

ABSTRACT

The study explores the predictors of the individual's learning through socialization in the context of a learning organization. The process of socialization or social learning is understood through the lens of Social Capital and its impact on individual performance is studied. The term social capital refers to the social trust, norms, and social ties or relationships that people can rely on to enable a productive outcome. Social capital involves various dimensions like structural, relational and cognitive; each of it playing a significant role towards the outcomes such as productivity, creativity, innovation and performance which are important to an organization.

Earlier studies have shown that higher social capital creates a better work environment and improves both knowledge level and performance. The literature mentions that continuous learning is the key to remaining competitive in today's marketplace and hence, sustaining a learning culture is important. Continuous learning happens by creating the right social environment to transact tacit knowledge. Organizations have to sustain the right social environment by advocating sharing behaviours through the implementation of appropriate policies, to become a learning organization. Peter Senge (1980) mentions that 'individual learning is central to creating a learning organization'. However, few studies have been published studying individual learning culture and its impact on individual performance. This study contributes towards linking factors which motivate individuals to learn to the individual's learning culture. While individual learning is driven by personality traits, individuals also learn by socialization. This study examines social learning of an individual through the lens of social capital in the structural, relational and cognitive aspects.

A survey was designed to understand the learning organization perspective of an individual. Responses were collected from an IT organization from different types of projects and the respondents included project engineers, technical leaders, and managers. A total of 183 valid and complete responses were received. This data was subjected to Structural Equation modelling, both covariance based, and variance based. Group comparison was done on the demographic parameters of age, gender, tenure in the project, education, designation and project type.

The results of the study show that some of the factors that motivate individuals to learn can be explained from a social capital lens. Individuals indeed contribute to the dimensions of a learning organization as we see a strong positive influence of individual learning through socialization on the dimensions of learning organization at the individual level. Results further show that shared vision, shared narratives in the cognitive dimension, trust, and identification in the relational dimension; and intimacy or mutual confiding in the structural dimension has a positive influence on learning organization constructs. The learning culture constructs are proactive learning, collaboration, seeking and providing help and organization support. Studies also show that relational dimension mediates the relation between structural dimension and learning culture. It also mediates the relation between cognitive dimension and learning culture. This study also contributes to the field of studies emphasizing on a comparison between the results achieved by variance-based SEM and covariance-based SEM

and we conclude that variance based SEM is more appropriate to be used for studies in the area of organizational behaviour.

The outcome of the study has various applications. It can be used by training department, human resource department, managers, and individuals. The training department can design learning initiatives which emphasize on discussion and collaboration rather than classroom learning. Human resources can take inputs to create policies which emphasize on creating opportunities and recognition through social learning. Managers can use this to ensure that the right environment is created to learn and to the individuals who can make informal learning more prominent when they are in a group. We thus see that individuals' learning is impacted by multiple factors within the organization.