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## Effect of Organizational Learning Culture on Career Development Competencies

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Organizational learning culture is the resilience of organizational growth today. Vibrant industries like the Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services have always faced challenges in meeting the issues relating to employees' career competencies. Career competencies can be attained when organizations provide continuous learning environment. The present study examines the influencing role of organizational learning culture on career development competencies in order to achieve career goals. Primary data, collected online through questionnaire have been used in the study. It involves two parts, organizational learning culture and on career development competencies. Career development competencies have two parameters such as career self-exploration and goal orientation. Data analyzed through Spearman's Rank Correlation and Linear Regression reveals the existence of a strong positive correlation between organizational learning culture and accomplishment of career development competencies. The study has further revealed that 64.9% variation in career self-exploration and 67.6% variation in goal orientation are caused by organizational learning culture. Organizational learning culture is found to be the supporting factor to accomplish career development competencies.*

*Keywords: Collaboration, competencies, openness, employee involvement, learning culture*

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## **Introduction**

In this era of competition, organizations face challenges to retain their positions in the global market. Only such organizations which nurture a culture of continuous learning and development can stay in the forefront. Development of human resource entails a culture of learning in an organization and such development creates a competitive advantage in the dynamic business environment. Therefore, due to this vital role of workplace culture on employees' career development, various studies have been reported by a number of researchers (Egan, Yang & Barlett, 2004; Wickramratne, 2013; Simonsen, 1997; Elvitigala et al, 2006). Learning culture articulates the real picture of the development in an organization. A continuous learning culture in an organization influences effective career development which directly affects the goal orientation, competitiveness and productivity of the employees.

In the light of changing career perspective, the organizational role in employees' career development has been intensified. There are various supporting mechanisms which an organization can consider while framing a strategic career development plan of the employees. Work culture has played an important role in providing opportunities in career advancement. So, organizations need to provide a work culture of continuous learning and teamwork collaboration. Organization that facilitates the learning environment remains competitive in the business environment. Organizations that are able to stimulate a learning environment remain competitive in the business environment. McDonald and Hite (2016) have highlighted five organizational support mechanisms, viz., 'policies and reward structures', 'work-life initiatives', 'inclusive work environment', 'supervisory support' and 'continuous learning culture'.

Organizational learning culture is considered to be one of the important areas in the modern management study. Understanding the career competencies are perceived to have a potential in achieving the career goals. Organizations facilitating a learning culture enhance in achieving such goals.

## **Organizational learning culture and career development competencies**

A learning culture is one with organizational values, systems and practices that support and encourage both individuals, and the organization, to increase knowledge, competence and performance levels on an ongoing basis (Blackwood, 2014). A learning organization refers to the principles, characteristics, and systems of an organization to learn collectively. In general, organizational learning is defined in terms of process and behavior, and a learning organization is conceived as an entity (Harvey & Denton, 1999).

Career development competencies means the essential elements needed to support a career. It gets widened over the time and is important to both the individuals and the organizations in their overall developments. Arthur (2005) has identified seven career competencies with personality traits. They are

'goal setting and career planning'; 'self knowledge', 'job-related performance effectiveness', 'career related skills', 'knowledge of politics', 'career guidance and networking'; and 'feedback setting and self-presentation'. Francis-Smythe et al. (2012) have developed the Career Competencies Indicator (CCI) to assess the above mentioned seven career competencies.

Career development leads to career success and career satisfaction. Career development requires both the individual and organizational initiatives. Prior to organizational career management, employees must be aware of their individuals' career needs. Individuals identify their skills and interest in order to explore their career path. Organizations strive to strategise the individual's goal orientation with the organizational career vision. So, organizations while framing a strategic career development program, should consider the competencies that can enhance the employee's career.

Organizational learning culture is considered to be an important area in the modern management study today. Learning culture aids to achieving one's career goals. Understanding the career competencies of employees is also perceived to have a potential influence on ones achievement of career goals. Fewer studies are however found to have been conducted on the impact of organizational learning culture on career development competencies. In order to understand the factors that influence career competencies, organization need to understand the employees self career-exploration and how developmental culture in an organization helps in achieving their self growth.

## **Review of Literature**

Elvitigala et al. (2006) made a study on gender issues in construction industry focusing on the cultural aspects of the workplace environment as a barrier of career development. Construction industry is generally a male dominated sector and often such dominance acts as a barrier to the career growth of women employees. The cultural environment is challenging for women employees unless it changes the facilitating values on their contribution. A strategic change in culture with the help of HR managers is necessary to enhance equal importance of the women employees.

Joo and Park (2009) have conducted an empirical study in four Fortune Global 500 companies located in Korea. The study was conducted in the manufacturing, finance and trading sectors. High performance goal orientation, organisational learning culture and developmental feedback were the most essential variables for employee career satisfaction, the study concluded.

Patrick and Kumar (2011) have conducted a study on top five Indian IT Companies. The study observed five categories of factors for career growth, namely, individual factors; managerial factor; organizational

processes; organizational culture and opportunities as the influencing factors for career management. Career management and employee development act as a tool to explore career goal characteristics.

Emami, R. et al (2012) have observed the inter-relationships of organizational learning culture, job satisfaction and turnover intention. Organizational learning culture encompasses of various dimensions, namely, 'continuous learning culture', 'inquiry and dialogue', 'team learning', empowerment' and 'strategic leadership'. Significant and positive correlation exists among the dimensions of organizational learning culture and job satisfaction. Negative correlation exists between organizational learning culture and turnover intention. The study also found that there exists an indirect impact of learning culture on turnover intention when job satisfaction mediates the two variables.

Namagembe and Ntayi (2012) have studied the influencing effect of individual ethical considerations and organizational culture on career growth of employees. Organizational culture imparting a learning atmosphere facilitates career growth than ethical considerations.

Rasool et al. (2012) have examined the interrelationships of organizational culture and employee's career competencies. Organizational culture promoting learning enhances the career capability of employees consequently increases the performance of employees. Culture is found to be enhancing the career capability.

Wickramratne (2013) has highlighted the organizational culture and senior management support. Identification of the scales to study career development culture and senior management support is based on the measures proposed by Simonsen (1997) which include work environment, management involvement and employee awareness of responsibility. Senior management support plays a vital role in the development of work culture enhancing career growth in the organization.

Beheshtifar and Rafiei (2014) studied the significant relationship between employees' career competencies and the organizational learning capability. Career competencies accelerate the progress of learning capabilities and reinforcement of these competencies can abridge the organizational learning process.

Koekemoer (2014) has identified the factors that influence managerial career growth. Using content analysis, two dimensions of career success were analysed, namely, the contributing factors and the impeding factors. Education, productive interpersonal relationship and networking, organisational culture, efficient performance, growth opportunities and open feedback were found to be the contributing factors to career growth. Impeding factors were lack of skills and experience, glass ceiling

effect, political and economic climate, business challenges and dependency on personal-work (interpersonal) interference. Organizations should consider both the contributing and the impeding factors to develop an effective career development program for the employees.

Rahman et al. (2016) have authenticated the interrelationship between organizational learning culture and employee's career development. Career planning and career management are the antecedents of career development through which organizations adopt various developmental activities. The antecedents act as the mediating factor in enhancing the organization development. Organization learning culture should involve various career developmental activities.

Sharma and Sharma (2016) have studied the effect of continuous learning culture and employee self efficacy on the effectiveness of training provided in the organizations. Systematic training and knowledge acquisition were found to be the important areas of providing continuous learning opportunities. Combined effect of continuous learning culture and self efficacy leads to effectiveness in training.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study has been undertaken to examine the interrelationships that exists between organizational learning culture and career development competencies.

Specific objectives

- To study the effect of organizational learning culture on career self-exploration.
- To study the effect of organizational learning culture on goal orientation.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

The following two hypotheses have been framed and tested in the study.

*H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no association between organizational learning culture and career self- exploration.*

*H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no association between organizational learning culture and goal orientation.*

### **Research Framework**

The aim of the present study is to examine study the relationship of organizational learning culture on career development competencies. Organizational learning culture is one of the supporting factors that help in the accomplishment of career competencies. Organizational learning culture and career development competencies are taken as independent and dependent variables, respectively.

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Dimensions of organizational learning culture are as given in Table 1.1. Indicators for career competencies taken in the study are career self-exploration and goal orientation as shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Dimensions of variables under study**

Independent variable	Measurement variable	Dependent variable	Measurement variable
Organizational learning culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration and team learning</li> <li>• Learning opportunities</li> <li>• Employee involvement</li> <li>• Constructive feedback</li> <li>• Top management commitment</li> <li>• Openness</li> </ul>	Career development competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career self-exploration</li> <li>• Goal orientation</li> </ul>

### Research Methodology

The following methodology has been followed in the present study:

**Data source and method of data collection:** The study has been conducted mainly on primary data collected online through self developed questionnaire in two parts, namely, organizational learning culture and career development competencies from three IT firms operating in India. Organizational learning culture as independent variable has been divided into five dimensions which are ‘collaboration and team learning’, ‘employee involvement’, ‘constructive feedback’, ‘top management commitment’ and ‘openness’. Career development competencies as dependent variable were assessed by career self-exploration and goal orientation.

**Sample size and sampling:** A total of 100 sets of questionnaire in a five ‘Likert scale’ were sent to the respondents of which 57 filled in questionnaire were received back which were included in the study for being complete in all respect. Convenience sampling was used for collecting the data by selecting three IT firms, namely, Wipro, Tech Mahindra and Infosys.

**Tools and techniques used:** Statistical tools used in the study were Spearman’s correlation and Linear Regression analysis. SPSS 17 package has been used for all the statistical calculations.

**Demographic profiles:**

Table 1.2 contains details of the demographic profile of the respondents.

**Table: 1.2: Demographic profile**

S. No.	Variables	Categories	Total respondents	Percentage
1.	Age	20 Yrs<30 Yrs	23	40%
		30 Yrs <40 Yrs	19	33%
		Above 40 Yrs	15	27%
Total		57	100%	
2.	Academic Qualifications	Graduate	19	33%
		Post Graduate	17	30%
		Technical/Professional	21	37%
		Graduate or Above		
Total		57	100%	

**Data analysis and Interpretation**

As stated before that the study intends to examine the role of organizational learning culture and keeping in view the objectives in mind, a correlation between organizational learning culture as independent variable and career development competencies as dependent variable has been calculated and the result is shown in Table 1.3.

The correlation coefficient value of career self-exploration with the dimensions of organizational learning culture ranges from 0.8152 to 0.7413, which shows a highly positive and strong relationship between the two variables. ‘Learning opportunities’ as independent variable has the highest spearman’s rho correlation coefficient value of 0.8152 indicating to be the most important influencing factor to create career self-exploration. ‘Learning opportunities’ is followed by ‘constructive feedback’ with rho value of 0.7818, ‘collaboration and team learning’ with rho value 0.7744, ‘employee involvement’ with a rho value of 0.7592, ‘openness’ with a rho value of 0.7531 and ‘top management commitment’ with a rho value of 0.7413.

Similarly, the correlation coefficient values of goal orientation with dimensions of organizational learning culture ranges from 0.8055 to 0.7631, showing a high level of significance. ‘Learning opportunities’ is also found to be the most influencing factor of employees’ career competencies with a rho value of 0.8055. It is followed by ‘employee involvement’ with rho value of 0.8007, ‘constructive feedback’ with a rho value of 0.7839, ‘openness’ with a rho value of 0.7686, ‘collaboration and team learning’ with a rho value of 0.7665 and ‘top management commitment’ with a rho value of 0.7631.

**Table 1.3: Link between Organizational Learning Culture and Career Development Competencies**

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Spearman's Correlation	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Career self-exploration	Collaboration & team learning	0.7744*	.655	.649
	<b>Learning opportunities</b>	<b>0.8152*</b>		
	Employee involvement	0.7592*		
	Constructive feedback	0.7818*		
	Top management commitment	0.7413*		
	Openness	0.7531*		
Goal orientation	Collaboration & team learning	0.7665*	.682	.676
	<b>Learning opportunities</b>	<b>0.8055*</b>		
	Employee involvement	0.8007*		
	Constructive feedback	0.7839*		
	Top management commitment	0.7631*		
	Openness	0.7686*		

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

To substantiate the linkage between organizational learning culture and career development competencies, that linear regression analysis was also conducted. The model summary shown in Table 1.3 indicates that the value of regression coefficient (adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) is .649 revealing that organizational learning culture accounts for 64.9% variation in career self-exploration. Likewise, 67.6% (.676) of variation in goal orientation is explained by organizational learning culture.

### Hypotheses testing

The set hypotheses have been tested using the coefficients of determination. Table 1.4 represents the coefficients of determination specifying the beta coefficient and the t value. The Beta value of .809 implies that 1% change in organizational learning culture results in 80.9% change in career self-exploration. It is clearly seen in the table below that the t value is 1.568 which is greater than the significant p value (.123). The calculated value i.e. 1.568 being more than the table value i.e. .123 leads

to rejection of the null hypothesis. It is concluded that organizational learning culture has a significant effect on career self-exploration.

**Table 1.4: Coefficients of Determination**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.227	2.695	.809	1.568	.123
Organizational learning culture	.854	.084		10.215	.000

**\* Dependent Variable: Career Self-exploration**

Likewise in the Table 1.5, the beta value (.826) explains 82.6% change in goal orientation with a unit change in organizational learning culture. It is apparent from the table that the t value is 1.128 which is greater than the significant p value (.264). The calculated value being more than the table value leads to rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, it is concluded that organizational learning culture mediates the goal orientation of employees.

**Table 1.5: Coefficients of Determination**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.003	2.661	.826	1.128	.264
Organizational learning culture	.897	.083		10.856	.000

**\* Dependent Variable: Goal Orientation**

**Major findings**

The major findings of the study may be stated under two heads, findings in general and findings with respect to hypotheses as follows:

- Findings in general
- Findings with respect to hypotheses
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## **Findings in general**

The broad findings of the study may be stated as follows:

1. The study found that organizational culture promoting continuous learning is an important factor facilitating career competencies of the employees. Such culture act as a supporting mechanism in assisting the career development needs of the employees.
2. The study revealed that 'learning opportunities' as an aspect of organizational learning culture is the most influencing factor in achieving the career development competencies with a correlation coefficient value of 0.8152 and 0.8055 for career self-exploration and goal orientation respectively.
3. With regards to 'career self-exploration', as a sub variable of career development competencies, the current study identified the significance relationship with the various dimensions of organizational learning culture in the decreasing order as, 'learning opportunities' (0.8155), 'constructive feedback' (0.7818), 'collaboration and team learning' (0.7744), 'employee involvement' (0.7592), 'openness' (0.7531) and 'top management commitment' (0.7413).
4. In view of 'goal orientation', as a sub variable of career development competencies, the current study established a positive and significant correlation with the various dimensions of organizational learning culture in the decreasing order as, 'learning opportunities' (0.8055), 'employee involvement' (0.8007), 'constructive feedback' (0.7839), 'openness' (0.7686) 'collaboration and team learning' (0.7665), and 'top management commitment' (0.7631).

**Table 1.6: Hypothesis wise findings and implications**

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis	Status of acceptance/rejection of the hypothesis	Findings	Implications
H <sub>01</sub>	<i>There is no association between organizational learning culture and career self- exploration.</i>	Rejected	Comparison of t value of regression coefficients with the significant p-value exhibits considerable relationship in the organizational learning culture and career self-exploration.	Organizations need to consider the individual skills and abilities. Work culture should be dynamic providing learning opportunities aligning with the individual expertise.
H <sub>02</sub>	<i>There is no association between organizational learning culture and goal orientation.</i>	Rejected	Calculation of the t value of regression coefficients with the significant p-value exhibits significant relationship in the organizational learning culture and goal orientation.	Continuous and spontaneous learning culture is necessary in organizations. Learning culture in organizations helps to boost the inclination of employees towards specific career goals.

**Conclusion**

Organizational learning culture plays an important influencing role in achieving the career competencies. So, organizations should nurture the work culture with continuous learning opportunities and effective collaboration of employees. Learning culture in an organization cannot be brought in a day. Continuity, spontaneity and proper planning of inculcating the learning process results in bringing an effective organizational learning culture. Employee career advancement and competencies is influenced by such culture of learning and development ultimately enhancing their performance. Learning culture provides diverse opportunities for individual career exploration and proper orientation of career goals. Empirical evidence of the current study supports the prior research and further validated the relationships between organizational learning culture and career development competencies. The study further concluded that a strong and significant relationship exists between organizational learning cultures which are continuous and spontaneous with career development competencies.

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