FACTORS RELATED TO ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING: A STUDY OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

By

SRABONI BHADURI

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

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To the

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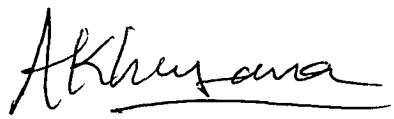
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "**Factors Related To Organizational Learning: Study of the Information Technology Industry**" being submitted by **Sraboni Bhaduri** to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of bona fide research carried out by her.

Sraboni Bhaduri has worked under my guidance and supervision and has fulfilled the requirements for the submission of this thesis, which, to my knowledge, has reached the requisite standard.

The results contained in this thesis have not been submitted, in part or in full, to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.



(AMULYA KHURANA)

Associate Professor
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology,
Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110 016
(INDIA)

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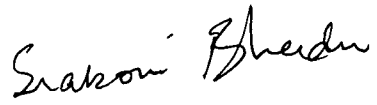

Sraboni Bhaduri

ABSTRACT

The current interest in organizational learning stems from the major discontinuities that organizations are experiencing in their rapidly changing environments, worldwide. The issue now is survival by learning constantly. A learning organization develops a large repertoire of responses to the environment, which gives it the capacity to adapt and change continuously.

The objective of this study is to explore the context in which a learning organization comes into being. It therefore explores the concept of organizational learning in the larger framework of organizational culture. This study attempts to calibrate and make certain correlates of organizational learning tangible. In order to do this, a scale to measure facilitating factors for organizational learning has been developed. It also examines the relationship of an enabling context for learning with leadership styles and organizational commitment.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative approach has been used to address these objectives. The relationship between the factors has been explored quantitatively, and the exploration at the values, beliefs and assumptions level has been done qualitatively. This gives an indication of the kind of values and beliefs that underlie such a context.

The findings support some of the central constructs from the theory. As the theory indicates, the environment of the learning organization needs to be psychologically safe, and this is experienced in the presence of a leader who is like a benevolent patriarch. The task situation is clearly defined, and, at the same time there is an emphasis on taking care of individual relationships. There is a sense of mission that is shared, and the individual's freedom of exploration and growth are seen to be

linked to the growth of the organization. In summary, it can be said that this paradigm rests on a solid foundation of respect for the individual and his abilities. What the organization strives for is to find a genuine resonance with the individual so that a true synergy is created.

High scoring and low scoring organizations, or, in other words, organizations which are more or less learning enabled, differ significantly in the kind of leadership style and organizational culture that they have. However, they do not differ significantly in terms of age, turnover, or growth rate. This seems to reinforce that the learning organization is a way of being. The findings indicate what the way of being might be, but outcomes such as growth, turnover and survivability are long term issues, which need to be observed in a longitudinal study.

Findings from the qualitative phase reinforce the findings from the quantitative phase. It was found that the high scoring organizations had a strong and clearly articulated set of values. From one of the case studies, it was also seen that the erosion of these values coincided with the company's transition from a high growth phase, in which it earned the respect of the industry and was also a highly preferred employer, to a phase where it began to go into decline. Short term profitability was however found to be independent of the value system of the organization. The learning competencies seemed to be more linked to outcomes such as innovation and long term survivability.

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