

INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING, ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION AND SELF COMPASSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR SMES

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Abstract

In this era of industrial revolution (IR 4.0), coupled with the emergence of the deadly global pandemic of COVID-19, organizations are compelled to embrace new strategies for their routine decision-making. Innovation is the core of organization policy and the lifeline of enterprises at the local and global market. There has been a huge amount of research on innovation and elements contributing to innovation performance; however, few of them built a theoretical model to research the correlations among organizational learning, innovation performance, self compassion and organizational performance. Based on the existing studies and literature at home and abroad and considering the development status of innovative enterprises, this paper decomposes organizational learning and organizational performance. The innovation performance play role between organizational learning and organizational performance., organizations can achieve maximum strong excellence and remain in a competitive market.

Keywords: Organizational learning, Organizational innovation, Organizational performance, SME's.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization, economic variations, advancements in technology and highly competitive business environment has forced organizations to continuously search for innovative and unique strategies so that they are able to survive and succeed in ever increasing competitive environment. In the past, competitiveness could be achieved through the utilization of conventional strategies such as cost control practices, effective management practices, specialization etc. as identified in the studies by (Ungerma et al., 2018; Li et al., 2019).

But with the advent of globalization, knowledge based economies and rapid advancements in information and communication technologies, conventional competitive strategies became ineffective towards ensuring competitive advantage and organizations were forced to look for innovative and unique strategies to ensure that they are able to retain their competitive advantage and survive in the tough market environment (Makarenko et al., 2020).

In such a dynamic and competitive business environment, organizational learning has been identified as an effective strategy for improving and sustaining organizational performance and competitiveness (Bilan et al., 2020). In their research Bilan et al., (2020), states that ever-increasing global competition is continuously changing the nature of knowledge that is required for survival in the business environment and as such organizations that are able to transition from one change to another in the most efficient and effective manner are able to maintain their competitive advantage. So, the author concludes that ability of the organization to learn and adapt is crucial if it wishes to compete and survive in the current business environment (Bilan et al. 2020). Furthermore, research conducted by (Do and Mai, 2020) suggest that new knowledge and skills gained via learning improve the organizational competitiveness and performance and also impart a positive impact on the innovativeness of employees. As per Abbas et al. (2020), innovativeness in any organization is related to the ability of the organization to accept and encourage new ideas and it is related to the organizational capability to engage in innovation. Researchers such as (Azeem et al. 2021; Migdadi, 2019) have also identified a positive relationship between organizational learning, organizational innovation, and performance but these researchers have stated that there is a complex relationship between these three variables e.g. in the research by Ur Rehman et al. (2019) researcher identified that effective knowledge management is the directing mechanism in between innovation and organizational performance and organizations that have a culture of learning

tend to utilize their resources more efficiently and are also more innovative as a result of which their performance is improved as well. Though, Aboelmaged (2014), states that innovation performance is the key mediating player in between the development of a learning culture and organizational performance. Author explains that it is the role of managers to facilitate knowledge acquisition, sharing, application and utilization to ensure a better technical and innovative administrative performance so that organizational performance could be improved. Hindasah and Nuryakin (2020) on the other hand stated that the learning orientation within an organization has significant impact on the long-term corporate growth of the organization as it encourages the development of new knowledge which is essential for the development of organizational innovation capability and improving organizational performance.

In the context of SME's, Shaher and Ali (2020) identified that well established SMEs in Kuwait place a lot of importance on innovation practices and strategies to gain competitive advantage and to improve their performance. In another research by Anning-Dorson (2021), researchers studied the relationship in-between organizational learning and SME's and through their research they were able to conclude that knowledge management and organizational learning practices in SME's were very different as compared to larger organizations as SME's are faced with issues such as resource constraints, ineffective learning management, loss of knowledge and ineffective utilization of external source of knowledge. However, on a positive note, Researchers were able to identify that SME's generally have shorter communication channels which allow fast dissemination of knowledge which helps in learning within an organization. Based on the findings of this research, it can be stated that organizational learning can significantly impact organizational performance if knowledge and learning management is carried out in an effective manner as SME's have shorter communication channels which can be easier to manage and disseminate information to encourage learning.

In positive psychology, self-compassion is a method for overcoming depression (Muris et al, 2016; Ab Rahman, Z. et al, 2021). Self-compassion is a behaviour that depicts self-love. This is evident based on several studies by Germer and Neff (2013), who found that the self-love or self-compassion aspect can reduce psychopathological markers. Self-compassion is a form of practical response by an individual when learning to listen to the inner voices in oneself as being the most loyal friend when faced with the adversities of life (Neff & Germer, 2018 ; Rahman, et al, 2019; Zaizul, et al, 2019).

Basically, self-compassion can actually enhance positive thinking. Several studies have found a relationship between self-compassion and the quality of psychological well-being, such as happiness, optimism, wisdom, curiosity as well as self-exploration and initiative (Özyeşil et al, 2013; Ab. Rahman, Z. 2018; Salasiah Hanin, et al, 2020). The advantage of self-compassion is that it can produce dominant capabilities to overcome negative emotions in a person. Through self-compassion, a person is more inclined to ponder negative thoughts or emotions and give in to their emotions. This explains why self-compassion is a negative determinant of depression, which is based on several studies that have shown self-compassion to be the most resilient factor when facing challenges of self-criticism.

Self-compassion is an individual's self-perception that can help understand and persuade oneself with positive words when facing difficult times in life or when committing a transgression by not trying extreme self-criticism and admitting that all that happens is part of a good experience in life (Neff, 2003; Ab. Rahman, Z. 2018; Salasiah Hanin, et al, 2020). Self-compassion consists of three main elements that help in the application of self-compassion in everyday life. First, self-kindness or self-goodness is the capability to understand oneself when an individual is deficient or has experienced some form of adversities in life. Self-kindness is an action that alleviates an individual's proclivity to self-criticise until one opposes oneself leading to monologue empathy towards oneself. One technique of self-kindness that can be performed when an individual experiences depression is to carry out appeasing or comforting activities, such as listening to music, participating in entertaining activities together with friends or family, watching movies, writing or indulging in some sporting activities. Carrying out activities that are desired through the self-kindness technique helps in overcoming depression because when experiencing depression an individual will limit himself to only carrying out certain activities, including desirable activities.

This research would provide a comprehensive and unique perspective regarding the role of organizational learning towards ensuring SME's success in the business.

2. THEORETICAL LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Experiential learning theory (ELT) was presented by Kolb's (1984) and is based on the concepts of psychology, ideology, and physiology (p. 7). This theory has greatly shaped the nature of leadership and organization learning. In ELT, learning is defined as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

2.1. Manufacturing productivity

In this manufacturing refers to the manufacturing firms in five main sectors namely aerospace, aluminum, and fabricated metals, food and beverage, pharmaceutical and maritime. The firms' productivity will be measured based on six items adapted from (Pérez-aróstegui and Barrales-molina, 2015) including the firm's performance related to business, operations, and customer service. To summarize, in an organizational learning context, organizational performance may represent

innovativeness (Ning and Li, 2018)(Abdi et al., 2018) enhanced productivity and quality (Lyman and Moore, 2019) employee satisfaction and increased capacity to acquire, transmit and use new knowledge (Al Idrus, Ahmar, and Abdussakir, 2018) product advantage and international expansion (Peronard and Brix, 2019) or an increase in the reputation of a firm (Qi and Chau, 2018). For the purpose of this research, organizational performance will be defined as an ability of an organization to create employment, improve effectiveness, efficiency and quality of work life resulting in organizational growth and survival.

2.2. Organizational learning

A very famous concept of Organizational Learning was given by Levitt is that Organizations are considered as learning when they learn from their past/history and implant that learning into their routines that eventually results in behaviors change (Patky, 2020). Organizational Learning is all about development of relationship between organization and the environment in which it exists (L. Li and Tang, 2020). Patky (2020), wrote in-depth analysis in order to give complete understanding of the concept of organizational learning. His finding also divides organizational learning into four constructs. Learning is necessary not only to continually improve current process adopted by an organization but also very important to adopt changes happening in the market that is necessary for survival (Firmansyah et al., 2022). The pioneer concept of learning organizations is based on learning individuals based on experiments. For organizations, in order to continually learn and change their individual members must learn individually and collectively and adopt knowledge to make their parent organizations learn. In this study, SME was taken to be any organization with the number of employees in between 10-100. Any business with number of employees less than 10 were categorized as micro-organizations and were not considered for this study.

2.3. Innovation capabilities

In this research innovation is characterized by a "multi-stage process" together with "transforming ideas into new/enhanced products" and not just highlights (Saunila, 2020). Every one of the phases that different researchers have distinguished relates to the definition of innovation. Additionally, it also features the way thoughts are utilized and transformed (together with varying means of innovation) resulting in "New/enhanced products, services or processes". Classifications of innovation vary with the level of change involved. Innovation has been hypothesized in a variety of ways. OECD (2005: 46) defines innovation as "implementing a new or improved product (services or goods), a method, a new advertising and marketing approach, or a new managerial practice". OECD (2005: 17) differentiates between 4 types of innovations: product innovations, process innovations, organizational innovations, and marketing level innovations. Product innovations contain considerable adjustments in the abilities of services or products, including new services and goods as well as major enhancements to present products. Process innovations are seen as a significant alternation in manufacturing and delivery approaches.

2.4. SMEs innovation

To maintain an SMEs innovation, SMEs are urged to establish a foundation for innovation, which may involve modifications to the organization's operations in order to develop an appropriate culture and guide SMEs through periodic periods of change. An SMEs innovation that fosters creativity may encourage workers to maintain a high quality of work, which in turn promotes the development of new goods and processes (Eidizadeh et al, 2017). Additionally, an SMEs innovation magnifies the importance of empowering employees and encouraging them to be creative and develop skills that result in new goods and services. It is not surprising that today; innovation is regarded as the key factor in organization's sustainable competition (Sharma and Djiaw, 2011). Hence, many authors consider innovation as the basis of today's competitive economy. Several specialists engaged in the field of innovation, argue that only those SMEs that focus on innovation by creating competitive advantage can live long (Eidizadeh et al, 2017). Based on Hill et al. (2015) one of the sources of creating competitive advantage is innovation.

2.5 Hypotheses' development

Studies by (Zuo et al., 2019) also stated that the capacity of organizational learning promotes a positive effect on the technological innovation capacity of the firm. Organizational learning establishes a mechanism to coordinate the resources and capabilities achieved by reducing time and costs in identifying market needs, meeting customer needs, and responding to changes in the environment. The tools therefore have the freedom to take the lead in enhancing the operating practices of the organization, engagement within the community and internal and external obligations in order to enhance firm efficiency. Organizational learning is very important for a company because organizational learning can provide the company with knowledge to keep it going. According to (Raziq, Borini, Malik, Ahmad, and Shabaz, 2018) organizational learning has a positive impact on the competitive advantage of companies by enhancing their profitability and operation. In addition, (T. L. Pham, 2018) explains the value of corporate learning in enhancing firm efficiency. This opinion explains that the company will acquire new knowledge from both inside and outside the organization with organizational learning to be used in an effort to improve firm performance. Therefore, this research hypothesizes that:

H1: Organizational learning capability has a significantly positive effect on firms' performance

H2: Organizational learning capability has a significantly positive effect on innovation capabilities.

Radical creativity allows a company to be willing to understand the importance of emerging information, which in effect

brings insight into existing information (Soomro et al., 2020). Research from Taiwan high-tech firms conducted by (Zuo et al., 2019). confirms that creative research has a significant effect on ability to invent. As Ali (2021) note that experimental learning provides an important approach for assessing different methods, techniques, languages, and tools, with the potential to add new knowledge to organizational memory. Furthermore, by encouraging mistakes, creative learning offers more versatility to technology engineers in designing new abilities in different areas and embraces more ambiguity in seeking novel opportunities for innovation. Such risk-taking attempts are crucial to the development of new technologies which often have uncertain results (Tho and Duc, 2020). Experimental learning, however, tends to be wider and requires a firm to try out unfamiliar tools, methods, and cognitive styles. The ambiguity associated with experimental trial-and error learning generates barriers to knowing the relationships of information in specific technical fields. Overemphasizing innovation may drive the company to look at previous possibilities where such trial-and - error testing is not related to the needs found in the external environment. Experimental research may distract the firm from the acquisition of expertise and the creation of a critical mass in particular areas needed to advance innovations with a strong potential for additional business breakthroughs (Morris, 2019). To advance the creativity potential of the companies, it has been recognized in the interrelation between learning capacity by experimental. Research by (Gomes and Wojahn, 2018) find that the capacity of organizational learning affects the innovative performance of small and medium-sized enterprises. Therefore, this research hypothesizes that:

H3: Experimental learning capability has a significantly positive effect on firms' performance

H4: Experimental learning capability has a significantly positive effect on innovation capabilities.

Adaptive learning promotes the advancement of new innovations by aligning the technology practices of the enterprise with potential possibilities which are evolving. The pursuit of specific technological opportunities influences the company's accumulation of knowledge in narrow areas, reinforces biases in favor of reproducible results and influences the company to pursue further learning in a particular field. Focusing on established technology prospects motivates the company to invest its technical resources on fields that will have stronger effect on practical production of innovation (Li et al., 2021). This focus encourages the company to adapt its technology activities to meet changing market needs identified through the adaptive learning approach of the company, which encourages the use of knowledge skills in response to external conditions. The organization is therefore using its accumulated knowledge to understand and seize these external opportunities. If the organization reacts to areas needed by the community, adaptive learning encourages practical awareness practices that can have significant effect on the creation of potential technologies. For novelty, adaptive learning is however disadvantageous. Because adaptive learning reacts to emerging opportunities it tends to engage in focused search (Davis and DeWitt, 2021). That is, the company is specifically looking for alternatives to the specific opportunities found in its climate. The resultant ability cap thus limits organizational learning to the functional form, which is typically linear, and focuses on problems or resources beyond the conventional reach of the operations of the company. The sequential sampling method to active learning prejudices companies toward new technology and pushes them to search for distant information (Davis and DeWitt, 2021). Through qualitative research, researchers find that as companies experience proactive learning, they appear to promote gradual advancement and weak approaches for internationalization. Companies change their learning to create new products by broadening the expertise of the business in reaction to changing market opportunities (Zuo et al., 2019). Therefore, this research hypothesizes that:

H5: Adaptive learning capability has a significantly positive effect on firms' performance

H6: Adaptive learning capability has a significantly positive effect on innovation capabilities.

Organizations which consider errors unacceptable are not learning promoters. This is because the possible mistakes will serve as facilitators of learning. Risk-propensity is related to the incentive to face new situations, taking risks that do not affect the company and the resources for new situations (Gomes and Wojahn, 2018). Furthermore, members ought to express their beliefs, desires, expectations and aspirations in order to improve workplace morale and achieve a stronger life for themselves and for the life of their company (Magdalena, Molina, and Garc, 2019; Zhang, Cao, and Wang, 2018). Rewarding workplace programs to do any creative jobs will promote motivation and employee dedication to work. Risks of failing to achieve an expected goal, however, may either encourage or discourage employees to work creatively and effectively, but require support for employees taking calculated risks. Research from Malaysian conducted by (Al Mamun and Fazal, 2018), concluded that the propensity to take risk influences micro-entrepreneurs performance significantly. Innovation is the key driver to deliver competitive advantages. Developing new technologies is, however, still connected to threats and needs committed time and funding. Using a sample of 114 German CEOs of small and medium-sized family-owned companies active in manufacturing, stressed that the CEO's risk-taking propensity had a positive impact on the innovativeness of new product portfolios (Younas et al., 2019). So, this research hypothesizes the following:

H7: Propensity to risk has a significantly positive effect on firms' performance

H8: Propensity to risk has a significantly positive effect on innovation capabilities

The Dialog concerns free and open communication within working teams, facilitating communication and multi-functional

working team presence.(Gomes and Wojahn, 2018) argue that communication barriers need to be breached. Transformational leaders inspire employees and can create a perception among employees that they are taken seriously, listened to and appreciated as members of the organization. To cope with constant changes in the work climate, it is important to motivate workers and build sentiments of appreciation amongst workers (Cassia et al., 2020). Moreover, transformational leadership stimulates employee participation by creating a work environment in which employees feel free and are able to look for innovative approaches to their jobs (Mourão, 2018).

Freedom to perform a job is important because employees generate more creative work when they feel they have greater personal control over how to perform certain tasks “Transformational leadership guides and motivates the organization’s common vision and fosters good communication networks and a spirit of trust, enabling knowledge transmission and sharing and knowledge generation to slack out (Alseiyari, Sidek, and Al-Shami, 2019). Aiding staff to analyze and learn from their errors will contribute to more imaginative and productive workers (Boukamcha, 2019). So, this research hypothesizes the following:

H 9: Dialog has a significantly positive effect on firms’ performance

H 10: Dialog has a significantly positive effect on innovation capabilities.

Interaction with the external world is known as the forces that affect the organization, however as the rivals, social and economic processes, and policies they become completely out of reach. The dimension includes indicators for collecting and reporting information from the external environment, receiving and sharing information and employee interaction with the external environment (Azar and Ciabuschi, 2018). In uncertain environments, learning occurs through knowledge transfer, skill improvement and involvement in problem solving within the organization. (Gomes and Wojahn, 2018)

H 11: interaction has a significantly positive effect on firms’ performance

H 12: interaction has a significantly positive effect on innovation capabilities.

According to (Rajapathirana and Hui, 2018)innovation capability is considered as the valuable assets for the firms to provide and sustaining competitive advantage and in the implementation of the entire strategy.The above literature leads to a looming question; Can SMEs achieve growth through innovation? From reviewing most of the literature works done on this topic indicate that there is a link between growth and innovation and that innovation does not only trigger growth but also improves on company’s processes/ services and products. Laforet (2011) suggested that even if company leaders might have visionary potential growth strategies; they still need innovation to grow. In research conducted by Gu, Jiang, and Wang, (2016) researchers measured innovation through the Implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new method of marketing or a new method of organization in business, workplace or external relations.

H 13: Innovation Capabilities mediates the relationship between organizational learning and firm’s performance

Understanding the needs of consumers, the actions of competitions, the technology and the guidelines of organizational learning can lead the organization to benefit from innovation (Gomes and Wojahn, 2018). Both product innovations as entry into new markets by SMEs can contribute to improvements with regard to quality, as well as increased sales of products manufactured by organization. Innovation is one of the main strategies for increasing market share and bringing the business a competitive edge (Quaye and Mensah, 2019), Having a positive impact on company performance, producing a better market position leading to competitive advantage and superior performance. Thus, it has been hypothesized:

H 14: Innovation Capabilities have positive significant relationship with SMEs performance

3. THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Based on the theoretical discussion and previous literature, following determinants (Experimental Organizational Learning Capability (EOLC), Adaptive Learning, Propensity to Risk, Dialog, Interaction, Innovation Capabilities) were identified as playing an important role towards the development of an effective organizational learning framework within an organization. Apart from these factors, it was identified that factors that can impact the organizational innovation are Specialization, Professionalism, Managerial Attitudes towards change, Technical knowledge, External and internal communication, Administrative Support, Formalization, Research and Development, and Organizational Learning Based on the identified factors that could impact the organizational learning and innovation it is essential to identify independent and dependent variables so that the impact of each on the organizational performance could be ascertained in an effective and efficient manner. Based on the conducted research Experimental Organizational Learning Capability, Adaptive Learning, Propensity to Risk, Dialog, Interaction, and Innovation Capabilities are the independent variables for organizational learning. Furthermore, based on the factors that could impact the organizational innovation, this research would only focus on organizational learning and its impact on organizational performance. So, organizational innovation is mediator variable for organizational learning and the combination of both leads to organizational performance, which is the dependent variable of this research, this research adopts this triangulation in designing the conceptual framework of this research as shown in figure 1.



Figure 1. Research Framework

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research findings showed that there is a strong positive correlation between organizational learning and organizational performance. The findings are in accordance with the findings of previous studies by various researchers such as Li (2021); Meekaewkunchorn et al. (2021), who stated that organizational performance is directly linked to the capability of the organization to learn and adapt to its surrounding market environment. The same sentiment was expressed by research respondents who stated that organizational learning and organizational performance are strongly inter-linked and in the current cutthroat market environment, it is imperative that organizations in industrial sector focus on organizational learning to improve their performance and competitive advantage. The research findings showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning capabilities and innovation. The findings imply that organizations that are committed towards developing a culture of organizational learning are far more adept at innovative practices as compared to organizations that are not willing to learn or change. The identified correlation is as per the findings of previous studies by Abbas et al. (2020); Abdi et al. (2018) who in their studies emphasized the importance of organizational learning towards improving innovation capabilities of the organization. According to Abdi et al. (2018), organizations that are able to change as per market trends are far more suited to innovate and have better chance of achieving competitive advantage. This correlation between organizational learning and innovation was also identified by Ali (2021), who in his ripple effect model of organizational learning, innovation and firm performance stated that organizational learning, leads to knowledge acquisition, which in turn leads to innovation and as a result of this innovation organizational performance is enhanced. Thus, it can be stated that the findings of this research regarding organizational learning and innovation are in accordance with findings of previous studies. The research findings showed that the major factors that can influence organizational learning and innovation in the manufacturing sector are experimental learning and adaptive learning. After experimental learning, adaptive learning was the most important factor identified for improving organizational learning and innovation. These results show that the organizations need to focus their efforts on improving their R&D through experimental and adaptive learning techniques to improve their innovative capabilities and performance.

The findings of this section show that the respondents strongly believe that there is a positive correlation between innovation and organizational learning and innovation, and these attributes can play a pivotal role in improving the performance of the organization and imparting it with a competitive edge that would allow the organization to survive in the long run. These results corroborate the findings of earlier researchers such as (Bilan et al., 2020) who stated that organizational innovation is directly related to organizational learning capabilities that is, the greater the level of innovation that has been achieved by any organization the greater is the change and learning required by the system to achieve the above-mentioned innovation. Organizational innovation is stimulated based on the effective utilization of existing and new knowledge by the organization. As per Cho et al. (2019), organizational learning is the forerunner for organizational innovation and as such for high-level

innovation within the organization, high level of organizational learning capability is required. Furthermore, in the words of Brix (2019) an innovative organization is a learning organization and there is a significant and positive relationship. Based on the evidence presented above and the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there is indeed a positive relationship between organizational learning, innovation, and organizational performance.

5. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Regarding the obtained results, the following suggestions are proposed:

- Creating a system for getting the customers' opinions and suggestions for providing services with a higher quality proportional to their needs.
- Encouraging group problem solving for stimulating individuals' innovation.
- Applying the employees' appropriate ideas, which encourage other employees for participation in innovation
- Creating ICT infrastructures for getting and using updated knowledge of organizational processes reengineering
- Strengthening the relationship with internal and foreign industries for getting information on effective business innovation models.
- Researching the actions of countries pioneering in business model innovation for gaining their experiences.

6. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

According to several researchers the lack of semantic content has always been an issue in OP definition. Currently it seems that practicing managers are not aware of the concept of OP and are walking in darkness concerning their attempts of finding and developing OP. Therefore, SMEs should try to improve the awareness of their managers regarding OP and future research is encouraged to find solutions to this problem. Recognizing the need for an appropriate business intelligence system for improving OP is just a first step and the real challenge is to make it an integral part of decision making process. Building OL can be a time-consuming, expensive and complex task. Therefore, more research is needed to empirically find the factors influencing the successful deployment of OL and its relationship with OP through OI.

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