

An Empirical Study of Learning Environment in Textile Sector of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT: *Learning in organizations has worldwide importance. Now also in Pakistan idea of organization learning is developing. The purpose of this paper is to examine the 'supportive learning environment' in textile sector of Pakistan. Supportive learning environment is first building block from the given three building blocks of a learning organization by David Garvin. For the purpose of collecting data a self administrated questioner was utilized. Results illustrate that there is need of improvement in supportive learning environment for providing learning oriented environment to the employees of textile sector.*

Keywords: Supportive Learning Environment, Learning Organizations, Textile sector, and Pakistan

In this dynamic environment only those organizations survive who make changes according to changing environment. There is one thing constant in environment that is "change". Change is the incessant procedure that organizations have to be taken up for meet the entrants. In this modern age, organizations must have capabilities of learn faster than their opponents to survive in the dynamic changing environment.

The learning organizations are those organizations where members of the organizations continuously augment their capabilities to get their desired results(Senge). Organization learning is a universal concept in the organizations. Also in Pakistan the idea of learning is developing. Peter Senge and David Garvin described five components for the learning organization. These five components: according to Senge (1994) "personal mastery, system thinking, mental model, shared vision and team learning", on the other side according to Garvin (1985) "systematic problem solving, learning from experience, experiments, transfer knowledge, learning from others". Basically there are three components for building a learning organization that are called building blocks of a learning organization. These building blocks are "Supportive learning environment, concrete learning process and practices, leadership that reinforce learning"(Garvin, Edmondson et al. 2008).

Organizations of twenty first century need to adopt specific changes that come due dynamic changing environment for the survival in the market. Learning for managers is essential thing to take the effective action for the organization. Action taken by the managers after getting total information would be more reliable(Marquardt 2000). The main focus of any organization is to meet the customer preferences, customer's preferences may change according to the environmental changes. So, enterprise that changes him towards changing environment can meet the customer's preferences and will be able to get competitive advantage.

This study will exclusively focus on first building block of a learning organization "Supportive learning environment", and the area of study is textile sector. Instrument developed by (Garvin, Edmondson et al. 2008) in their article "Is yours a Learning Organization?" is used for the purpose of getting and evaluating the data.

Literature Review

The thought of learning organization can be elaborate as Organization learning is the process of categorizing and

solving the errors(Argyris 1977). The learning organization is the organization that is skillful in generating, attaining and conveying the knowledge and amends its behavior to disclose new knowledge and insights(Garvin 1985). The learning organizations are those organizations where members of the organizations continuously augment their capabilities to get their desired results(Senge 1997).

Learning organization is an organization where members of the organizations rapidly acquire, share and learn new skills to defend the changes in environment. It is a process where organizations totally redevelop through acquired new knowledge(Hitt 1995). In the manufacturing world the idea of learning has already developed. Supportive learning environment is an initial stage for the workers of an enterprise to get know how about the dynamic changing environment. Environment that reinforce the learning in the organization emerge the learning abilities of the employees(Bessant and Tsekouras 2001).

Organizations that convert themselves according to the changes in the environment could create the competitive advantages. Manufacturing firms that introduce the training campaign for their members could enhance their productivity by an 17 percent(Dearden, Reed et al. 2006).Through making the vision and establish themselves by obtaining and transferring the new knowledge, people of the organizations can gain the competitive benefit in changing environment(Garvin, Edmondson et al. 2008). First building block supportive learning environment is most important building block for Private sector organizations as well as Public sector organizations. In a comparative study it is concluded that public sector organizations have not yet been capable to build up a learning surroundings proportional to that of private sector organizations(Ali, Bajwa et al.).

Learning organizations should encourage individual learning. Even corporate level management and CEO's are interested in corporate level learning at large scale, corporate level learning is not possible without individual learning in the organization(Kapp 1999). For the flow of basic and fresh knowledge about the changing environment 'Knowledge Management' in an organization is an essential thing. Knowledge management system is an information structure that particularly developed to support incorporation and division the knowledge in an organization(Alavi and Leidner 1999).

Knowledge management and learning organization are connected with each other and must be considered and awarded in performance(Loermans 2002). Knowledge and experience sharing in an enterprise play a vital role in becoming a learning organization, because these are

the elements that can aware members of the organization with changing circumstances(Khan, Tanveer et al.).

Learning is important because performance of an organization in rapidly changing environment depend on broad learning(Main, Rauf et al. 2013). Only learning organizations that learn faster from the environmental variations can survive at the time of uncertainty(Ummar, Lodhi et al.). In this dynamic environment, circumstances may not be same in future for an enterprise. To handle these changes organizations should adopt pro-active approach rather than reactive approach. To become learning organization is not a one night process; it comes through management commitment and mind-set of the members of the organization(Garvin 1985). The only benefit for an organization is the aptitude of learn faster than the opponents. For maintaining this advantage over competitors' organization has to adopt environmental variations(Rasheed, Hussain et al.).

Methodology

All data for this study collected from textile sector of Faisalabad. Employees of top level management, middle level management and lower level management were selected as respondent. Convenient sample technique is used in this study. 70 employees from the whole sector were taken as the sample. The object of this study is exclusively focus on the first building block "Supportive learning environment" in textile sector. Eighteen variables and a benchmark score card used for evaluating the strength of this building block in this particular area. A questioner is used for collection the data from the respondents, questioner developed by David Garvin. With the help of SPSS 16.0, arithmetic mean test applied on collected data. To check the reliability of data Cronbach's alpha test applied. All questioners were filled up by the respondents in the existence of the investigator and queries solved politely by the researcher.

Variables and Findings

To become an organization into a learning organization, learning oriented environment is necessary. Supportive learning environment has four aspects.

- 1) Psychological Safety
- 2) Appreciation of Differences
- 3) Openness to new Ideas
- 4) Time for Reflection

These four dimensions included supportive learning organization. The collective entity of these four dimensions ensures that there is supportive learning in

an organization. These dimensions have eighteen variables. Each of them tested through likert scale.

Table 1 Instrument

| |
|---|
| Psychological Safety |
| 1. In this unit, it is easy to speak up what is in your mind |
| 2. If you make a mistake in this unit, it is often held against you |
| 3. People in this unit are usually comfortable talking about problems and disagreements |
| 4. People in this unit are eager to share information about what does and does not work |
| 5. Keeping your cards close to your vest is the best way to get ahead in this unit |
| Appreciation of Differences |
| 6. Differences in this unit are welcome in this unit |
| 7. Unless an opinion is consistent with what most people in this unit believe, it won't be valued |
| 8. This unit tend to handle differences of opinion privately or off line, rather than addressing them directly with the group |
| 9. In this unit, people are open to alternative ways of getting work done |
| Openness to new Ideas |
| 10. In this unit, people value new ideas |
| 11. Unless an idea has been around for a long time, no one in this unit wants to hear it |
| 12. In this unit, people are interested in better ways of doing things |
| 13. In this unit, people often resist untried approaches |
| Time for reflection |
| 14. People in this unit are overly stressed |
| 15. Despite the workload, people in this unit find time to review how to work is going |
| 16. In this unit, schedule pressure gets in the way of doing a good job |
| 17. In this unit, people are too busy to invest time in improvement |
| 18. There is simply no time of reflection in this unit |

Table2 Scaled Scores

| Building block of learning organization | Bottom quartile | Second Quartile | Median | Third Quartile | Top Quartile |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|--------|----------------|--------------|
| Supportive learning environment | | | | | |
| • Psychological Safety | 31-66 | 67-75 | 76 | 76-87 | 87-100 |
| • Appreciation in Differences | 14-56 | 57-63 | 64 | 65-79 | 80-100 |
| • Openness to new ideas | 38-80 | 81-89 | 90 | 91-95 | 96-100 |
| • Time for Reflection | 14-35 | 36-49 | 50 | 51-64 | 65-100 |
| Learning environment composite | 31-61 | 62-70 | 71 | 72-79 | 80-90 |

In Table 2 there is benchmark score card that is given by David Garvin. After calculating mean values of all dimensions in supporting learning environment, these will compare with benchmark score card given above. Five scales score are there to judge the strength of each dimension. Bottom quartile shows the initial stage of any dimension, second quartile leads little improvement,

median tells the average score, or strength, third quartile shows much better condition and top quartile elaborate that the strength of any dimension is extremely good.

Table 3 Mean Values

| Supportive Learning Environment | Mean Values |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Psychological Safety | 66.73 |
| Appreciation of Differences | 63.08 |
| Openness to new ideas | 71.58 |
| Time for Reflection | 61.42 |
| Learning environment composite | 65.70 |

Psychological Safety: Mean value of psychological safety is 66.73. It lies in second quartile. It illustrates that it crosses the initial stage but need much improvement in organization for providing a supportive learning environment.

Appreciation of Differences: Mean value of appreciation of differences is 63.08. Appreciation of differences also falls in second quartile. Like first dimension, appreciation of differences needs improvement for providing ideal circumstances to meet changes in environment.

Openness to New Ideas: The third dimension of supportive learning environment is openness to new ideas. Mean value of this dimension is 71.58 and it falls in bottom quartile. It tells that openness to new ideas at its initial stage in the enterprise. Management should have to improve this immediately for better environment of learning.

Time for Reflection: The value of mean of time for reflection is 61.42. It lies in bottom quartile. Situation of this dimension is better than others three dimensions of supportive learning environment.

Learning Environment Composite: Overall mean value of supportive learning environment is 65.70. It falls in second quartile according to bench mark score card. Situation of supportive learning environment in textile sector is not convinced at all. Organizations of this sector need much more improvement in supportive learning environment for impressive learning.

Table 4 Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .747 | 18 |

Table 4 shows that the value of Cronbach's alpha .747. Cronbach's alpha more than .50 is always satisfied. It means the reliability of internal data in good

Conclusion

It is concluded that "Supportive learning environment" first building block of an organization at its initial stage and needs improvement in textile sector of Pakistan. Out of four dimensions of the supportive learning environment, only one dimension that is "Time for Reflection" falls in third quartile it means it's much better. Other dimensions need improvement to build a supportive learning environment for learning oriented organization. The scope of this study is not too broader, because the data collected from limited respondents. Same results of this study cannot be applied to all organizations because of limited respondents

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