

# **An Empirical Investigation of Learning Orientation in the Context of Textile Sector of Pakistan**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The purpose of this study is to investigate learning orientated organizations in textile sector of Pakistan. This study based on Garvin's three building blocks. Data is collected through questionnaire. All three building blocks have been considered that include fifty eight variables. Individual mean scores along with cumulative mean scores are used to analyze organizations. Result show that openness to new idea, a variable from first building block, needs improvement.*

**Keywords:** Building blocks, Learning organization, Textile sector, Openness to new idea, Time for reflection,

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Organizations have disruptive impact of environment change. Any organization that wants to survive in changing environment should adopt some measure to maximize their survival. It is hard to change environment so we have to change ourselves with changing environment. Because environment change, to some extent hard, bring lot of opportunities. In today world organization that avails these opportunities get faster success as their competitors. Availing these opportunities, organization should not be just an organization but a learning organization. Traditional organizations change as response to reacting to happenings. They are often changing averse. By contrast learning organizations are visionary and creative.

The concept of learning is firstly described by Peter M Senge. Peter M. Senge's book, The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of a Learning Organization, contains one of the best images of a learning organization. Learning organizations are organizations where people continually enhanced their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and extensive model of thinking are fostered, where collective target(Senge 1991). Organizations learn just like human, organization sense circumstances within their environment (internal as well as external) and they learn. Learning organizations are those who seek to create their future.

Why learning is important. Because organization's level of success and performance required in ever changing environment depend on extensive learning. Organizations that learn as quickly as other competitors gets higher level learning and competitive advantage. Organization that continues learn from environment are the biggest example of success. Other benefit of learning, maintaining competition, being reacted to external pressures, having the knowledge based management to customer needs and improving quality of products.

Learning is worldwide accepting concept in business organization. Even in Pakistan organizations are widely accepted the concept of learning. Many organization developed separate research and development department to ensure learning in their respected organization even though it is limited but can be considered as first step toward better future. Many organizations in Pakistan have realized that without learning they will lead towards slow death. In this study the focus on Textile industry of Pakistan. The concern of this study to evaluate that to what extent there is learning in industry and how much organization support learning of its employees. For the purpose of measuring and evaluating learning David A Garvin tool is being

used in this study. Garvin stated three building block of learning organization, a supportive learning environment, concrete learning process and leadership that reinforces learning. The tool kit, develop by Gavin et al in their article "is yours a learning Organization" is used to test hypothesis.

## Literature Review

Learning organization can be defined as an organization that is skillful in creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insight(Garvin 1985).the learning organization is the type of organization that permit to human spirit to ensure creativity and innovation. Spiritual theme does not help to attaining goals, but flourish human(Porth, McCall et al. 1999). Learning organization is an organization in which people continually acquire, share, and use new knowledge to adapt to an ever-changing environment. It is renewal process where organization totally redevelops itself(Hitt 1995). An organization where peoples continuously expand their capabilities to generate result that they actually seeking for, where extensive thinking patterns are fostered, and where people are continually learning from experiencing of other and as well as their own.This demand that the organization should learn with that rate which equal or greater rate of changing in environment (March, Sproull et al. 1991). Learning organization and knowledge management are depend upon each other, changes in each effect other, simply the concept of hen and egg who come first(Aggestam 2006).

In the social world the concept of learning is already established one. Many research articles, publication and sources are explained this concept. The result of compelling vision and made up skilled by creating adopting and transferring knowledge, people could help their organization to establish a competitive advantages and adopting the environment changes more quickly than other(Garvin, Edmondson et al. 2008). There is potential relationship between that learning and the performance of the organization(Marsick and Watkins 2003).One prediction to high performance productivity is to increase personal knowledge and organizational information(Asadi, Ghorbani et al. 2009).The learning organization traits, that made easy to perform one's job in professional manner, are open communication, sharing of information, risk taking, new idea promotion, time for learning and best utilize of available resources(Kontoghiorghes, Awbre et al. 2005).

The research provide the evidence that TQM totally depend on learning, better understanding to environment, seeking competitive advantages from employees commitment, information, analysis and knowledge(Terziovski, Howel et al. 2000). It is seams that the change in structure and increment in collective knowledge associated with and other feature will tend to favor those formally appointed as manager, especially at the apex of organization. Learning is nothing without of individual of the enterprise. The key to stay alive in changing environment in learning, not individual but collective learning of whole organization(Fard, Rostamy et al. 2009).

A firm's learning ability is hidden in it employees there for creative learner in necessarily encouraged, which evaluate the importance of human resource management in learning organization(Herisi and Khodabakhsh). Learning organization must persuade individual learning and development, even CEOs, presidents, and corporate managers concerned in broad picture of organization and paying their full attention to adopt learning at cooperate level, there is no cooperate learning without individual learning(Kapp 1999).Learning habitually occurs in project settings and mostly involves convey of knowledge through involvement(Kalyar, Rafi et al. 2012). More active and resourceful learner believes themselves as a more useful and mare often involve in leadership behaviors(Örtenblad 2004). When leaders actively participated in process of learning, carefully listen to their employees, spending their time to solving problems of employees, they ensures the learning in their organizations(Garvin, Edmondson et al. 2008). To grow up with rapid changing environment and made organization more successful the leaders must improve their capacities and capabilities to perform in seven chief roles as a change agent, coordinator, servant, teacher mentor, innovator, system thinker, and visionary.(Marquardt 2000).

A proper planning in key point towards learning organization, choosing the best method and practice is necessary for the learning organization(Galer and Van Der Heijden 1992). Learning does not adopt at once but requires a step by step procedure. Research shows four foundations or mechanisms that support to development of organization learning, learning environment, identifying learning needs, meeting these needs and application of learning(Armstrong and Foley 2003). A firm faced with unstable,

unpredictable environment must constantly be innovative so as to save its position as competitive in terms of learning(Teare and Dealtry 1998).

There should be consistency in improve their capacity and capability to learn with adversely changing market condition, if not they are doomed to suffer from such unfavorable market condition like market myopia, reinventing wheel or repeated mistakes(Škerlavaj and Dimovski 2011). Absorptive capacities of external information of firm define its innovative capabilities(Cohen and Levinthal 1990).Absorptive capacity can be created with variety of ways. Research show that firm that engage in its own R&D is better able to absorb information and propagate it.(Mowery 2010).

Learning needs to be incorporated into work and be an honest and at liberty part of employees' work(Örtenblad 2004). Measuring the learning in learning organization is essential. In learning organization Just massive discussion of learning and just implement learning in nothing fruitful. Organization must need a clear instruction and a proper operational advice to ensure learning(Garvin 1985). Characteristic that permits an examination of the behaviors which will either support or restrain organizational learning, these behaviors can be measured using behaviorally anchored rating scales which indicate strengths and weaknesses and that can be enhanced through action. Organization wants a way to assess their current status and guide, scholars want a better measure of organization learning for the purpose of compare and assessing the link between performance of the firm and organizational learning(Marsick and Watkins 2003).

## Methodology

In this study all three building block is used. Some researcher in past also use only one building block in their study like (Ali, Bajwa et al. , Rasheed, Ali et al. , Rasheed, Masood et al. ,Ummar, Lodhi et al.). The purpose of this study is to investigation learning organization building blocks of textile sector in Pakistan, for bring about this goal eight organization was taken as the sample. Sampling was done on the bases of convenient sampling. Employees from top level management and middle level management from textile sectors were considered as sampling. Questionnaire approach was used to collect data. Questionnaire is based on well establish tool kit developed by David A. Garvin, Amy C. Edmondson, and Francesca Gino in 2008. To ensure the reliability of data collected from respondent, data was collected very carefully and

intention. Questionnaire was basically composed of four main sections. Foremost section was built on the aim to gather personal information like age, education and job experience etc. after this remaining three section was based on primary objective of this study. These sections were “a supportive learning environment”<sup>4</sup>, concrete learning process” and “leadership that reinforce learning”.

To check the validity of the data, collected from the respondents “Reliability analysis” was used. For reliability analysis “Cronbach’s Alpha” technique was used in SPSS. Cronbach’s Alpha result was 88% table shown in appendix. For result and interpretation Means technique was used. Means of each building block was calculated separately. The result of calculated means then compared with benchmark scores of tool which was used in data collection, and in questionnaire.

### Variables and Analysis

This study takes all three building blocks, these building blocks are important to check the learning in an organization. Many researchers used any one building block in their research. The survey consist of following elements

#### A supportive learning environment:

1. Psychological safety
2. Appreciation of differences
3. Openness to new ideas
4. Time for reflection

#### Concrete learning process:

1. Experimentations
2. Information collection
3. Analysis
4. Education and training
5. Information transfer and

#### Leadership that Reinforces Learning

All these elements were measured with several variables used in survey. Data was collected with 55 variables that cover all the aspect of those elements. Psychological safety was evaluate by easy to speak, mistake against you, comfortable talking about problems, easy to speak and card close to your chest. Appreciation of differences was evaluate with differences in opinion, opinion value and people believes, handle difference in opinions and alternative ways of getting work done. Value to new idea, hear new idea, better way to doing thing and resist untried approaches used to evaluate openness to new idea. Time for reflection was evaluated with people overly stressed, time to review, schedule pressure, people

are too busy to invest time in improvement and no time for reflection.

Experimentation was evaluated with experiments with new way of working, experiments with new products and services, formal process of evaluating experiments and new idea and employee’s prototypes when trying out new ideas. Information collection was evaluated with collection of information from competitors, collection of information from customers, collection of information from economics and social trends, collection of information from technological trend, compare performance with competitors and compare performance with best-in-class organization. Productive conflict, seek out dissenting view during discussion, never revisit well establish perspective in discussion, identifying underlying assumption and pay attention on differences in view used to evaluate analysis. Education and training was evaluate with newly hired employees training, experienced employees periodic training, experienced employees for new position, experienced employees training for new initiative, training is valued and time made for learning and education. Information transfer evaluated with learning from expert from inside the organization, learning from expert from inside the organization, learning from customers/clients, learning from suppliers, share of information with networks of expert within organization, share of information with networks of expert outside organization, quickly and accurately communicates new knowledge to key decision makers(convey) and Post audit.

Leadership that reinforces learning was evaluated with manager invites input, manager acknowledges, manager asks probing questions, manager listens attentively, manager encourages, manager provide time and resources and manager criticize against his views.

The arithmetic means was calculated for the analysis in this study. These arithmetic means was then compared with benchmark score discuss in “Is your organization is learning” by(Garvin, Edmondson et al. 2008).

Showed in table:

Building Blocks and Their Subcomponents	Scaled Scores				
	Bottom quartile	Second quartile	Median	Third quartile	Top quartile
<b>Supportive Learning Environment</b>					
• Psychological safety	31–66	67–75	76	77–86	87–100
• Appreciation of 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
<b>Concrete Learning Processes and Practices</b>					
• Experimentation	18–53	54–70	71	72–82	83–100
• Information collection	23–70	71–79	80	81–89	90–100
• Analysis	19–56	57–70	71	72–86	87–100
• Education and training	26–68	69–79	80	81–89	90–100
• Information transfer	34–60	61–70	71	72–84	85–100
Learning processes composite	31–62	63–73	74	75–82	83–97
<b>Leadership That Reinforces Learning</b>					
Composite for this block	33–66	67–75	76	77–82	83–100

## Result and Discussion

### A supportive learning environment

**Physiological safety:** The mean result of this element is 75.13, which lies in median quartile. This result shows that element of physiological safety needs some more attention so that it ensures learning in textile sector in Pakistan.

**Appreciation of differences:** The mean result of this element is 75.2, which lies in third quartile. This result shows there is learning with respect to appreciation of differences. Textile sector needs to give attention to this to stable learning with respect to this element.

**Openness to new ideas:** The mean of this element is 77.20, which lies in bottom quartile. It is alarming situation for textile sector of Pakistan. Management should pay more attention.

**Time for reflection:** The mean result 75.19 indicates that this element lies in top quartile. This situation goes in favor of the industry. There is learning in textile industry in Pakistan and management has to maintain it on its current position.

### Concrete learning process Experimentations:

Mean result of this element is 76.53. This result shows that this element show learning and lies in third quartile of the benchmark score. It's upon management that they should give proper check and balance on experimentation process so maintain and running smoothly toward learning in textile industry of Pakistan.

**Information collection:** Mean result of this element is 80. This mean lies in median quartile. Management should pay intention on the process information collection, information processing, and information transferring.

**Analysis:** Mean result of this element is 70.34. This mean lies in second quartile. It requires high level of management.

**Education and training:** Mean result of this element is 78.69. This lies in second quartile. This is very alarming situation for Textile industry. Education and training plays a vital role in enhancing capacity of learning of individual as well as organization as whole.

**Information Transfer:** Mean of this element is 73.31 which lie in third quartile. This show that information transfer inside and outside of the organization is somehow proper. Management should encourage that environment which supports transparent process information transfer.

**Leadership That Reinforces Learning:** In this building block the mean result is 74.72, which lay in second quartile of benchmark score table. Result show that leadership does not capable to reinforce learning.

## Conclusion

As per the findings of the study, all three building blocks are playing important role in transforming textile manufacturing organizations into learning ones. In this regard, supportive learning environment, the first building block, has a significant impact which is followed by concrete learning process, the second building block, and leadership that reinforce learning, the third building block. Overall, first and second building blocks lie in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile that shows that they both are playing significant role in transforming a learning oriented organization. The third building block, leadership that reinforces learning, lies in 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile which means that leadership has to play more active part as compared to current one.

Openness to new ideas has to be encouraged in the organizations to improve its overall impact on the learning. Among all other factors, this one is lacking and due to this reason it is placed in bottom quartile as per its mean score. So, organizations in textile industry have to encourage their staff while listening and understanding their views and suggestions. Education and training also need to be looked as it is in 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile so training sessions has to be arranged on regular basis as per requirements and they should be encouraged for getting formal education as education is integral part of learning.

This study has some limitations that its sample has been taken from a particular sector so results could vary for other sectors. It is suggested that this study should be carried out by taking large sample size and by



implementing on other sectors so that it could be checked that same results are found.

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**Appendix**  
**Table -1 Cronbach’s Alpha**

**1: A Supportive Learning Environment**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.727	18

**2: Concrete Learning Process**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.816	29

**3: Leadership That Reinforce Learning**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.738	8

**Total**

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	107	99.1
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	1	.9
	Total	108	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.880	55

Table -2

S. no.	Building Block	Means
1	A supportive learning environment:	
	1. Psychological safety	75.13
	2. Appreciation of differences	75.20
	3. Openness to new ideas	77.20
	4. Time for reflection	75.19
Total	Average	75.68
2	Concrete learning process:	
	1. Experimentations	76.53