

# Implementing Tabletop Role-Playing Games for Workplace Learning: The ADVENTURE Framework in Practice

Davide Capobianco<sup>1</sup> and Flavio Manganello<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, University of Venice Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy

<sup>2</sup>Institute for Educational Technology, National Research Council, Genoa, Italy

[davide.capobianco@unive.it](mailto:davide.capobianco@unive.it)

[flavio.manganello@cnr.it](mailto:flavio.manganello@cnr.it)

**Abstract:** Organizations seek innovative approaches to develop collaborative competencies among knowledge workers, yet traditional corporate training often fails to address complex social and cognitive skills required in modern team-based work environments. This paper presents the practical implementation of the ADVENTURE framework, demonstrating how tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs) can systematically enhance workplace learning through structured intervention design. TTRPGs offer unique advantages through cooperative storytelling, shared problem-solving, and reflective practice, creating immersive learning experiences that mirror real workplace challenges while maintaining high engagement levels. The absence of systematic implementation frameworks for professional contexts has constrained their adoption in organizational learning programs. The ADVENTURE framework addresses this gap by providing evidence-based methodology for designing, implementing, and evaluating TTRPG interventions in workplace settings. The framework integrates Self-Determination Theory with European LifeComp competencies through a three-level architecture encompassing theoretical foundations, operational implementation, and stakeholder engagement. This comprehensive approach ensures theoretical rigor while providing practical flexibility for diverse organizational contexts. The Adventurer's Diary assessment methodology captures learning processes and group dynamics through structured reflection prompts aligned with autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs, enabling systematic evaluation of competency development. Implementation involves knowledge worker teams engaging in four weekly TTRPG sessions designed to progressively mirror workplace challenges within fictional contexts that promote collaborative problem-solving and adaptive thinking. Game systems emphasizing collaborative narrative construction are selected using systematic criteria, with scenarios increasing in complexity and requiring sophisticated decision-making strategies. The five-phase implementation methodology guides practitioners from initial assessment through competency integration, ensuring systematic application while accommodating organizational constraints. Data collection integrates pre-post competency assessments, behavioral observations, and diary-based reflections using multiple methodologies to ensure comprehensive evaluation. Anticipated outcomes include improvements in LifeComp competencies, particularly collaboration, communication, and learning-to-learn skills, enhanced team dynamics, increased engagement, and measurable transfer of competencies to workplace contexts. Practical contributions include systematic game selection criteria, structured facilitation guidelines, comprehensive assessment protocols, and implementation guidance addressing organizational challenges. This work demonstrates that TTRPGs, when systematically implemented through frameworks such as ADVENTURE, may offer viable alternatives to traditional training methodologies while providing engaging approaches to developing workplace competencies, with implications for organizational learning and development practice.

**Keywords:** Workplace learning, Tabletop role-playing games, Competency development, Experiential learning, Team training, Implementation framework

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## 1. Introduction

Contemporary organizations face unprecedented challenges in developing collaborative competencies among knowledge workers. Traditional corporate training approaches, while structured and measurable, often fail to address the complex social and cognitive skills required in modern team-based work environments. The need for innovative learning methodologies that can effectively develop collaboration, communication, and adaptive thinking skills has become critical for organizational success (Abersek et. al., 2023; Harari, 2018; Morin, 2008; Sim & Nicolaidis, 2024).

Tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs) present a unique opportunity to address these challenges through their inherent characteristics of cooperative storytelling, shared problem-solving, and reflective practice. However, the systematic implementation of TTRPGs in professional contexts requires structured frameworks that can bridge the gap between game-based learning theory and practical workplace application (Haarman, 2022; Markiewicz et al., 2024).

The ADVENTURE framework was developed to address this implementation gap by providing evidence-based methodology for designing, implementing, and evaluating TTRPG interventions in workplace settings. The theoretical foundations of the ADVENTURE framework, presented in detail elsewhere (Capobianco & Manganello, 2025), integrate four key theoretical perspectives

- Firstly, we consider Self-Determination Theory (autonomy, competence, relatedness) (Deci & Ryan, 2001), since in TTRPGs, these needs manifest through the ludic architecture's foundations. Players autonomously decide their character's behavior and influence the narrative (autonomy); overcome narrative challenges through individually or collectively conceived strategies requiring creativity (competence).
- Secondly, we introduce LifeComp Framework (personal, social, and learning-to-learn competences) (European Commission, 2020), which identifies essential life competencies for personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment (Pellegrini & Vitali, 2023). These competencies align naturally with TTRPG mechanics, where players must adapt to unexpected situations, collaborate effectively, and continuously learn from both successes and failures.
- Thirdly, we propose a pedagogical perspective articulated into three sub-dimensions, that are: 1) the heutagogical learning model (Hase & Kenyon, 2000) serving as our primary pedagogical reference. The heterogeneity of TTRPGs aligns with non-linear and personalized training possibilities. This creates superior engagement and intrinsic motivation, as individuals are free to solve problems according to their interests. This freedom has been readily associated with the creative liberty to manage one's learning that TTRPGs can provide; 2) TTRPGs propose "disorienting dilemmas" (Mezirow, 2003) that lead to critical reflections on one's assumptions, resulting in new configurations of interpretive systems. Players experience and make mistakes in complete autonomy, being challenged to find critically different approaches to ever-new situations. We operate between Bateson's second level and third (Bateson, 1973): modifications in decision-making processes are actuated, as subjects redefine reference schemas among which to choose their actions, questioning their methods. This is a profound redefinition of cognitive paradigms regulating reality perception and involves "epistemic learning" that implies changing the very way of knowing and basic meta-assumptions (Fahrenbach & Kragulj, 2022); 3) cooperative learning: TTRPGs are played in a relational decision-making context of exchanges and confrontations, where self-questioning is a reciprocal process. Everything happens in a cooperative context.
- Lastly, we considered neuroscience insights (neuronal patterns, neuroplasticity) and especially the game transfer phenomena), which describes how experiential game elements can influence perceptions and behaviors in daily life (Ali & Tan, 2022; Bowman & Schrier, 2018; Villalba, 2017). While the theoretical foundations of this framework are presented elsewhere (Author, 2025), this paper focuses on the practical implementation aspects, providing detailed guidance for practitioners seeking to integrate TTRPGs into organizational learning programs.

This paper presents the operational architecture of the ADVENTURE framework, with particular emphasis on intervention design, assessment protocols, and implementation guidelines. The contribution is primarily methodological, offering practitioners systematic approaches to TTRPG implementation that can be adapted across diverse organizational contexts.

## **2. The ADVENTURE Framework: Implementation Architecture**

The ADVENTURE framework operates through a three-dimensional architecture that bridges theoretical foundations with practical implementation while addressing diverse stakeholder needs. This architecture encompasses the theoretical dimension, operational dimension, and stakeholder dimension, creating a comprehensive approach to TTRPG-based workplace learning.

### **2.1 Framework Overview**

The theoretical foundations of the ADVENTURE framework, presented in detail elsewhere (Author, 2025), integrate four key theoretical perspectives: Self-Determination Theory (autonomy, competence, relatedness) (Deci & Ryan, 2001; Gupta & Goyal, 2022; Li et al., 2024), LifeComp Framework (personal, social, and learning-to-learn competences) (European Commission, 2020; Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008; Pellegrini & Vitali, 2023), pedagogical approaches (heutagogy, transformative learning, cooperative learning) (Bateson, 1973; D'Souza, 2024; Fahrenbach & Kragulj, 2022; Hase & Kenyon, 2000; Mezirow, 2003; Stoten, 2020), and neuroscience insights (neuronal patterns, neuroplasticity, game transfer phenomena) (Ali & Tan, 2022; Bowman & Schrier, 2018; Villalba, 2017). These theoretical foundations inform all operational decisions while ensuring evidence-based implementation.

Game design principles embedded within the framework emphasize decision making, trial and error learning, and cooperation as core mechanisms for competency development. These principles translate into specific operational guidelines that inform scenario design, session facilitation, and assessment approaches.

Figure 1 illustrates the three-dimensional architecture of the ADVENTURE framework, showing the integration between theoretical foundations, operational components, and stakeholder considerations that guide practical implementation.

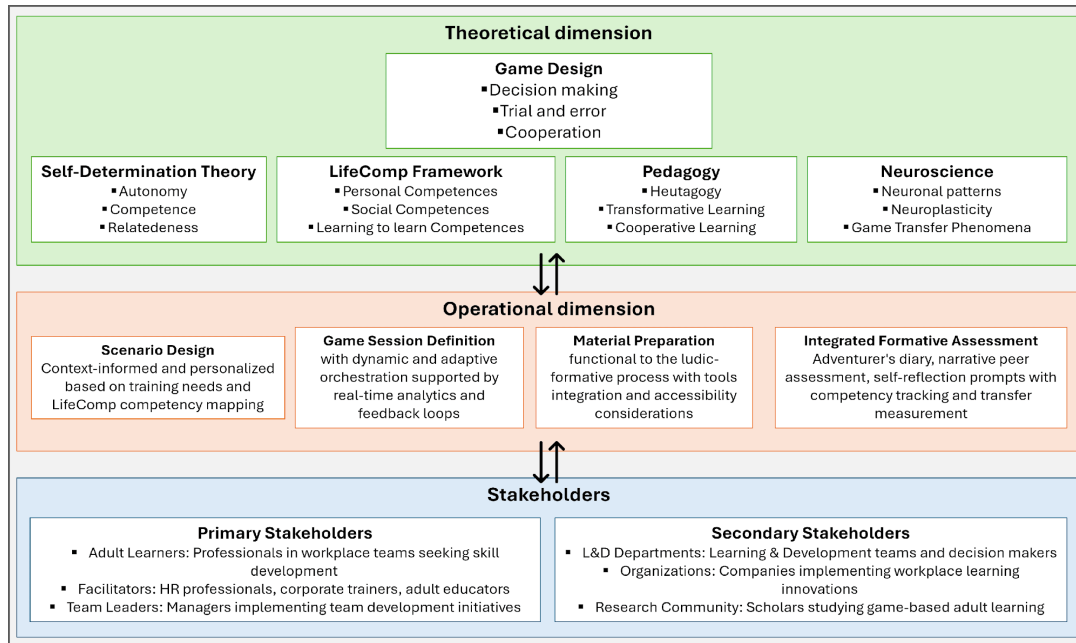


Figure 1: The ADVENTURE Framework Three-Dimensional Architecture

## 2.2 Three-Level Architecture

The operational dimension encompasses four core components that translate theoretical foundations into practical implementation. Scenario design involves context-informed and personalized approaches based on training needs and LifeComp competency mapping. Game session definition includes dynamic and adaptive orchestration supported by real-time analytics and feedback loops. Material preparation addresses functional requirements for the ludic-formative process with tools integration and accessibility considerations. Integrated formative assessment utilizes the Adventurer’s Diary methodology, narrative peer assessment, and self-reflection prompts with competency tracking and transfer measurement.

The stakeholder dimension addresses both primary and secondary stakeholders essential for successful implementation. Primary stakeholders include adult learners (professionals in workplace teams seeking skill development), facilitators (HR professionals, corporate trainers, adult educators), and team leaders (managers implementing team development initiatives). Secondary stakeholders encompass Learning and Development departments, organizations implementing workplace learning innovations, and the research community studying game-based adult learning.

This three-dimensional approach ensures that implementation maintains theoretical rigor while providing practical flexibility for organizational adaptation and stakeholder engagement.

## 3. Systematic Game Selection and Preparation

### 3.1 Game Selection Criteria

The selection of appropriate TTRPG systems represents a critical implementation decision that significantly impacts learning outcomes. Dungeons & Dragons (D&D), for example, features complex gameplay divided by classes, species and abilities that deeply alter the experience with minimal variations. Players have an arsenal of solutions through parameters and narrative possibilities exploiting the game environment to solve complex situations. On the other side, Vampire - The Masquerade focuses heavily on social relations, political intrigue, and factional conflicts, rarely resolved through combat. There are no longer optimized statistics for creating characters with quantified characteristics, but abilities are registered in ten-sided dice pools whose successes

(6-10) give the Game Master an indication of action outcomes, not fixed resolution tied to numbers as in D&D. This makes combat and calculation-based strategies much less important, giving more space to player autonomy, their extradiegetic competencies and relationships among them. Yet another example could be *Fabula Ultima*, which encourages inexperienced users to intervene in narration and participate with the Game Master. It exploits the *fabula points* mechanic as a form of education in collective construction of diegetic environments and narrative elements (even during combat). Even bonds provide numerical bonuses, thus reinforcing cooperative dynamics.

Our framework establishes systematic criteria for game selection based on learning objectives, participant characteristics, and organizational context. Primary selection criteria include collaborative narrative emphasis, rules complexity appropriate for novice players, session duration compatibility with workplace scheduling, and thematic alignment with learning objectives. Game systems must prioritize cooperative storytelling over competitive elements, ensuring that learning occurs through shared narrative construction rather than individual achievement. Secondary criteria address practical implementation considerations including facilitator training requirements, material costs, and scalability across organizational units. The framework recommends game systems that require minimal specialized knowledge while providing sufficient structure to support meaningful learning experiences.

### **3.2 Scenario Development**

Scenario development follows a structured approach that ensures alignment between fictional contexts and workplace learning objectives. Scenarios are designed to progressively increase in complexity while maintaining thematic coherence throughout the intervention period.

Each scenario incorporates specific competency development opportunities embedded within narrative challenges. The design process begins with competency mapping, identifying which LifeComp competencies will be addressed through particular narrative elements. Scenarios then integrate these competencies into storylines that require collaborative problem-solving and adaptive thinking.

The framework provides templates for scenario development that can be customized to organizational contexts while maintaining learning effectiveness. These templates include character development guidelines, conflict escalation patterns, and decision-making frameworks that facilitate competency development through gameplay.

### **3.3 Material Preparation**

Implementation requires systematic preparation of learning materials that support both gameplay and assessment activities. Material preparation follows standardized protocols that ensure consistency across implementation sites while allowing for organizational customization.

Core materials include participant handbooks, facilitator guides, assessment instruments, and reflective practice tools. The participant handbook provides game rules, character development guidelines, and reflection prompts. The facilitator guide includes session plans, intervention protocols, and troubleshooting guidance.

Assessment materials encompass pre-intervention competency assessments, session observation forms, and post-intervention evaluation instruments. All materials are designed for ease of use by non-specialist facilitators while maintaining assessment rigor required for meaningful outcome evaluation.

## **4. Intervention Design and Session Structure**

### **4.1 Five-Phase Implementation Methodology**

The ADVENTURE framework follows a structured implementation process designed for workplace learning contexts, organized in five interconnected phases that ensure systematic application while maintaining flexibility for different organizational needs. The framework typically involves three to five workshop sessions of four to five hours each, allowing for deep engagement and meaningful competency development.

This flexible approach accommodates diverse organizational contexts, from intensive multi-day workshops to extended programs distributed over several weeks. The duration and frequency of sessions can be adapted based on participant availability, learning objectives, and organizational constraints while maintaining the integrity of the learning process.

The five phases ensure comprehensive implementation from initial assessment through long-term competency integration, with each phase building upon previous components while preparing for subsequent development activities.

#### *4.1.1 Phase One: Pre-Assessment and game selection*

The initial pre-assessment and game selection phase involves assessing team dynamics and learning objectives to establish a clear understanding of the target competencies and organizational context. This phase includes selecting the most appropriate TTRPG system based on organizational needs and participant experience levels, while establishing baseline measurements for target competencies that will serve as reference points for subsequent evaluation.

The assessment process examines existing team collaboration patterns, individual competency levels, and specific learning needs that will inform scenario design and facilitation approaches. Game selection follows systematic criteria that match system characteristics with learning objectives and participant characteristics.

#### *4.1.2 Phase Two: Workshop series design*

During the workshop series design phase, facilitators develop a comprehensive structure consisting of three to five workshop sessions. This phase encompasses creating scenarios aligned with learning objectives and workplace challenges, ensuring that the fictional elements resonate with real professional situations participants encounter. Simultaneously, facilitator materials and participant resources are prepared, including scenario guides, character creation templates, and assessment instruments.

Scenario development follows the framework's principles of progressive complexity increase while maintaining thematic coherence throughout the intervention period. Each workshop session is designed to build upon previous learning while introducing new collaborative challenges that require increasingly sophisticated problem-solving approaches.

#### *4.1.3 Phase Three: Facilitated gameplay*

The facilitated gameplay phase represents the core implementation period where sessions are conducted with trained facilitators who implement real-time observation protocols while supporting participant reflection through guided diary completion. This phase requires careful balance between maintaining game flow and capturing learning data, ensuring that assessment activities enhance rather than disrupt the immersive experience.

Sessions incorporate dynamic and adaptive orchestration supported by real-time analytics and feedback loops, allowing facilitators to adjust scenarios and challenges based on participant responses and learning progress. The gameplay experience emphasizes cooperative storytelling, shared problem-solving, and reflective practice as vehicles for competency development.

#### *4.1.4 Phase Four: Assessment and reflection*

The assessment and reflection phase involves systematic analysis of diary entries and observational data collected throughout the gameplay sessions. Focus group discussions are conducted to facilitate collective reflection and peer learning, while competency development is evaluated against baseline measures established in the initial phase. This comprehensive evaluation approach ensures both individual and group learning outcomes are captured and understood.

Multiple assessment methodologies are integrated including the Adventurer's Diary, narrative peer assessment, and self-reflection prompts with competency tracking. The assessment process addresses both formative learning during sessions and summative evaluation of competency development outcomes.

#### *4.1.5 Phase Five: Transfer and integration*

The final transfer and integration phase focuses on facilitating the transfer of learned competencies to actual workplace contexts through the development of concrete action plans for continued development. Follow-up assessment protocols are established to monitor long-term retention and application of developed competencies, ensuring that the learning experience produces lasting organizational value.

This phase includes specific activities designed to help participants identify workplace applications for developed competencies and establish support systems for ongoing skill enhancement. The transfer process is

supported by structured reflection on learning experiences and goal setting for continued competency development.

## **5. Assessment Protocols and Data Collection**

### **5.1 Integrated Assessment Methodology**

The ADVENTURE framework employs an integrated assessment methodology that captures learning processes and group dynamics through multiple interconnected approaches. This comprehensive system includes the Adventurer's Diary as the core methodology, complemented by narrative peer assessment, behavioral observations, and competency tracking measures that provide a holistic view of learning outcomes.

The integrated approach addresses both formative assessment during the learning process and summative evaluation of competency development. Multiple methodologies ensure triangulation of data sources while maintaining engagement through assessment approaches that align with the ludic-formative process characteristics of TTRPG experiences.

Assessment activities are designed to enhance rather than disrupt the immersive learning experience, utilizing tools that integrate naturally with gameplay while generating systematic data for both participant feedback and research evaluation purposes.

### **5.2 The Adventurer's Diary Component**

The Adventurer's Diary serves as a central component within the integrated assessment methodology, capturing learning processes through structured reflection prompts aligned with Self-Determination Theory components. Based on diary study methodologies and reflective learning journals (Buranasinwattanakul, 2024; Miller, 2022; Rimmer, 2024), the diary serves as both a critical reflection tool for participants and an evaluation instrument for facilitators and researchers.

The diary methodology operates through reflection prompts structured according to SDT's three fundamental needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), ensuring systematic coverage of motivational aspects while maintaining connection to the ludic experience. Participants can autonomously choose when to complete diary sections, either during or after sessions, supporting the framework's emphasis on learner agency.

Reflection prompts are designed to be engaging and accessible while maintaining assessment rigor. Questions utilize gaming metaphors and narrative elements to encourage thoughtful reflection while generating data that can be systematically analyzed for learning outcomes and competency development patterns.

### **5.3 Narrative Peer Assessment and Competency Tracking**

The framework incorporates narrative peer assessment as a complementary methodology that leverages the social and collaborative nature of TTRPG experiences. Participants provide structured feedback to peers about observed competency development, collaborative contributions, and learning growth throughout the intervention period.

Peer assessment protocols utilize narrative formats that align with the storytelling nature of TTRPGs while providing systematic data about social competencies and group dynamics. This approach captures perspectives that may not be visible through individual reflection or external observation alone.

Competency tracking integrates data from multiple sources including diary reflections, peer assessments, and facilitator observations to provide comprehensive monitoring of learning progress. The tracking system maps individual and group development against LifeComp competency frameworks while maintaining focus on learning transfer to workplace contexts.

### **5.4 Pre and Post-Intervention Assessment Protocols**

Baseline assessment establishes initial competency levels and participant characteristics that inform both intervention customization and outcome evaluation. The protocol includes standardized LifeComp competency assessments that measure collaboration, communication, and learning-to-learn skills, providing quantitative baseline data that enable measurement of competency development throughout the intervention period.

Post-intervention evaluation includes competency reassessment using the same instruments administered at baseline, enabling measurement of competency development over the intervention period. Additional measures assess learning transfer intentions and self-reported application of developed competencies to workplace contexts.

The assessment protocol balances systematic data collection with practical feasibility for implementation in organizational settings, utilizing instruments that can be efficiently administered while generating data suitable for both individual feedback and program evaluation purposes.

## **6. Implementation Guidelines for Practitioners**

### **6.1 Organizational Readiness Assessment**

Successful implementation requires systematic assessment of organizational readiness for TTRPG-based learning interventions. This assessment addresses cultural factors, resource availability, and stakeholder support that influence implementation success.

Cultural readiness assessment examines organizational attitudes toward innovative learning approaches, acceptance of game-based learning, and support for collaborative competency development. Organizations with strong cultures of innovation and experimentation are more likely to successfully implement TTRPG interventions.

Resource assessment addresses facilitator availability, physical space requirements, and material costs associated with implementation. The framework provides guidelines for resource planning that help organizations prepare for successful intervention delivery.

### **6.2 Facilitator Preparation and Training**

Facilitator preparation represents a critical success factor for ADVENTURE framework implementation. The framework provides comprehensive training protocols that prepare facilitators to effectively deliver TTRPG-based learning experiences.

Training addresses both technical game facilitation skills and learning facilitation competencies. Facilitators learn to manage game mechanics while maintaining focus on learning objectives and competency development. Training emphasizes the dual role of facilitators as both game masters and learning facilitators.

The training protocol includes practice sessions, mentoring relationships, and ongoing support systems that help facilitators develop confidence and competence in intervention delivery. Training materials are designed for use by organizational learning professionals without prior TTRPG experience.

### **6.3 Participant Preparation and Engagement**

Participant preparation involves orientation to the learning approach, expectation setting, and motivation building for active engagement. The framework provides structured approaches to participant preparation that maximize engagement and learning outcomes.

Orientation sessions introduce participants to TTRPG concepts, explain learning objectives, and address potential concerns about game-based learning. These sessions help participants understand how gameplay connects to competency development and workplace application.

Engagement strategies address potential resistance to game-based learning while building enthusiasm for the collaborative learning experience. The framework provides techniques for maintaining participant motivation throughout the intervention period.

### **6.4 Organizational Integration Strategies**

Successful implementation requires integration with existing organizational learning and development systems. The framework provides guidance for positioning TTRPG interventions within broader competency development programs.

Integration strategies address how TTRPG learning experiences complement traditional training approaches and support organizational learning objectives. The framework helps organizations understand how collaborative competency development through TTRPGs can enhance overall learning effectiveness.

Implementation guidance includes suggestions for scaling successful pilot implementations across organizational units and embedding TTRPG approaches into ongoing learning programs. These strategies help organizations maximize return on investment in innovative learning approaches.

## **7. Discussion and Future Directions**

### **7.1 Implementation Challenges and Solutions**

Practical implementation of the ADVENTURE framework reveals several common challenges that organizations must address to ensure successful outcomes. These challenges include participant resistance to game-based learning, facilitator confidence in managing both gameplay and learning objectives, and organizational skepticism about the effectiveness of TTRPG approaches.

Participant resistance often stems from misconceptions about gaming and concerns about professional appropriateness. The framework addresses this challenge through comprehensive orientation, clear connections between gameplay and workplace competencies, and emphasis on learning outcomes rather than gaming entertainment.

Facilitator confidence develops through structured training and ongoing support systems. The framework provides detailed facilitator guides, practice opportunities, and mentoring relationships that help facilitators develop competence in intervention delivery.

### **7.2 Scalability and Adaptation Considerations**

The ADVENTURE framework is designed for adaptation across diverse organizational contexts while maintaining core learning effectiveness. Scalability considerations include resource requirements, cultural adaptation needs, and integration with existing learning systems.

Resource scalability addresses how organizations can implement TTRPG interventions efficiently while maintaining quality. The framework provides guidance for training multiple facilitators, adapting materials for organizational contexts, and managing implementation costs.

Cultural adaptation ensures that TTRPG interventions remain effective across different organizational cultures and participant populations. The framework provides guidelines for customizing scenarios, adjusting facilitation approaches, and modifying assessment methods to maintain cultural relevance.

### **7.3 Future Research Directions**

Implementation of the ADVENTURE framework opens several promising research directions that can advance understanding of TTRPG-based workplace learning. These directions include longitudinal studies of competency development, comparative effectiveness research, and investigation of individual differences in learning outcomes.

Longitudinal research can examine how competencies developed through TTRPG interventions transfer to workplace performance and persist over time. Such research would provide valuable evidence about the long-term effectiveness of game-based learning approaches.

Comparative effectiveness research can examine how TTRPG interventions compare to traditional training approaches in developing collaborative competencies. This research would help organizations make informed decisions about learning methodology selection.

### **7.4 Technological Integration Opportunities**

Future development of the ADVENTURE framework may benefit from integration with digital technologies that can enhance assessment, facilitate remote implementation, and provide ongoing support for competency development.

Digital assessment tools could automate data collection and provide real-time feedback to participants and facilitators. Such tools could reduce administrative burden while improving assessment accuracy and accessibility.

Remote implementation capabilities could extend the framework's reach to distributed teams and organizations with limited physical meeting space. Hybrid approaches combining in-person and digital elements could provide flexibility while maintaining the collaborative benefits of TTRPG learning experiences.

**Ethics Declaration:** Ethical clearance was not required for this research as it presents methodological frameworks and implementation guidelines rather than empirical research involving human participants. Future empirical implementation of the ADVENTURE framework will require appropriate ethical clearance from relevant institutional review boards.

**AI Declaration:** AI tools were used in the development of this paper to support formatting consistency and language refinement. The conceptual framework, implementation guidelines, and methodological contributions represent original work by the authors. AI assistance was limited to editorial support and did not influence the substantive content or conclusions of the research.

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