DETERMINANT OF LEARNING ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF SELECT SERVICE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract: *Organizations are exposed to stringent competition and challenging customers, so they need to transform themselves so as to be able to confront the shifting needs of the new environment, more demanding customers, elegant workers and tough competition. Organisations need to possess the capability to anticipate and adapt readily to the environmental changes, accelerate the development of new products, processes and services, shorten the time required to implement strategic changes and stimulate continuous changes in all areas of the organisation.*

The current study tries to investigate a set of service sector organization in order to understand the determinants which fosters the organizations to be labelled as learning organization. The service sector in India contributes more than 65% in the gross domestic product. It becomes obligatory for the researchers to understand the dynamism behind Indian service industry which has taken a leap to put forward the economic growth of the nation and influenced the Indian economy to obtain a competitive advantage globally.

The objective of the research is to empirically test the existing global model of learning organization by making use of the confirmatory factor analysis and to customize the model which shall fit in the Indian context and help the service sector organizations to move ahead globally.

The findings of the study shall help the corporate world to make use of the framework suggested in order to strengthen the organizational effectiveness and shall add the literature gap existing in the areas to support the researchers in India and globally.

Key Words: *Learning Organization, Service Sector, India*

JEL Classification: *L2*

INTRODUCTION

The Indian service sector contributes around 57 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP) and is making rapid strides in the last few years and has emerged as the largest and fastest-growing sector of the economy. Besides being the

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dominant sector in India's GDP, it has also contributed substantially in generating employment, exports and foreign investment flows,. India's services sector covers a wide variety of activities that have different features and dimensions. They include financing, transport, insurance, real estate, trade, hotel and restaurants, storage and communication & business services, community, social and personal services and services associated with construction. Services in India are emerging as a prominent sector in terms of contribution to national and states' incomes, trade flows, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, and employment.

The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of services sector GDP was 8.5 per cent for the period 2000-01 to 2013-14. The service sector is the largest and fastest growing sector in India and has the highest labour productivity. The growth of India's service sector has drawn global attention ever since the industrial policy of 1991. Unlike other countries where economic growth has led to a shift from agriculture to industries, in India there has been a shift from agriculture to the service sector. In this respect, India has been considered as an outlier among South Asia and other emerging countries.

Now the government is taking steps to improve ease of doing business and attracting investments, FDI inflows into the services sector grew by over 46 percent to USD 3.25 billion in 2014-15 (DIPP report June 2015). The services sector, which includes banking, insurance, outsourcing, R&D, courier and technology testing, had received foreign direct investment (FDI) worth US$ 2.22 billion in 2013-14. However, the total foreign inflow in 2014-15 in the services sector was low as compared to 2012-13 when it was USD 4.83 billion, according to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) data. With respect to the growth of service sector, India has been considered as an outlier among South Asia and other emerging countries. Gordan and Gupta (2003) and Jain and Ninan (2010) have, however, pointed out that with the rise in per capita income, the share of services in GDP increases.

Kochhar *et al.* (2006) argued that India was a negative outlier in 1981 compared to other emerging markets as the share of services in value added and employment was below that of other countries. After the 1990s, the service sector grew, and in 2000 India became a positive outlier in terms of the share of services in value added but continued to be a negative outlier in terms of its share in employment.In developing countries like India, the service sector can lead to inclusive growth through backward and forward links (Banga 2005), by ensuring equitable access to basic services at low prices (Deloitte 2011), by creating employment opportunities, and by developing human capital.

Some studies have pointed out barriers to growth in services including lack of decent employment, a poor business environment, lack of an integrated service sector policy (Banga 2005), and a strong focus on skill-intensive services. There

may exist numerous challenges in terms of policy making, trade and regulation, but the focus of study is primarily on the internal challenges faced. Recruiting and retaining qualified staff is constantly a key challenge for the Indian IT industry. Another study indicate that defining roles & responsibilities and distributed decision making are two major bottlenecks in the employee satisfaction in service sector.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The organizations are trying to recognize the important role of Human Resource Department though learning and career development planning in order to successfully steer towards profitability. It is necessary for the management to invest considerable time and amount, to learn the changing dynamics of business and learning and development function of the organization. In order to survive the competition and be in the race, organizations should consciously update themselves. With high attrition rates, poaching strategies of competitors, there is a huge shortage of skilled employees and hence, a company's learning and developmental activities play a vital role in combating this crisis. Learning has been a cornerstone of success for any organization and the factor which contributes in inculcating the learning of an organization need greater understanding in order to conceptualize the concept and augment the growth of the organization. The organizations need to transform themselves into learning organization to remain competitive and sustain their growth.

Organizations that learn faster will be able to adapt more quickly and thereby achieve significant strategic advantages in the global world of business. The new learning organization is able to har-ness the collective genius of its people at the individual, group, and system levels. This capability, combined with improved organizational innovativeness and individual creativity, will enable or-ganizations to leave the competition in the dust.

The aim of the study is to identify and capture various internal components which accumulate and contribute to the success of the organization. The factors collectively shall enhance the organization to learn from the internal and external business environment.

LEARNING ORGANIZATION

The term 'Learning Organization' was formally coined in 1980's to describe organizations that experiment with new ways of conducting business in order to survive in turbulent, highly competitive markets as learning is the main mechanism through which individuals and organizations cope with novel challenges. Thus those who make the shift from traditional organization thinking to learning organizations develop the ability to think critically and creatively. Knowledge creation becomes the primary strategic task of learning organizations.

The concept of learning organization, and recognition of its importance, can be traced in the re-search literature back to the 1940s, but not until the 1980s did a few companies began to realize its potential for increasing organizational performance, competitiveness, and success.

In the 1980s, Shell Oil began to consider organizational learning in relation to strategic planning. Teamwork and more extensive communications were seen as crucial factors in creating a more re-sponsive, successful corporation. Shell spent twelve months experimenting with work groups and researching the implications of the organizational learning concept. The company concluded that learning as an organization did indeed prove valuable for both strategic planning and corporate success and had enabled Shell to gain an advantage of a year or two over its competitors.

During the 2000s, the number of firms committing themselves to becoming learning organizations increased dramatically. Companies such as Tata Consulting Services, Infosys in India;, General Electric, Pacific Bell in the United States; Sheerness Steel, Nokia, Sun Alliance, and ABB in Eu-rope; and Honda and Samsung in Asia were among the early pioneers.

Whether or not to become a learning organization is no longer the question; becoming a learning company is required to remain competitive. And, anyone who asks "when?" should be told "quickly" because becoming this new species will soon be essential to survival in the increasingly global environment. Answering the question "how will it help the organization" is the essence of the research.

DEFINITIONS OF LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Senge's (1992) definition of a learning organization encompasses a collective effort to develop the ability of organizational members to create their preferred future, where innovative thinking is fostered and continuous learning is encouraged.

Garvin's (1993, p. 80) definition of a learning organization is "a learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights."

Senge's *et al.* (1994) "Learning in organization means the continuous testing of experience, and the transformation of that experience into knowledge - accessible to the whole organization, and relevant to its core purpose."

Marquardt (1996) defines it as an organization, which is empowering people within and outside the organization, collectively learns and transforms itself to better collect, manage and use for corporate success.

ANTECEDENTS OF LEARNING ORGANIZATION

With the above definitions, it is clear that learning organization is conceptually the capacity of an organization to transform itself from an ordinary organization

to a dynamic organization by virtue of altering either of the aspects including vision, strategy, leadership style, culture, structure, systems and processes.

Senge *et al.* (1999) iterates that Learning Organization possesses five main characteristics: personal mastery, team learning, building a shared value, systems thinking, and presence of mental models. The five dimensions defined by Senge would lead the organization towards increased effectiveness. On the parallel lines, Marsick and Watkins (2003) have developed an instrument called the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), a diagnostic tool for a learning organization, gleaned out of both research and practice. They have used "people and structure" as the main constructs and linked learning outcomes to better performance endeavour.

Burgoyne (1995) proposed three levels of organizational learning such as single loop learning, double loop learning and triple loop learning. Single loop learning offers individuals the opportunity to identify errors and correct them within the organization while double loop learning views people as learning agents who examine environment, develop appropriate responses suitable for new requirements and provide room for organizations to adapt and manage change. Triple loop level offers possibility to challenge strongly interpretations of existing knowledge and traditional constructs including the understanding of management of people and work and this is where Learning Organization can wholly emerge (Burgoyne, 1995). Khadra and Rawabdeh (2006), in the Jordanian context, have developed and tested a conceptual model to assess learning organization consisting of five dimensions: leadership and strategic planning, performance evaluation, continuous alignment with strategy, learning organizational practices and the learning infrastructure.

Extensive review of literature is performed and all the major studies/ constructs of learning organization are explained in a tabular form below.

Despite the separate development for the five disciplines (Senge, 1991), they are actually closely correlated. For the establishment of learning organization, every discipline item is imperatively required. Aksu and Ozdemir (2005) summarize the main points of learning organization as:

- The learning organization needs to change the current applications and the
- views of organizational members.
- The learning organization has direct bearing on the future of the organization.
- The learning organization needs changes to improve.
- The learning of all members in the organization must be easier.
- The input of all members is needed.

Table 1.1
Factors of Learning Organization

Author	Factors Studied	Thrust area
Argyris (1977)	• Single-loop learning • Double-loop learning	The focus is on obtaining information to stabilize the existing system and solve immediate problems faced by the organization.
Senge (1990)	• Team Learning • Shared Visions • Mental Models • Personal Mastery • System Thinking	Learning is a continuous process; Conditions necessary to build a learning organization.
Pedler (1991)	Initially comprised nine dimensions (Pedler et al., 1988) which was later developed into 11 dimensions (Pedler et al., 1991) • Learning approach to strategy; • the participative policymaking; • informing; • the formative accounting and control; • internal exchange; • reward flexibility; • enabling structures; • the boundary workers as environmental scanners; • inter-company learning; • learning climate and • Self-development opportunities for all.	Role of the individual in the context of the whole organization which is not empirically tested in Indian Organizations. An organization that facilitates learning for all its members and consciously transforms itself and its context
Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996)	• Continuous learning • Inquiry and dialogue • Team learning • Empowerment • Embedded system • System connection • Strategic leadership	Integrates both concepts: Learning organization and organizational learning; Holistic instrument which is highly reliable.
Marquardt (1996)	• Learning Dynamics • Organization Transformation • People empowerment • Knowledge Management • Technology Management	Role of culture in creating Learning Organization. Encourage learning at three levels: individual, group and organization.

contd. table

Author	Factors Studied	Thrust area
Tannenbaum (1997)	• Learning opportunities • Tolerance of mistakes • High performance expectations • Openness to new ideas • Policies and practices support training • Awareness of big picture • Satisfaction with development	Each organization has a unique learning profile and relies on different sources of learning to develop individual competencies
Learning Organization Process (LOP) Survey (Pareek, 2002a, b)	• Holistic frame, • Strategic thrust, • Shared vision, • Empowerment, • Information flow, • Emotional Maturity, • Learning and • Synergy.	Comprehensive, profound and tested instrument with high validity and reliability in Indian Context.
Jamali and Sidani (2008)	• Employee participation; • Learning climate; • Systematic employee development; • Constant experimentation and • Learning reward systems.	A learning climate constitutes the link between formal employee development and application in the sense that firms fostering a learning climate strengthen the connection between learning and application and maximize the benefits derived from their investment in employee development.
McGill et al. (1992)	• Openness • System Thinking • Creativity • Personal efficacy • Impartiality	Learning organization can respond to new information by altering internal processes and practices and creating new ideas into action.

In Indian context, several attempts have been made to assess the perception of organizations regarding the various components of learning organization. But there is hardly any attempt This research explores the current functioning of the instrument developed by Dr. Udai Pareek as a Learning Organization and how it can be strengthened and sustained. Considering the Learning Instrument (Pareek, 2003) as a base, the components of learning organizations are investigated and a model is created based upon the feedback of the respondents. The instrument of

Udai Pareek was customized and was supplemented by a comprehensive review of the literature on Learning Organizations.

A recent study in Australian manufacturing sector (Dymock & McCarthy, 2006) was performed with an objective to explore employee perceptions of the development of a learning culture in a medium-sized manufacturing company that was aspiring to become a learning organization. The findings of the study were that the companies were using learning to develop their competitive edge, and employees were at various stages of understanding and acceptance of the need for learning and competence development on the job to sustain and develop the company. A tension was detected between the company's objectives and the aspirations of some employees, but the majority appeared to accept the overt learning policy as good for them and the company.

Historically Ramnarayan and Bhatnagar (1993), based on the Indian industrial setting of liberalization of the economy, carried out a series of studies on identifying enablers and inhibitors to organizational learning as against a radical change in the environment. Our study may be considered as an extension of this research.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H01: All the select organizations are termed as learning organizations.

H02: There exist no significant difference in the perception of employees regarding the determinants of learning organization w.r.t. all four verticals of the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To create a model of learning organization for Indian service industry and to compare the model with the existing model(s) available.

2. To capture the extent of variation in the level of determinants of organizational learning among the select industries.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is an investigation which tries to explore the components of learning organization. The study is empirical in nature which would make use of both primary and secondary type of data sources. The research is exploratory in nature and tries to explore various components which may be entitled as components of learning organization.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Although this study primarily aimed to test theoretically-derived hypotheses, the findings of this study do have practical implications for the Indian service industry

particularly their human resources practices. In a way the research would add substantial value in extending the contribution of learning organization towards organizational success.

SAMPLING PLAN

Four verticals are chosen for the current study including IT, ITeS, Banking, and Hospitality. Multi-stage sampling has been used for the current study. In order to select the companies stratified sampling has been used. Top 2 and bottom 2 companies from each of the industries were selected from the Business Today 500 (BT500) list of 2014. In the second stage of the sampling convenience sampling method is used to get the individual response.

A total of 800 questionnaire were circulated and 380 filled questionnaire were received by the researchers. Approximately 95 valid questionnaire were received from each of the industries targeted for the study. Data was collected primarily through an online questionnaire created and link was forwarded to respondents.

INSTRUMENT USED FOR THE STUDY

Learning Organization Process (LOP) Survey (Pareek, 2002a, b) has been taken as base and customized using the input given by industry experts and academicians. The construct initially include eight dimensions of organizational learning namely Holistic frame, Strategic thrust, Shared vision, Empowerment, Information flow, Emotional Maturity, Learning and Synergy. The final instrument has been cultivated and customized after doing a comprehensive face and content validity by a group of academicians and corporate professionals.

The reliabilities of the customized instrument were determined through the SPSS 17.0 and the cronbach alpha values were found to be significantly high. The alpha values for the instrument is 0.8165.

DATA ANALYSIS

A mixed of descriptive and inferential statistical tools have been used for the purpose of data analysis. For the purpose of understanding demographic profiles of respondents, descriptive analysis is used.

Table 1.1
Type of Companies

Type of Companies	Number of respondents
IT	95
ITeS	95
Banking	95
Hospitality	95

Equal number of respondents are taken from all the for select industries.

Table 1.2
Demographic Profile

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	255	67.1
Female	125	32.9
Age	Frequency	Percentage
Between 24 to 35	190	50
Between 35 to 45	110	28.9
45 and Above	80	21.1

Majority of the respondents are male (approximately 67%) and most of the respondents are between the age group of 24 to 35 (50%).

In order to achieve the first objective of the study; an exploratory factor analysis was administered in order to explore the components of learning organization. There were a total of forty eight statements in the instrument used. Seven components were extracted from forty eight items as shown in table 1.1 as a result of exploratory factor analysis.

Table 1.3
Rotated Component Matrix

	F1	F2	F 3	F 4	F 5	F 6	F 7
LOF1	.843						
LOF1	.821						
LOF1	.812						
LOF1	.721						
LOF1	.711						
LOF1	.702						
LOF2		.795					
LOF2		.783					
LOF2		.723					
LOF2		.716					
LOF3			.869				
LOF3			.815				
LOF3			.711				
LOF3			.641				
LOF3			.612				
LOF4				.821			
LOF4				.811			
LOF4				.781			
LOF4				.712			

contd. table

	F1	F2	F 3	F 4	F 5	F 6	F 7
LOF4				.711			
LOF5					.824		
LOF5					.808		
LOF5					.787		
LOF5					.712		
LOF5					.512		
LOF6						.821	
LOF6						.811	
LOF6						.803	
LOF6						.771	
LOF7							.823
LOF7							.812
LOF7							.803
LOF7							.711

Each factor identified has been understood and given a name based upon the relevance of statements and review of literature.

Table 1.4
Learning Organization Factor Description

Factor Code	Factor Name
LO_F1	Strategic Orientation
LO_F2	System Connectedness
LO_F3	Organizational Values
LO_F4	Internal Communication
LO_F5	Team Work
LO_F6	Emotional Intelligence
LO_F7	Empowerment

Only variables having a factor loading of more than 45 per cent in the factor are considered. These extracted components are discussed below.

Strategic Orientation: This component shall include emphasis of organizations in reframing information at a strategic level; assessing the alternatives, prioritizing and choosing the most important option. The variable promotes the strategic discussion at all levels of the organization.

System Connectedness: This component includes aspects of system thinking (as suggested by Perter Senge, 1990), perceiving interconnectedness and patterns amongst key variables of the organization. Presence of this variable indicate that the organization has a capability of systematic problem solving by critical examining the issues. System connectedness persists the organizations to work upon the root cause rather than dealing with the problem symptoms.

Organizational Values: Organizations possessing this component possess strong values including employee participation, aligning individual and personal goals, creativity, fosters transformational leadership and get employees' commitment.

Internal Communication: Pre-requite of sharing of authentic and critical information; opening formal channels of communication; minimizing rumours and gossips describes organizations with strong information flow. Presence of this components encourages employees to share ideas and willingness to provide constructive feedback on sensitive issues.

Team Work: Collaboration and team work are two major pillars of promoting cohesiveness in an organization. Consensus building by working through differences & negative feelings and formation of cross functional teams are emphasized in such organizations.

Emotional Intelligence: This component includes awareness of self emotions, optimism, self-discipline and commitment. The employees will have a belief that they can influence the events and possess capability of moderate risk taking. Clear goals, taking self responsibilities and having faith in people are key characteristics of the variable.

Empowerment: Decentralization and delegation are the key characteristics of organizations which promote employee empowerment. Trusting your employees, making them participate and persuading them towards achievement are integral components of organizations which fosters empowerment.

In order to test the 2nd objective of the study mean score of each factor was compiled to access the level of perception of respondents towards each of the component of learning organization.

Table 1.5
Mean Score of the factors explored

Variable	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Strategic Orientation	1.96	0.321
System Connectedness	1.99	0.124
Organizational Values	2.02	0.156
Internal Communication	2.17	0.112
Team Work	3.10	0.134
Emotional Intelligence	3.05	0.341
Empowerment	2.3	0.231

The above table depicts the mean values of the all seven factors explored and their correspondence value of standard deviation. As per the above table the values which are close to one indicate high agreeableness towards the factor and the

values closer to five indicate high disagreeableness towards to factor. The table suggests that the mean score for the two variables namely strategic orientation and system connectedness are below two, hence they are more prevalent in the organizations understudy. The areas where the organizations are facing some challenges are team work and emotional intelligence with mean values above three. Internal communication, empowerment and organizational values are captured as moderate factors as per the perception of the employees as their mean scores are more than two and less than three.

One way ANOVA was performed to achieve the third objective of the study.

Table 1.6
Factors of Learning Organization w.r.t. type of industry

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Strategic Orientation	Between Groups	2.121	3	1.230	2.158	.128
	Within Groups	224.287	380	.453		
	Total	242.618	380			
System Connectedness	Between Groups	.210	3	.105	.251	.468
	Within Groups	124.928	380	.418		
	Total	135.138	380			
Organizational Values	Between Groups	.078	3	.049	.154	.557
	Within Groups	110.068	380	.317		
	Total	120.166	380			
Internal Communication	Between Groups	1.029	3	.513	2.048	.046*
	Within Groups	130.806	380	.251		
	Total	131.832	380			
Emotional Intelligence	Between Groups	1.802	3	.951	1.392	.023*
	Within Groups	331.916	380	.683		
	Total	333.617	380			
Empowerment	Between Groups	2.065	3	1.032	1.430	.241
	Within Groups	329.165	380	.722		
	Total	321.229	380			
Team Work	Between Groups	2.025	3	1.032	1.430	.241
	Within Groups	349.145	380	.722		
	Total	347.229	380			

* indicates significant difference in mean values ($p < 0.05$)

The above table suggests that the perception of respondents regarding two factors namely internal communication and emotional intelligence varies with respect to the type of industry studies whereas for the other five factors there exist no significant deviation in the perception of the respondents.

The mean score for the components namely internal communication and emotional intelligence are further analysed to access the moderating role of the type of the industry.

Table 1.7
Comparison of significant components w.r.t. the type of industry

	IT Industry	ITeS Industry	Banking Industry	Hospitality Industry
Emotional Intelligence	3.25	3.15	2.95	2.85
Internal Communication	2.01	2.05	2.20	2.42

The above table (table 1.7) clearly depicts that the internal communication was most strong for the IT industry and Hospitality Industry scored highest in the level of emotional intelligence they exhibit. There was not much of difference in the perception of respondents from IT and ITeS industry.

Figure 1.1: Model of Learning Organization

DISCUSSION ON MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings of our study confirms that there exists some individual and organizational variables that may turn an organization into a learning organization. A total of seven such factors are extracted in the current study. The intensity of these factors may vary from one industry to another but they all are prevalent in the Indian

service industry. Majority of the variables extracted are in line with the existing studies including DLOQ model of Watkins and Marsick (1997). The most commonly mentioned characteristics are the five disciplines, popularized by Peter Senge, namely personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and systemic thinking. Table 1.5 shows that employees of Indian service industry has strong orientation towards strategic thinking and system connectedness. This paper argues that Indian service organizations at large are in the age of post-bureaucracy and have evolved as system oriented organizations to qualify the concept of learning organization.

Some previous researchers (Baruch, 2010) have acknowledged leadership, self motivation, personal mastery and goal setting process as key antecedents of learning organization. The major challenge that lies in front of the organizations is the orientation towards emotional intelligence and team work as the mean score of these two factors is more than 3 across the industry. we can say that the Indian Service Industry is required to enhance the skills related to emotional intelligence and team work to face the uncertainties of the new environment.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is important to clearly understand the concept of learning organization, and this study has made an attempt in investigating the concept and understand the antecedents/factors which may contribute to the existence and continuation of learning culture. It must be understood that the concept of learning organization vary slightly from organizational learning. Organizational learning may be referred to the process that leads to transforming a traditional organization into a learning organization.

The study was further limited by the small sample size which impaired the potential to establish causal relationships across industries. Another future area of investigation is to correlate the concept of learning organization with organizational outcomes such as organizational effectiveness, entrepreneurship, business excellence and outcomes.

Despite these concerns, the author still believes that the study is worth consideration for the researchers and corporate world. Although there is some substantial work (Awasthy and Gupta, 2011) in comparing manufacturing and service firms which talks about the differences in opinions of employees regarding learning organization. Our this study can be compared with the old study and some new propositions can be created.

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