

ROLE OF STRATEGIC LEARNING CAPABILITIES IN ENHANCING INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR: MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEES' ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Strategic Learning Capabilities play an important role for development and innovation in organizations. This study analyze the impact of Strategic Learning Capabilities in enhancing Innovative Work Behaviour: mediating role of Employees' Engagement. Theoretical and empirical evidence has shown impact of Strategic Learning Capabilities (SLC) in enhancing Innovative Work Behaviour on organizational culture. The resulting research instrument included 27 items of strategic learning capabilities, 8 items of Innovative Work Behaviour and 9 items of Employees' Engagement. All response categories were five point Likert scale. Structured questionnaire was distributed among 261 Employees of Hazara University and comsats university, Pakistan. Main objective was to study mediating impact of Employees' Engagement of the relationship between Strategic Learning Capabilities (SLC) and Innovative Work Behaviour among teaching faculty of both universities. Results has shown complete mediation of Employees' Engagement on said variables, it has also shown positive relationship among predictor and outcome. All the formulated hypotheses of the study at hand were accepted. This study adds to the present literature by emphasizing the inevitability of understanding the significance of Employees' Engagement in organizations in the context of Pakistan. Lastly, the findings confirm the expected effect of Employees' Engagement on both Strategic Learning Capabilities and Innovative Work Behaviour.

Keywords: Employees' Engagement, Strategic Learning Capabilities, Innovative Work Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Strategic learning capabilities (SLC) play significant role in the growth of organization through innovation (Ven, 1986), and the implementation of innovative ideas the employees are a major source of the organization. Frankelius (2009) innovation is defined as real, much effective resulting in new ideas that break into the market or society. In the industries and economies, innovation is a catalyst to development and progress. Innovation is associated to optimistic changes in efficiency, production, competitiveness, excellence and market share. Engelberger (1982), engineer of robotics, stated that the innovation has only three components: An identified need, technology relevancy of competent people, and fiscal resources. In response to the rapidly changing 21st century global business context Industries must be extremely proactive (Tseng and Lin, 2011). According to Pietersen (2010), organization learning strategically ongoing processes will be much flexible to external environment. High employee engagement organizations therefore be likely to do better than those with 'less' employee engagement (Adrien, 2004). SLC is perceived as capability learning perspective allowing capacity to establish organizations can execute continually the strategic learning or not (Anderson, Covin, & Slevin, 2009). Anderson et al. (2009) defined two factors of SLC: new pertinent knowledge strategically and performance of strategic change likely as their outcome. Following the identification of dimensions of the SLC by

Anderson, Covin, and Slevin (2009), they distinguished SLC from the other expression of learning, and novel knowledge to the created organizational change. The dimensions included: external focus, disciplined imagination, strategic engagement, dialogue, customer-centric, experiential learning, and reflective responsiveness. Innovative work behavior is ability of employees to innovate continuously and improve products, work processes and services, important for the organization in contemporary business environment (Janssen, 2000). Innovation theory stresses innovation more extensive than creativity and implements new ideas (King & Anderson, 2002). The IWB construct is related more to employee creativity (Amabile, 1988). Creativity is visualized as a basic component of IWB, for initiating of innovation practices, when problems and performance-gaps are identified and generate approach in response to apparent need of innovation (West, 2002).

Krause (2004) and Dorenbosch et al. (2005) suggested two aspects of innovative work behavior that is idea cohort and idea application. Employee's confidence of their personal ability for goal achieving facilitates their creativity by setting their devotion, energy and time to work (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Zahra and George (2002) emphasized external and internal activation triggers (changes in technologies or market) of acquiring and assimilating knowledge and social incorporation processes to share knowledge and deployment. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory (2001) stated optimistic emotions eg interest, pride, enthusiasm to extend people's thoughts range and to promote explorative acts for developing the over time resources of intellect, physical, and psychological. Martins & Terblanche (2003) stated that organizational culture valuing interactions, team's work, and ideas through active communication between group members support innovative behavior. Accordingly, the organization's ability share knowledge and to learn is decisive to organizational innovation if previously the organizations support organizational creativity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Hirst et al., 2009). The present study has examined mediator role of employee engagement at the relation between organizational strategic learning capabilities and innovative work behavior in light of these research findings. For all the organizations strategic learning capability is imperative now a day. Employees are an important mechanism for implementing the innovative ideas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Learning

Mintzberg (1987) gave concept of strategic learning and other scholars developed it further (Pietersen, 2002; 2010, Starbuck, Voronov & Yorks, 2005; Barnett & Baumard, 2008). Mintzberg, stated that learning take place like a strategy with time, till learning becomes formalized. Starbuck (2008) discussed challenges of strategic learning eg difficulties of unlearning of learned, learning from lose and learning occurrence. Strategic learning have different meaning by scholars just like social knowledge procedure (Burgelman, 1988; Eden & Ackermann, 2001), strategic thinking and strategic conduct plan process (Casey and Goldman 2010). Strategic learning merges dyadic learning (Mintzberg, 1987a) and unlearning (Argyris & Schon, 1996; Hedberg, 1981; Tsang & Zahra, 2008). SLC is defined as strategic knowledge implementation as an act that entails generating the processes or activities that enables academic institutions in Iraqi to be better off or skilled by creating, storing, and using knowledge so as to come up with something positive or constructive thus achieving the set objectives. The four areas are to strengthen the economic foundations, reviving the private sector, quality of life improvement and to strengthen security and good governance (Chohan, 2016) relying on strategic learning on academic entrepreneurship.

Strategic learning Capabilities (SLC)

SLC enable strategic knowledge in the oscillation. SLC is perceived as competence of establishing that organizations can carry the strategic learning continuously or not (Anderson, Covin, & Slevin, 2009). Other researchers (Kuwada, 1998; Pietersen, 2010) coined the word of strategic learning capability, an answer to question of how firms build up and modify strategically with time. The personal, group and organizational or community sense of knowledge is inexorable as the information is interpreted by each person perceptions, in context of their past experience, groups, organizational culture and social values (Gerdes et al., 2014).

Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB)

IWB is the capability of employees to repeatedly transform and develop the goods, procedure important in organization for modern business environment. Employees need willingness and potential to be innovative (Janssen, 2000). Jong (2007) defined (IWB) as ‘the positive growth in organizations through new ideas. Gong, Zhou, & Chang, (2013) confirmed that with high employees’ innovativeness organizations shows high level of competence.

Enhance Innovative Work Behaviour

Campbell (1996) established a positive correlation between organizational performance and innovative behaviors. To inculcate the innovative work behaviour in employees, leaders may designate duties to employees, acknowledge and enhance the innovative efforts, provide resources to innovate and involve them in decision making process. Getz and Robinson (2003) concluded about employees initiate 80% of inspirations in organization. Thus, IWB belong to employees’ job. The innovation is identified as a purely flexible added role behaviour (Katz, & Kahn, 1978). Innovative behaviors guide employees to cultivate, hold, respond to and mutate ideas. Innovation of processes and methods makes employee vital in their organization (Ramamoorthy, 2005).

Employees’ Engagement

The engaged employee is fully immersed and passionate for their work and do constructive actions for organization's reputation and interests (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees’ engagement motivated intrinsically is significantly related to innovation. Zhang and Bartol (2010) found that employees’ confidence for achieving goals facilitate their creativity to devote their energy and time to their work.

Employees’ engagement as mediator at the relation of organizational strategic learning capabilities and innovative work behavior is drawn on theories of broaden-and-build (Fredrickson, 2001), absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990), and the intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These studies have taken employee engagement as a mechanism assisted by factors of empowerment of decision making, communication, and support of supervisor and reward factors. In the absence of resources from organization, employees withdraw and disengage themselves from their jobs. Shahril (2010) studied Employee Engagement in Malaysia’s Education and found that communication, career development and rewards & recognition are controlling factors of Employee Engagement. Ivan et al. (2010) also suggest that engagement might be taken as factor of job involvement because individuals experiencing deep role engagement identify with their jobs. Generally, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment and attachment are factors of engagement related to “positive” employee behavior covering established psychological concepts (Ivan et al., 2010). Culture of engagement and depth of communication within the organization significantly influences esteem held by its employee which is internal reputation of organization (Hull & Read, 2003). Organizational Culture

include organizational, managerial and membership factors aspects. (Anahita, Ahmadi, Isfahan, & Iran, 2013; Kör, 2016).

METHOD

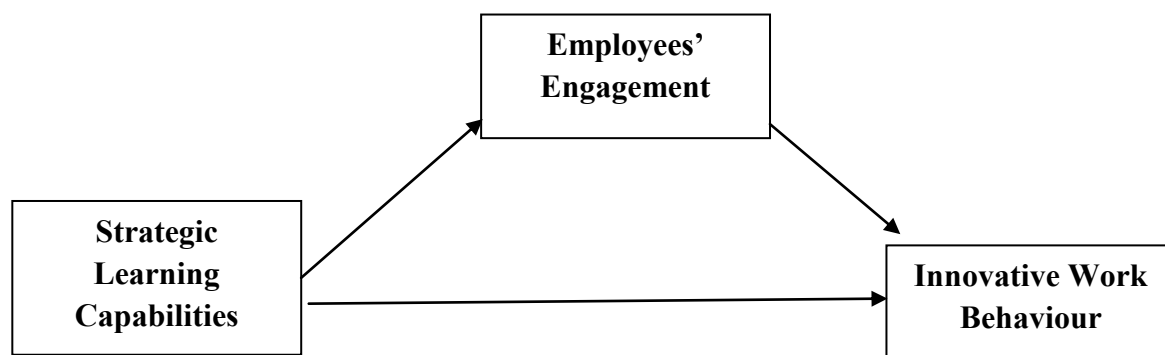
Objective of Study

1. To study impact of strategic learning capabilities on Innovative work behavior.
2. To study mediating impact of employees engagement on the relationship of strategic learning capabilities and Innovative work behavior.

Hypotheses of Study

1. Strategic learning capabilities will be positively correlated to Innovative work behavior.
2. Employees engagement will positively mediate the relationship between strategic learning capabilities and Innovative work behavior.

Conceptual Framework of the Study



RESEARCH DESIGN

In present study quantitative research design was used. Data was collected through random sampling technique from 261 teaching faculties of both universities. 280 questionnaires were distributed out of which only 261 were returned back. Total teaching staff was 1057 in Comsats university Abbottabad and Hazara University Mansehra out of which sample was decided by using Cochran (1997) sampling formula mentioned below and data was collected by using Strategic Learning Capabilities, Innovative work behaviour, Employees Engagement questionnaires. SLC has 27 items, IWB has 8 while EE has 9 items and response categories of all the scales were Likert.

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 (.5)(.5)}{(.05)^2} = 385$$

Measures

Strategic learning capabilities

Independent variable of the study was strategic learning capability. Independent variable consists of 27 items.

Innovative work behaviour

The dependent variable of the study was innovative work behaviour. Dependent variable consists of 8 items.

Employees’ Engagement

The mediating variable of the study was employees’ engagement. Mediating variable consists of 9 items.

Data Collection

Questionnaires, observation and interviews are some methods used for data collection. Here in this study structured questionnaire 5 point likert scale was used for data collection. Among the teaching staff of Comsats Institute of information technology Abbottabad and Hazara University Mansehra Pakistan 282 questionnaires were distributed out of which 261 questionnaires were filled by teachers and 21 questionnaires were unfilled. For the current study data was collected through questionnaire and the questionnaire were adapted from previous studies. For the current study strategic learning capabilities was measured through the measures developed by (Benson & Clark, 1982). Innovative work behaviour was measured through measures developed by (Hair, 1998). Employee’s engagement was measured through measure developed by (Schouteten & Benders, 2004). For the current study questionnaire were distributed among randomly selected employees of the said industry. The collected data would be analyzed using different statistical tools that would be suitable for data analysis and interpretation. Correlation, regression and Baron and Kenny 4 step test (Baron & Kenny, 1986) was utilized. On the basis of this analysis findings and conclusion was made. For calculations SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) was used.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data was prepared on the basis of information collected from questionnaires. Furthermore, in order to make sure rational capability and reliability of responses, data suppression was conceded out by the researcher. Recognized mistakes and data gaps were clear as soon as possible. After editing, data was analyzed quantitatively. By the use of version 16-SPSS software quantitative data analysis was done. The method for quantitative data scrutiny were regression, correlation and Barron and Kenny 4 step test and are used to verify the ratio of respondents choosing the various. Tables and charts were also used to make sure simply indulgent for the analysis.

Implications

The findings of the present study will expand the existing body of knowledge, on the employees’ engagement impact on strategic learning capability and innovative work behaviour in many ways. Findings will provide empirical support for role of strategic learning capability in enhancing innovative work behaviour: mediating role of employees’ engagement.

RESULTS

Table 1. Psychometric Properties of SLC, IWB and EE

<i>Scale</i>	<i>No of items</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Alpha value</i>
SLC	27	96.25	15.95	0.93
IWB	8	29.15	6.77	0.96
EE	9	34.28	6.92	0.94

Note. All scales have satisfactory reliability

Table 2. Correlational Analysis

Measure	SLC	IWB	EE	M	SD
SLC		0.51**	0.41**	3.69	0.49
IWB			0.64**	3.64	0.84
EE				3.80	0.76

** P<0.05.

Table 3. Linear Regression

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE
1	.413 ^a	.170	.167	.772

Note. SE= Standard Error of Estimation

Table 4. Coefficients Unstandardized Coefficients Standardized Coefficients

	B	SE	β	T	Sig.
1	1.535	.293		5.239	.000
SLC	.592	.081	.413	7.296	.000

a. Outcome: Innovative Work Behaviour

Table 5. Linear Regression

Model	R	R ²	SE
1	.523 ^a	.273	.657

Table 6. Coefficients Unstandardized Coefficients Standardized Coefficients

Model	B	SE	β	T	Sig.	
1	(Constant)	1.381	.249		5.539	.000
	SLC	.681	.069	.523	9.870	.000

a. Outcome: Employees' engagement

Table 7. Linear Regression

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE
1	.619 ^a	.402	.415	.648

Table 8. Coefficients Unstandardized Coefficients Standardized Coefficients

	B	SE	β	t	Sig.	
1	(Constant)	0,939	.203		4.631	.000
	EE	.710	.052	.619	13.60	.000

a. Outcome:: Innovative work behaviour

Table 9. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE
1	.663 ^a	.417	.420	.644

Table 9. Coefficients Unstandardized Coefficients Standardized Coefficients

Model		B	SE	β	t	Sig.
1	(constant)	.637	.259		2.462	.000
	EE	.651	.061	.591	10.67	.000
	SLC	.149	.079	.104	1.871	.062

a. Outcome: Innovative work behaviour

DISCUSSION

H1: Strategic learning capabilities will be positively correlated to Innovative work behavior.

In present study result has shown from table 1 correlation between variables were satisfactory reliable. Alpha reliability of SLC, IWB and EE were, .93, .96 and .94 which were highly reliable. As it was hypothesized that Strategic learning capabilities will be positively correlated to Innovative work behavior. From table 2 it has been shown that correlation between all three variables were positively significant. Correlation between SLC and IWB was .51**. Correlation between IWB and SLC was .41**, and strong correlation exists between EE and IWB .64** and p value from linear regression table shows 0.00* value is < 0.05, it is clear from analysis fist hypothesis is accepted.

H2: Employees engagement will positively mediate the relationship between strategic learning capabilities and Innovative work behavior.

The Table 9 shows Employee’s engagement has mediating effects on the relationship of strategic learning capabilities and innovative work behaviour. As p value from linear regression table for SLC is 0.062 which is greater than 0.05 which shows results for SLC is insignificant so from the analysis it is evident that employees’ engagement has mediating effect on both independent and dependent variable so H2 is accepted.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The current study has following limitations and suggestions:

1. The sample consisted of population of Mansehra and Abbottabad. They may not represent the entire community, so, it is suggested that in next research the data may be selected from other areas of Pakistan.
2. This study only reflects a subjective evaluation of the employees’ engagement at a particular time in the employees’ life. The individual may be suffering from role overload, work pressures, financial pressures or any number of other influences that may have influenced his/her evaluation. These are all factors not controlled for in this study. So, the next researcher may also study those variables.
3. The questionnaire consisted only of closed-ended questions, which meant that no leeway was granted in qualifying statements or opinions.
4. The next research may study those factors by using some other assessment techniques.
5. Finally, current study has 261 respondents out of 282 due to some reasons of teaching staff and 261 is very small sample size; it is because of lengthy questionnaire or busy schedule of teaching staff.

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