selection process and eligibility

The selection process followed the methodological recommendations of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) diagram, ensuring transparency and reproducibility. After an initial identification of relevant articles, a first selection was carried out on the basis of titles and abstracts, discarding studies that were off-topic or did not meet the methodological criteria. An in-depth evaluation of the full content then made it possible to exclude research with insufficient theoretical anchoring to the Watkins and Marsick model, or an organizational context incompatible with social economy structures. At the end of this procedure, a final corpus was constituted, characterized by a geographical diversity spanning several continents and a thematic homogeneity focused on the challenges of organizational learning.

2.4. Data extraction and coding

After the selection of the studies, the data extraction was systematized using a predefined analysis grid. This made it possible to collect information on three main axes: the complementary theories mobilized (e.g., dynamic capacity theory, sociological institutionalism), the dimensions of the Watkins and Marsick model validated or reconfigured empirically, and the contextual specificities of the organizations studied (sector of activity, size,

cultural anchoring). The thematic coding was carried out using the NVivo 12 software, a tool allowing a fine categorization of qualitative data and the identification of conceptual recurrences. To strengthen the reliability of the results, a double check by a second coder was performed on a random sample of the corpus, thus limiting interpretation biases and ensuring analytical consistency.

3. Results of the meta-analysis

3.1. Characteristics of the included studies

The meta-analysis incorporated research covering a significant geographic and sectoral range, reflecting the diversity of contexts in which the Watkins and Marsick model is applied. The selected studies, conducted in a variety of national contexts, focus mainly on three key sectors: handicrafts, agriculture and microfinance, these are areas where the challenges of organizational learning are heightened by specific economic and social constraints. Methodologically, qualitative approaches predominate, with a prevalence of semi-structured interviews, making it possible to grasp the perceptions of actors and informal dynamics. Multiple case studies complete this corpus, offering a comparative analysis of learning mechanisms within similar structures but located in distinct environments.

3.2. Validation of model dimensions

The analysis reveals uneven validation of the seven dimensions proposed by Watkins and Marsick. The dimensions of continuous learning, collaboration and knowledge sharing emerge as robust, transcending cultural and sectoral boundaries. These elements are systematically identified as catalysts for resilience, especially in craft cooperatives where the exchange of traditional know-how and adaptation to technical innovations are crucial. On the other hand, the empowerment and leadership dimensions of learning support appear fragile, their implementation often being hampered by centralized power structures or hierarchical cultural norms. For example, in several African and Middle Eastern studies, the empowerment of members clashes with traditions of patriarchal governance, limiting equal participation in decision-making processes.

3.3. Divergence factors

There are three main factors that explain the discrepancies in the application of the model. First, the weight of hierarchical culture, particularly marked in the Moroccan and Asian contexts, influences the ability of organizations to establish distributed leadership or promote empowerment. Second, forms of informal collective governance, while promoting social cohesion, complicate the formalization of learning processes, making it difficult to sustain

them. Finally, the low level of formalization of learning mechanisms in many cooperatives – often linked to an over-reliance on orality and limited resources – limits the traceability of knowledge and its intergenerational transmission. These elements underline the importance of adapting the model to local organizational logics, where the balance between informality and structuring remains a central challenge.

4. Discussion

These results invite a critical reflection on the adaptability of Watkins and Marsick's model to Moroccan sociocultural realities.

Indeed, the results of this meta-analysis highlighted the **conditional** validity of Watkins and Marsick's model in diverse organizational contexts, while highlighting its limitations when transposed to culturally distinct realities, such as that of Moroccan craft cooperatives. While the dimensions of collaboration, continuous learning and knowledge sharing are universally relevant – because they are rooted in collective logics common to learning organizations – the dimensions of empowerment and supportive leadership reveal a systemic fragility in contexts marked by rigid social hierarchies. This dichotomy illustrates a central paradox: universalist models, although useful for structuring analysis, struggle to integrate the local specificities that shape learning dynamics.

In Morocco, craft cooperatives embody this tension. Their strength lies in informal dynamics of collaboration, nourished by community traditions and oral transmission of knowledge. These mechanisms, although not formalized, promote remarkable adaptability in the face of economic fluctuations, as illustrated by the carpet cooperatives of the Atlas, where artisans adjust their designs according to tourism trends without resorting to written procedures. However, this informality becomes an obstacle when it comes to sustaining knowledge or structuring inclusive leadership. The empowerment of members, for example, comes up against patriarchal structures where decision-making authority remains concentrated in the hands of traditional actors (e.g., male leaders or elderly figures), limiting the emergence of participatory governance.

The intercultural analysis highlights three critical dimensions that are absent from the initial model, but which are essential for its adaptation to the Moroccan context:

- ❖ **Informal collective governance**, which, although a source of cohesion, requires hybrid mechanisms to reconcile community traditions and transparency requirements.
- ❖ **Oral memory**, the dominant vector for the transmission of artisanal knowledge, but vulnerable to modernization and the migration of the younger generations to cities.

- ❖ **Community coping capacities**, which transcend individual learning to rely on local solidarity networks, such as *jemaâ* (village assemblies) in the High Atlas.

These elements invite us to rethink Watkins and Marsick's model through the prism of **institutional hybridity** (Battilana & Lee, 2014), where formal and informal structures coexist. For example, the introduction of digital platforms to document traditional knowledge (mitigating the risks of oral knowledge) could complement – but not replace – existing channels of transmission. Similarly, distributed **leadership**, relying on respected figures while training young relays, would make it possible to circumvent hierarchical rigidities.

Finally, this discussion raises a major theoretical question: to what extent can organizational learning models, designed in formalized Western contexts, integrate holistic and **community-based logics** prevalent in the Global South? The answer lies in decompartmentalizing theoretical frameworks, integrating concepts such as *the economy of the commons* (Ostrom, 1990) or *the epistemology of the South* (Santos, 2018), to better understand the alternative rationalities at work in Moroccan cooperatives.

The adaptation of Watkins and Marsick's model to Morocco requires less a rejection of its principles than a **dialogical recontextualization**, where universal dimensions (collaboration, sharing) are articulated with local logics (oral memory, community governance). This approach, both theoretical and pragmatic, offers an operational framework to strengthen the resilience of craft cooperatives, without sacrificing their cultural identity to the imperatives of global standardization.

In summary, we have highlighted the urgent need to adapt universalist models to local realities, as evidenced by all the analyses and discussions dealt with in the previous sections and as will be formalized in the following section.

5. Proposal of an integrative model adapted to the Moroccan context

Based on the reasoning and results carried out in the previous sections, the aim is to propose an integrative model adapted to the specificities of Moroccan craft cooperatives.

Based on the results of the meta-analysis and the theoretical discussion, it seems necessary to propose an integrative model that combines the foundations of Watkins and Marsick's model with the socio-cultural specificities specific to Moroccan craft cooperatives. This adapted model is based on the articulation of four fundamental pillars, designed to enhance organizational learning capabilities while respecting local organizational logics.

The first pillar, continuous community learning, aims to enhance the continuous exchange of traditional and modern knowledge. Contrary to a strictly individual approach to learning, the

aim here is to promote collective dynamics where members share their experiences, adapt ancestral know-how together to contemporary requirements and gradually build hybrid skills. This process, rooted in daily practice, facilitates the adaptability and resilience of cooperatives in the face of market changes, while consolidating their cultural identity.

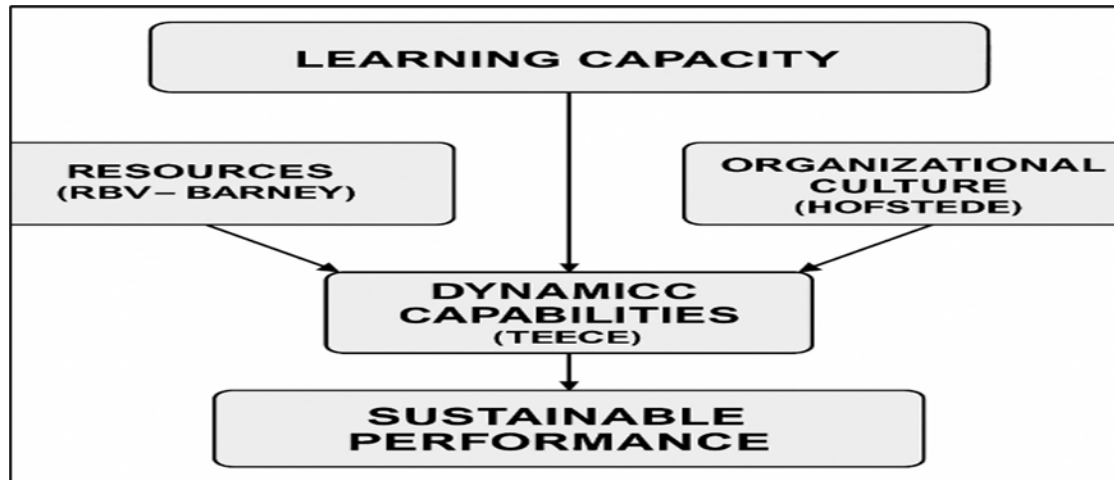
The second pillar, collective learning leadership, proposes to replace traditional formal leadership with an informal structure based on mutual support. In this model, the most experienced members – seasoned craftsmen, respected figures – play a key role as facilitators and mentors. This approach makes it possible to circumvent traditional hierarchical rigidities, while establishing a dynamic of upward transmission, favoring the gradual emergence of new generations of leaders within cooperatives.

The third pillar, collective memory systems, responds to the need to preserve and transmit knowledge in a context where orality remains a central vector of professional socialization. Rather than imposing an inappropriate bureaucratic formalization, it is proposed to develop light mechanisms for capitalizing on knowledge, compatible with local practices. This can include, for example, collecting stories of experience in audio or video form, creating community archives or documenting craft processes in the form of illustrated sheets that are accessible to all.

Finally, the fourth pillar, proactive connection to the environment, highlights the importance for cooperatives to expand their interaction networks. It is not only about strengthening links with local or regional markets, but also about exploring the opportunities offered by digitalization, including e-commerce and craft promotion platforms. The ability to anticipate economic changes and to integrate institutional, technological and commercial partners is thus becoming a major lever for ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of cooperative structures.

This integrative model is not content with juxtaposing traditional practices and imported theories: it seeks to weave a pragmatic synthesis between the conceptual contributions of the international literature on the learning organization and the cultural, economic and institutional realities specific to Morocco. In this sense, it offers a flexible framework for action, capable of strengthening the learning capacity of craft cooperatives while respecting their deep identity anchors.

Figure N°2: Diagram of the integrative model adapted to the Moroccan context



Source: developed by the authors

Conclusion

This meta-analysis confirms the cross-cutting relevance of Watkins and Marsick's model as a structuring framework for analyzing organizational learning dynamics, including in non-Western contexts. However, it acutely reveals the limits of a direct application of this model to Moroccan craft cooperatives, where cultural and institutional specificities require a critical revision of its universalist postulates. Indeed, while dimensions such as collaboration and knowledge sharing find a natural echo – carried by centuries-old community traditions – others, such as empowerment or formal leadership, come up against complex societal realities, marked by implicit hierarchies and informal collective governance.

The proposed integrative model responds to these challenges by anchoring organizational learning in the Moroccan socio-cultural soil. It articulates four complementary pillars:

- ❖ Continuous community learning, which values both ancestral know-how (e.g. Berber weaving techniques) and pragmatic innovations (e.g. use of digital markets),
- ❖ Collective and inclusive leadership, based on respected figures while integrating younger generations via reverse mentoring mechanisms,
- ❖ The adapted formalization of oral memory, combining digital tools (multimedia databases) and traditional channels (tales, craft demonstrations),
- ❖ A proactive connection to the environment, developing local and international networks to anticipate market changes.

On a theoretical level, this adaptation illustrates the fecundity of a conceptual hybridization, where Western theories of organizational learning dialogue with endogenous logics, such as the economy of the commons (Ostrom, 1990) or the epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2018). It

demonstrates that the sustainability of cooperatives does not lie in imitating foreign models, but in their ability to synthesize modernity and tradition.

On a practical level, the model offers concrete levers to strengthen the agility and resilience of these structures. For example, the introduction of collaborative platforms to document craft techniques preserves collective memory while facilitating access to new markets. Similarly, culturally appropriate participatory management training can promote the progressive empowerment of members without upsetting existing social balances.

Finally, this research opens up perspectives for comparative studies in other contexts of the Global South, where similar challenges – informality of processes, tensions between orality and formalization – are acute. She advocates for a decolonization of managerial models, inviting us to recognize that organizational effectiveness requires an active listening to local rationalities. In short, socio-cultural roots are not an obstacle to modernization, but rather the basis of authentic and lasting innovation.

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