Factors Affecting the Organizational Learning Process: A comparative Study of Textile Sector of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT: The main Objective of study to know the level of learning in textile sector of Pakistan and explore the differences in learning practices at different types of firms categorized to Large, Medium and Small textile industries of Pakistan on the bases of volume of business. In order to accomplish the objective of desire DLOQ is used given by Marsick and Watkins (2003). In DLOQ there were seven dimensions of learning given at three levels of leaning which indicate the level of learning and two more key dimensions Financial Performance and Knowledge Performance. To access the level of learning and relationship between seven factors and Key outcomes a 32 items on six point Likert scale were distributed to different textiles industries. Sample size is 60(20 from each type of organization). By applying regression analysis it is empirically proved that all seven dimensions have significant & positive effect on Outcomes variables. And by comparing means score of seven dimensions with the benchmark score identify the factors affecting the organizational learning process.

Keywords: Organizational Learning, DLOQ, Learning Factors, Key Performance Factors, Textiles Firms
The concept of organization learning was emerged in late 80’s decade of 20th century when many researchers started their work on this construct from the roots of work on Organizational learning by JG March and Chris Argyris and most of researchers suggested that an organization should be at appropriate level of learning to acquire sustainable competitive advantage over other existing firms in the market. Learning organization is not only about the survival of any organization but firms can also innovate new product, groom their employees and ultimately can generate maximum revenue. In 21 century it becomes essential for organizations because the business in today’s global world become more complex. In recent era firms had to face rapidly varying environment, vibrant structures and globalization world. Organizational learning is always necessity of an organization but not adequate to be a learning organization. Today only firm are sustained who actually strive for learning.

The theory of learning organizations was turn out to be a burning issue of corporations when Peter M Senge’s give a new dimension to learning organization by giving five innovative learning disciplines in his book “The Fifth Discipline”. He explained these as thinking systematically, challenging mental models, creating team learning and adopting personal mystery approach (Senge 1997). The learning of the organizations is not all about survival but it is much about the adaptive learning process to adopt or adjust with the global changes in environment (Senge 1997).

Garvin (1985) said “learning organizations are building through a continuous process; where people generate their knowledge by learning new things and acquire that knowledge by systematic process and transfer it to peers and other members of organizations”. He also focused upon an evolutionary process to explain three basic M’s of learning which are known as meaning of learning, defining the theory according to organization resources & requirements, proper management of knowledge activates and last but not the least is the measuring the level of learning organization which help a manager to access the exact level of performance in a firm. He further gave five major building blocks which express the construct of learning organization well.

**Literature Review**

Idea of Learning Organization is not too much new to us by many researchers focused it with different concepts and topic also. In between 1960 s to 1970s researchers start the to explore on organizational learning when managers of organization started to face problems of globalization and mind set of organizational change emerged among many managers of top class companies in that era.

There was a lot of literature and descriptive work on construct of Organizational Learning which led them to exploit the construct of Learning Organization had been made, which provide a wide and inclusive range of different prospective and definitions to the future researchers and managers of organization (Denton, 1998; Pedler et al.1997; Budhwaret al., 2002; Wang and Ahmed, 2003).

According to the theory of Peter, a learning organization can be denoted as “an organization where individual employees of firms and firms repeatedly improve their competences to get the efficient result which they want in real, where new and expansive methods of thinking & judgments are highly encouraged, where combined objectives are free, and where individuals are continually acquiring knowledge that how to learn individually and as well as in teams”. (Senge 1997)

In a learning organization, individuals always have the key importance inside or outside the organization where employees of firm made work to learn and also contributed in making of the learning environment of firm. The all knowledge must be in comprehensive and easily understandable form so the organization may convert it into their actions (Argyris 1993).

Garratt (1995) said that Action learning processes is always connected to the learning organization process because through action methodology learning people transfer their knowledge to other fellows in day to day activities.

In current era of globalization only organization survive which improve its ability to learn fast and better to acquire all knowledge. People, Organizations, Technology, knowledge and technology are the major subsystems which are the important essential of learning organizations (Marquardt 1996).

(Garvin 1985) a professor of Harvard Business School strongly criticized the previous researchers in the field of Learning Organization specifically he declared the work of Peter M Senge as an ideal work based on the psychological notions which only deal with qualitative attributes of a learning organization. Then he was the first researcher who gave a practical dimension to the field of learning organization by introducing 3 blocks meaning, management & measurement. He also gave a new definition to learning organization:

To test empirically this toolkit he took survey more than 100 companies several times and several occasions. He
also provided the benchmark score for future researchers to access the level of learning in an organization (Garvin, Edmondson et al. 2008).

There are always different patterns of learning adopted by individuals & organizations which are categorized as situational learning according to situation facing, fragmented learning by sharing experiences, opportunistic learning (Kim 1998) and double loop learning is in last but not the least. (Argyris 2005).

- A day to day learning process by situation faced by any managers and individuals in an organization without considering the future problem solving of the same problem is called Situational Learning. (Kim 1998)
- Fragmented learning is occurred gaining when individuals shared their experiences with themselves and try to challenge their mantel models within the organization limit and outside the organizations (Kim 1998)
- When individuals and groups are perform their actions by viewing the opportunity and take actions by overlapping bureaucratic structure of an organization (Kim 1998).
- Single loop learning and Double loop learning are two major categories of learning. Double loop learning is more appropriate form of learning where people thinks deeply about their previous mistakes and by thinking out of the box try to solve their problems (Argyris 2005).

In every organization there must be three levels of learning at which people craft and procure knowledge which are individual, group and organizational level (Watkins and Marsick 1993). Actions of individuals refer the level of learning among them. At this level a lot of errors and mistakes because there is lack of procedures and systematic approach among them. HRD professionals can boost the knowledge of individuals by informal learning (Argyris and Schön 1999). There is a positive association between Leadership commitment & individual learning and both are positively influenced the process of organizational learning and performance (Pham and Swierczek 2006). Formal Learning differ from informal learning because it happens in organized and controlled atmosphere like class rooms and in informal learning people learn from their actions and it takes place in an open environment where there is no structural limitation (Marsick and Watkins 2001).

Senge (1997) explained that when individuals collectively learn as a team then learning is referred as Team learning. And through team learning performance of an organization improved.

“An organization is said to be a learning oriented organization where people create knowledge and procure knowledge and finally delivered that obtained knowledge and continuously changing their behaviour to explore more knowledge and innovation” (Garvin 1985).

Third and more important level of learning is organizational learning which takes place in many organizations because it helps managers to achieve the desired goals. It is based upon responsive change to the environment and industry that can bring change in organization only that can survive. By improving four major capacities strategy, ideology strategy and slack organizations can improve organizational learning as well can obtain wanted results. (Meyer 1982).

In organization there are different tools to measure the different aspects of learning. Every researcher gave a tool to measure its own instrument for measuring his given ideas of learning. So there was a strong need a comprehensive toolkit that covered maximum dimensions of learning organization to provide better result to managers. For this purpose Moilanen (2001) gave an inclusive tool in his article “Diagnostic tools for learning organization” which helped future researcher to measure development and learning in an organization.

There was still an issue that how to access the level of learning in a certain organization and what quick remedies should had been taken by a manager to be a learning organization. There was a solution provided by David A Garvin which is still famous among many organizations called Learning toolkit. He divided the overall learning environment into three major slabs
1. Supportive and friendly Learning Environment at workplace
2. Concrete and absolute Learning process at workplace
3. Learning support by leadership

In order to measure the level of learning in an organization or to check whether an organization is learning or not, there is another toolkit (DLOQ) provided by Victoria J, Marsick and Watkins in their article “Demonstrating the Value of an Organization’s Learning Culture: The Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire.” In this instrument they built 62 questions having six point likert scale. These questions are based of seven dimensions (divided into three core levels) which predict the results into two major outcome variables. (Marsick and Watkins 2003).

Yang, Watkins et al. (2004) was empirically test the validation and worth of DLOQ by taking survey from more than 200 firms having different attribute
demographically and business wise. They proved the validity of construct through critique and reliability also.

Role of leadership is lack in education sector and as well as in manufacturing sectors of Pakistan. Leadership enforcement have key enforcement in a learning organization. There is still strong structural autocratic systems evolve in manufacturing sectors of Pakistan.(Ummar, Lodhi et al.)

The significance of DLOQ was empirically test in Malaysia which showed a positive impact of seven learning dimensions on Knowledge performance and other organizational outcomes (Noubar, Rose et al. 2011)

(Sohaib, Ihsaan et al.) explained the different valuable factors which may affect the Organizational Learning culture specifically in Commercial Banking sector of Pakistan. By using DLOQ he identified that in banking sector of Pakistan there is a significant relationship between seven key factors given in DLOQ and two major organizational performance outcomes.

In Pakistan Abbas, Murad et al. (2011) studied the level of learning organization in public sectors education institutes and explore their results by DLOQ and discovered five most significant magnitudes of learning organizations.

Textile sectors of Pakistan only deal with new idea and show sincerity. But it need a lot of improvement in Pakistan to be learning oriented (Main, Rauf et al. 1991)

Aim of the Study

As we all aware that there must be an appropriate level of individual, team learning and organizational structure to enhance organizational learning at any workplace. There are given seven major factors given in DLOQ by (Marsick and Watkins 2003) to access the level of performance and learning as well in any organization. For these purpose too more outcome variables which is measured by seven dimensions to be explained further in conceptual framework at individual, team and organizational level.

Research questions of the study given following
1. To explore the relationship between seven dimensions and knowledge outcomes
2. Are these factors affecting the organizational learning process in different organizations on the demographics and operations procedures adopted by them?
3. To access the level of learning in Textile sector of Pakistan at different levels.

Conceptual Framework

As discussed earlier in literature that Marsick and Watkins (2003) divided organizational Learning process into three sub categories Individual, Group and organizational Level of learning and they derived further seven dimensions from these levels. Furthermore these dimensions have two key results outcomes financial performance and Knowledge performance of a firm. (See Fig. 1)

In below figure it is clear that at individual level there were two construct Continuous Learning process And Inquiry, at Team Level team learning and at Organizational level there are four different constructs which are Embedded System, Empowerment, Strategic Leadership and System connection and two outcome variables. (See Fig. 1)
Methodology

In this study I shall focus upon the key factors that affect the learning environment in an organization and organizational process. For this purpose I shall use DLOQ questionnaire given by (Marsicks & Watkins 2003) and try to measure the level of learning organization. I choose Textile sector of Pakistan because it was one of the most growing sectors among other manufacturing sectors in last decade. But it suffered badly for last three years by energy crises and some other economic reasons. For this purpose I selected two or three large textile firms and couple of small and medium textile and spinning units. This study will show us about the level of learning and how these levels vary from one from Company to company in same sector and how it also vary in two different subsidiaries under one parent corporation and even in two departments.

Our main objective of the study is to measure or check the level of organizational learning in textile industries of Pakistan. In order to check or access the level of learning we must have to explain two variables which is categorized as Knowledge Outcomes by Marsicks & Watkins (2003). And to exploit the values of these variables we must take seven dimensions as measurable constructs as predictors at Individual, Team and organizational level in any organization. So to fulfil the main target of study we used A 36 item’s DLOQ Questionnaire on six point Likert scale (Almost Never True (1) Usually not True (2) Sometimes but Infrequently True (3) Often True (4) Usually True (5) and Almost Always True(6)) as a measurement tool.

Textile industry of Faisalabad at three different levels (Large textile firms, medium textile industries and textile SME’s) is our target population for the fulfilment our research. Data was collected from 70 respondents (25 Respondents each from large, middle and small) from employees by using convenient & purposive sampling technique as sampling technique for this study. From 70 Responses 60 responses has been used for data analysis at response rate of 85%.

Research Findings

First of all averages from responses of seven dimensions and two key outcomes are taken as whole from whole Textile industry and compared these averages to benchmark score given by Marsicks and Watkins, (2003). The averages taken are mentioned following (see Table 1). Which shows mean of all dimensions on the bases of responses collected at three levels of learning, Singular, Grouped, and structural level of an organization. (Appendix-1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Descriptive Statistics</th>
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</table>
Yang, Watkins et al. (2004) and many researchers further checked the reliability of DLOQ construct for empirical evidence of reliable & valid toolkit of organizational learning. Because this study is the comparative analysis of textile industry of Pakistan (large, Medium and small) so Cronbach’s Alpha Value were respectively .924, .883 and .924 for large, Medium and small industries. If it is greater than 0.7 Then data is reliable for further analysis (Appendix-2).

To check the normality test box plot test plot applied to outcomes variables which shows that in both variables data was normality distributed in all three types of organization. Value of test is within the range of +1.96 and -1.96. (Appendix-3, 4)

While applying Regression analysis first applied correlation among all variables and their positivity and negativity. The result shows P is less than .01(P< 0.01) in most cases and showed positive “r” values that shows a significant connotation and association and tells us that seven predictors have a positive impact on organizational performance. (Appendix- 5)

Our second and main objective of study is to check the level of significance of predictor variables on key factors at different types of industries in Textile sector. So while applying regression analysis of seven predictors on Financial Performance R Square value respectively .432, .746 & .782 for large, medium and small firms. R square value denoted as total effect and variation explained of independent variable to the dependent variable. (Appendix 6)

Furthermore in ANOVA table P value (.007, .003) less than 0.05 in medium and small industry which shows significant relationship of seven dimensions on financial performance of firms. But in Large firms P value (.328) is greater than 0.05 which indicates that there is no significant effect of predictors on FP of firm. (Appendix 6)

In case of second key outcome of Knowledge performance, model summery table shows the R square values are .723, .630 and .692 for large, medium and small industry respectively. Which means in case of large organizations Predictors explain the KP 72.3% among all factors which is good for research as well. In ANOVA all three types of Organizations shows a significant effect of seven dimensions on Knowledge performance at three level of learning because ANOVA table shows the Sig values less than .05( Large=.011, Medium = .050 & Small= .020) in all types of organizations

Moreover it is shown by the VIF values (Variance Inflation Factor) ranged from (2.567 to 2.883) which is below then 10 and shows that there is no multi-co-linearity issues in predictors to predict Dependent variables. (Appendix 2i)

Despite of one case of large organizations in textile sector above discussion proves that all seven learning dimensions have strong positively effect on dependent variable which are key factors of organizational performance which is addressed in DLOQ.

**Conclusion**

It is an empirical study of textile Industry of Pakistan which studies a textile industry as a whole and comparatively analyse the factors upsetting organizational learning at three different types of textile firms. The study shows an empirical evidence of DLOQ and states that all seven dimensions strongly effect the organizational performance variables (Financial Performance, and Knowledge Performance) at individual, group and structural levels.

There were many researchers including Marskis & Watkins themselves discussed in literature who empirically tested the DLOQ and provided a benchmark score for nine dimensions which effect the Organizational learning. If any firm want to access level of learning at workplace can compare its scores with benchmark score.

In this study at individual level Continuous learning have average value of higher than 4 in large and medium organization and in small organization level of Continuous learning is slightly less than medium and large industry. Average value of Inquiry & Dialogue was 3.96, 3.62 & 3.36 respectively which shows a lack whole textile industry.

At Team level of learning all large organizations have value of 4.02 which is slightly higher than other two types of industries. At Organizational Level Large firms have a significant value of 4.35 and in medium organization there is a value of 3.65 which is so bad and in small firms these value of organizational learning is 3.25. So there is need an improvement of Organizational Structure to improve learning.

Results shows that all seven dimensions are significantly affect the financial performance of textile firm falls under categories of Medium and small. But in case of Large Organization is there is no significant relationship between seven factors and Financial Performance. This might be because of several reasons. All large firms that participated in this study are listed in KSE. So there is
huge impact of economic policy of a country on the financial performance of a listed firm.

Knowledge performance has values of 3.76, 3.86 & 4.17 respectively, which is good as per literature discussed. Regression analysis shows that all seven dimensions have a strong effect on Knowledge performance of a firm.

Furthermore this study leads toward learning organization practices is desperately need for Pakistani based manufacturing industries. There should be proper role HRD professionals in every firm who identified the problem and solve them with the help of managers and leaders.

References


Appendixes

Appendix-1

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
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Appendix-2

Reliability Statistics

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Appendix-2i

Co-Linearity Model

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Appendix-3

Case Processing Summary

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Appendix-4

Appendix-5

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

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Appendix-6

Financial Performance

Model Summary

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<th>Organizational Type</th>
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<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
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a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership, Empowerment, System Connection, Continuous Learning, Team Learning, Embedded System, Inquiry Dialogue
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership, Empowerment, System Connection, Embedded System, Inquiry Dialogue, Team Learning, Continuous Learning
c. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership, Embedded System, Continuous Learning, Team Learning, Inquiry Dialogue, Empowerment, System Connection

ANOVA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Type</th>
<th>Model</th>
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### Appendix 7

#### Knowledge Performance

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a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership, Empowerment, System Connection, Continuous Learning, Team Learning, Embedded System, Inquiry Dialogue

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership, Empowerment, System Connection, Embedded System, Inquiry Dialogue, Team Learning, Continuous Learning

c. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership, Embedded System, Continuous Learning, Team Learning, Inquiry Dialogue, Empowerment, System Connection