

Organizational Learning & Training and Emotional Intelligence as predictors of Workforce Agility among Bank Employees

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Abstract

Agility enables the organisations to tackle the dynamic environment with ease but, what are the enabler's of agility within an organisation specially in context of workforce, as the workforce is a crucial part of the entire system who needs to adapt to the demands of changing circumstances. A very few empirical evidences are present in the literature which focus on workforce agility's enablers. The present investigation empirically tests the effects of organisational learning & training (OLT) and emotional intelligence (EI) on workforce agility (WA). The study collects data from 253 bank employees and utilises PLS-SEM. Results show crucial role of both OLT and EI on WA. The study provides important implications for understanding the psychological and organisational aspects of being a learning organisation.

Keywords: Organisational learning & training, Emotional intelligence, Workforce agility, Bank employees

INTRODUCTION

Past 5 years have seen the voluminous capacity that the world possesses to acclimatize itself to the ever changing circumstances in different forms, be it, up and down in the economy, obsolescence of technologies, natural disasters and more so the pandemic. The world everytime gets up and gets going thus, resonating the never say die spirit meaning thereby the adaptability levels are high. Understanding the concept of adaptability in organisational context, means "the ability to move quickly towards new opportunities, to adjust to volatile markets and to avoid complacency" (Birkinshaw and

Gibson 2004). Organisations, can adapt by way of changing strategy, through management systems, organisational structures and production processes etc. Whatever means an organisation chooses to adapt, people who work for organisations are the ones who have to implement the adaptation thus, creating a need for agile workforce. The need for agile workforce in dealing with unanticipated change and difficulties was widely highlighted during the COVID-19 crisis (Childress, 2020). Many researchers have developed some characteristics that agile workforce possesses such as adaptability, proactivity, generative (Dyer and Shafer, 2003); business and value-driven, concentrated, resilient (Shafer et al., 2001); adaptive, flexible, progressive, prompt, combined, informative and competent (Muduli, 2013). These reseachers more or less portray some common characteristics which are adaptability, proactivity and resilience. The workforce must be capable of sensing and make use of the opportunities that the environment sheds upon them and deliver accordingly, this deliverability highly depends upon the quickness of the workforce in learning, which refers to, "a relatively permanent change in behaviour resulting from experience" (Robbins, 2001). Tendency of organisations to keep learning and grow, gives them competitive advantage. Organisational learning occurs at various levels for instance a single loop when the improvement is technical, a double loop when it is technical and adaptive, or a triple loop when it is about transformation (Senge, 2006). It occurs in different communities such as individuals i.e. when an employee undergoes a training program, in a group through mentoring, coaching, etc., then organisational and inter-organisational (Senge, 2006). According to Senge (1990), learning occurs when employees do, reflect, connect, and

decide which is almost similar to Kolb's, 1984 process of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. The developing of human resources depends on understanding the elements that contribute to organisational learning and knowledge transfer in the workplace (Holton and Swanson, 2011). According to Slater and Narver (1995), organisational learning is a intricate process that involves the acquirement of new knowledge and can influence behaviour.

Moving towards the behavioural aspect of learning, emotional management or intelligence is crucial which is defined as "a set of four emotional skills including accurately perceiving emotions, integrating emotions with cognition, understanding emotional causes and consequences, and managing emotions for personal adjustment" (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Lopes and Mayer, 2004; Schneider et al., 2013). Employees with high emotional abilities can effectively perform tasks and become more capable to adapt new changes in the organisation (Lam and Kirby, 2002). Employees become more adaptive, and proactive in their problem-solving, and find flexible solutions to present and future issues if the organisation provides training to their workforce (Muduli, 2017). Further, it was highlighted by Menon and Suresh (2020) and Li et al. (2006) that organisations use management practices like training and development, rewards, employee empowerment, building EI, etc. which help them to foster the agility of the employees. Armstrong and Foley (2003) came out with a multidimensional definition of organisational learning in which they outlined the various mechanisms involved such as providing a facilitative learning environment, understanding learning identification from work unit perspective or supervisory perspective. According to Mishra and Upadhyay (2021) using innovative organisational learning strategies can strengthen the organisation culture and working environment, leading to improvement in performance. Similarly, Celemin-Pedroche et al. (2020) findings suggest that learning is regarded as an essential component for enhancing organisational effectiveness. Having high EI employees means that they are capable of accepting and adapting to the organisational change Vakola et al. (2004). The present study concentrates on investigating the impact of individual aspect of employees that is EI and organisational aspect that is OLT towards building an agile workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workforce Agility and Organisational Learning & Training

Tessarini and Saltorato (2021) state that WA is an employee's aptitude to acclimatize to sudden changes in unpredictable work situations through proactive and adaptive behaviours and his KSAs.

Griffin and Hesketh (2003) use the theory of work adjustment to divide adaptable behaviour into three categories: proactive, reactive, and tolerant behaviour. Many authors have identified a variety of characteristics of the agile workforce in their studies. According to Dyer and Shafer (2003); Alavi et al. (2014) achieving WA needs different forms of employee behaviour namely proactive, adaptable, flexible, resilient, generative, etc. These characteristics aid in determining the level of an agile workforce. Almost similar framework was provided by Qin and Nembhard (2015). Several other dimensions of workforce agility are collaboration, speed, flexibility, competency, development, and resilience which help to boost agility among employees (Muduli, 2016; Muduli, 2017; Tirkey and Sharma 2021; Iravani and Krishnamurthy, 2007).

Learning is often regarded as being essential to gaining a competitive advantage (Garratt, 1987). People are more open and inventive in chasing new ideas in a learning environment provided by the organisation (Muduli, 2017). Many organisational practices such as OLT, teamwork, involvement, compensation, etc. help to encourage the agility of the workforce and reveal that organisational learning is an important management practice to foster adaptability among employees (Muduli, 2016). Workforce agility is positively and significantly affected by organisational learning (Alavi et al., 2014). Similarly, Edeh et al. (2023) suggested that as organisational learning improves, so does human resource skill adaptation to the new work culture. The organisational learning aimed to modify people's attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of their behavioural regulation in order to shift responses from negative to positive (Taran, 2019).

Researchers suggest that one of the most important tools for improving organisational learning capability is training and development (Gomez et al., 2005; Lau et al., 2018). Training is also said to contribute towards the advancement of organisational learning capacities (Aragon, 2014). Training and development may create an

organisational culture that inspires people to learn new skills and use them in their organisation (Gomez et al., 2005; Nevis et al., 2009). Training makes the employees adaptive, and proactive in their problem-solving, and find flexible solutions to present and future issues (Muduli, 2017; Sadati et al., 2019). Hypothesis so formulated is:

H1: There is a significant relationship between OLT and WA.

Emotional Intelligence and Workforce Agility

Huy (1999) looked into how EI played an important part in the learning phase of organisational change process. The model demonstrates that EI has become a highly significant aspect of dealing with dynamicity, and thus becomes a crucial factor in determining the success or failure of organisational change projects. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), being empathetic and voicing one's own emotions, recognizing emotions in others, controlling, and using moods and emotions to encourage adaptive behaviour are all traits of people who have mastered their skills of EI. Emotional balance is essential to everyone's success, which also contributes to the organisation's success. Emotionally intelligent people are better at finding adaptive solutions to problems when they tackle life's challenges (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). They asserted that individuals who have high EI are better able to adjust to changes in an organisation and fit in with organisational events. EI facilitates people's creativity, eases flexible programming, improves decision-making, and helps individuals complete difficult and unpredictable tasks. In another study, Yao et al. (2009) showed how EI can help employees maintain their composure in stressful circumstances and adjust to shifting organisational environments. Employees with high emotional abilities can effectively perform tasks and become more capable to adapt new changes in the organisation (Lam and Kirby, 2002). Besharat (2005), indicated that people with EI are optimistic and joyful which enables them to focus on solutions rather than blaming the cause of failures. According to Soni et al. (2023), EI improves coping flexibility and mental health. Another research revealed that the factors of EI have a positive impact on the agility of the workforce (Varshney and Varshney, 2020; Hosein and Yousef, 2012; Soliman et al., 2023). Moreover, increasing self-awareness and providing learning initiatives to the workforce helps to strengthen agility and resilience (Taran 2019; Sharma and Tiwari, 2023). Hypothesis so formulated is as follows;

H2: There is a significant association between EI and WA.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collected through cross-sectional survey from the respondents using a questionnaire. The information was gathered from the bank employees in India. A total of 400 employees were approached through online as well as offline mode and 280 responses were collected, showing a 70 per cent response rate. Out of 280 responses, 27 responses were eliminated the erroneous and straight-lining responses.

A. Scale

For WA 18 items were altered from Alavi et al. (2014). This scale was initially created by Sherehiy (2008). EFA with Varimax rotation was employed in this work to examine the factors of WA. Out of the eighteen items, three factors were explored namely; adaptability (Alpha 0.9), resilience (Alpha 0.88), and proactivity (Alpha 0.82). Every component comprises six items. A few of the items include "I can quickly adapt to switch from one project to another" (Adaptability); "When a different situation occurs, I react by trying to manage the problem" (Resilience); "I look for the opportunities to make improvement at work" (Proactivity). All of the components' high alpha values indicate the questionnaire's great reliability. CFA was used in this study to validate this scale.

To measure OLT, a total of 29 items were modified and adapted from Armstrong and Foley (2003) and Alavi et al. (2014).

The 16-item measure of EI scale was adopted from Wong and Law (2002). There were 62.45% male and 37.55% female participants overall.

According to (Hair et al., 2022), PLS-SEM is the most suitable technique when the study examines a theoretical model from a prediction perspective. Moreover it can be used with a small sample size, as it offers better flexibility in complex modeling (Ringle et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2020).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. First-order Measurement Model

Most outer loadings for all construct indicators were over 0.70 to indicating sufficient indicator reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2017). However, some indicators were kept with

lower loading because the construct had reached the AVE criterion of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022). According to the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019, 2022) the measurement model assessments of first-order constructs were examined.

In order, to establish reliability, Cronbach's alpha, rho A, and composite reliability were determined to be within the acceptable limit of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). All of the

constructs' AVE values were reported to be high above the acceptable threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022), establishing convergent validity.

TABLE 1. MEASUREMENT MODEL FOR FIRST-ORDER

Construct	Dimensions	Coding	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (rho_A)	CR (rho_C)	AVE
Organisational Learning & Training	Empowered & Progressive Learning & Training Environment	E6	0.887	0.883	0.895	0.911	0.56
		E7	0.80				
		E8	0.639				
		E9	0.661				
		E10	0.686				
		E11	0.811				
		E12	0.881				
	Training Satisfaction	T19	0.898	0.89	0.901	0.918	0.654
		T20	0.875				
		T21	0.690				
		T22	0.655				
		T23	0.852				
		T24	0.847				
	Knowledge Sharing	K13	0.883	0.881	0.89	0.911	0.632
		K14	0.773				
		K15	0.690				
		K16	0.691				
		K17	0.830				
		K18	0.878				
	Learning Identification Satisfaction	L25	0.899	0.892	0.898	0.921	0.702
		L26	0.805				
		L27	0.743				
		L28	0.828				
		L29	0.905				
	Mission-linked learning and commitment to learning	M1	0.915	0.857	0.88	0.899	0.644
		M2	0.752				
		M3	0.614				
		M4	0.838				
		M5	0.861				
Emotional Intelligence	Use of emotion	UE9	0.846	0.892	0.893	0.925	0.756
		UE10	0.832				
		UE11	0.893				
		UE12	0.905				
	Regulation of emotion	RE13	0.844	0.896	0.901	0.928	0.763
		RE14	0.906				
		RE15	0.833				
		RE16	0.908				
	Other's emotion appraisal	OE5	0.844	0.889	0.892	0.923	0.751
		OE6	0.878				
		OE7	0.866				

		OE8	0.879				
	Self-emotion appraisal	SE1	0.814	0.878	0.882	0.917	0.734
		SE2	0.892				
		SE13	0.896				
		SE4	0.820				
Workforce Agility	Adaptability	A1	0.790	0.898	0.904	0.922	0.664
		A2	0.779				
		A3	0.760				
		A4	0.717				
		A5	0.859				
		A6	0.889				
	Resilience	R13	0.876	0.861	0.866	0.897	0.593
		R14	0.712				
		R15	0.645				
		R16	0.794				
		R17	0.808				
		R18	0.811				
	Proactivity	P7	0.812	0.830	0.844	0.876	0.543
		P8	0.842				
		P9	0.76				
		P10	0.63				
		P11	0.768				
		P12	0.876				

Source: Software's Calculation

TABLE 2. HTMT RATIO FOR FIRST-ORDER

Discriminant validity of first-order constructs is shown in Table 2, all constructs' HTMT ratios were below the maximum limit of 0.85 (Hair et al., 2022).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1) SE												
2) OE	0.475											
3) UE	0.47	0.473										
4) RE	0.498	0.482	0.493									
5) M	0.158	0.202	0.243	0.3								
6) E	0.253	0.234	0.183	0.232	0.402							
7) K	0.233	0.325	0.226	0.188	0.534	0.507						
8) T	0.357	0.263	0.162	0.225	0.451	0.348	0.548					
9) L	0.204	0.286	0.188	0.3	0.603	0.44	0.58	0.63				
10) A	0.421	0.408	0.396	0.342	0.179	0.17	0.23	0.214	0.157			
11) P	0.316	0.34	0.167	0.256	0.123	0.193	0.221	0.172	0.196	0.457		
12) R	0.39	0.455	0.397	0.42	0.236	0.244	0.318	0.234	0.258	0.58	0.465	

Note: E- Empowered & Progressive Learning & Training Environment, T- Training Satisfaction, K- Knowledge Sharing, L- Learning Identification Satisfaction, M- Mission-linked Learning and Commitment to Learning, UE- Use of Emotion, RE- Regulation of Emotion, OE- Other's Emotion Appraisal, SE- Self-Emotion Appraisal, A- Adaptability, R- Resilience, P- Proactivity.

Source: Software's Calculation

B. Second Order Measurement Model

The reflective-reflective construct was used in this research to analyse second order constructs. As can be seen in Table 3, all construct indicators had outer VIF values that were substantially below the threshold of 3. So there is no multi-collinearity. The measurement model, reliability, convergent, and discriminant validities must be confirmed (Hair et al. 2019). Further, disjoint two-stage technique was used to measure these constructs (Agarwal and Karahanna, 2000; Becker et al., 2012). The higher-order construct was evaluated using the average lower-order construct scores in accordance with the two-step technique (Sarstedt et al., 2019)

TABLE 3 MEASUREMENT MODEL ASSESSMENT FOR SECOND ORDER

Construct	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (rho_A)	CR (rho_C)	AVE	VIF
Organisational Learning & Training		0.751	0.754	0.842	0.572	
E	0.665					1.3
T	0.738					1.6
K	0.813					1.7
L	0.798					1.9
M	0.713					1.5
Emotional Intelligence		0.802	0.813	0.863	0.559	
UE	0.736					1.4
RE	0.757					1.5
OE	0.773					1.4
SE	0.758					1.4
Workforce Agility		0.703	0.723	0.833	0.626	
A	0.828					1.5
R	8.44					1.4
P	0.692					1.3
HTMT Ratio for Second Order						
		1	2	3		
1 Emotional Intelligence						
2 Organisational Learning & Training		0.484				
3 Workforce Agility		0.731	0.414			

Source: Software's Calculation

According to Hair et al. (2022), a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable. Table 3 indicates that the composite reliability (CR) and values are higher than the suggested cutoff point (Hair et al., 2022). Next, HTMT of all constructs is shown in Table 3, which is less than the threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015).

C. Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was examined as the measurement model was appropriately evaluated. OLT, emotional intelligence, and workforce agility were evaluated as higher-order reflective constructs.

The structural model findings for hypotheses testing as well as the model's explanatory and predictive power. The VIF inner values were less than the threshold of 3.33 diagnosing the collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2022). According to Saari et al. (2021), the size and importance of the path coefficients in the structural model were tabulated. A statistical significance level of 0.05 was met by all path coefficients (Table 4). OLT and EI were discovered to be the important predictors of WA. The

results highlight that both predictors are capable of explaining 31.2% of variance in workforce agility. The effect size of OLT was .021 indicative of small effect size and for EI it was 0.307 indicative of moderate effect size. The goodness of fit index i.e. the SRMR value was discovered to be 0.075 which meets the threshold criterion (Hair et al., 2022).

TABLE 4 STRUCTURAL MODEL ANALYSIS (TESTING OF HYPOTHESES)

	<i>Structural Coefficient (Beta)</i>	<i>Standard deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T statistics</i>	<i>P values</i>	<i>F Square</i>	<i>Hypotheses Results</i>
EI → WA	0.496	0.062	7.994	0	0.307	Supported
OLT → WA	0.131	0.055	2.382	0.017	0.021	Supported

Source: Software's Calculation

1. Predictive Relevance

According to academic research, a model's predictive relevance shows how well it can anticipate new interpretable observations with accuracy (Shumeli et al., 2016). As recommended by Shmueli et al. (2019), the predictive ability of the model was evaluated by cross-validation with holdout samples. Firstly, Q^2 was evaluated, which is found to be greater than the stated threshold of zero (0.281), indicating that the model had

enough predictive ability. Secondly, the regression model (LM) technique, which produces predictions by regressing all independent constructs on each dependent indicator. According to Hair et al. (2019), all root mean squared error (RMSE) PLS values for service sector workers have been demonstrated to be less than (RMSE) LM benchmarks, demonstrating significant predictive power for workforce agility as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5 PLS PREDICT RESULTS

<i>Construct Predictive Summary</i>			<i>Q² predict</i>		
<i>WA</i>			0.281		
<i>Construct Predictive Summary</i>			<i>PLS</i>	<i>LM</i>	
	<i>Items</i>	<i>Q² predict</i>	<i>RMSE</i>	<i>RMSE</i>	<i>ΔRMSE</i>
	A	0.202	0.896	0.918	0.022
	P	0.093	0.956	0.974	0.018
	R	0.238	0.877	0.903	0.026

Source: Software's Calculation

DISCUSSIONS

The new approach to handling an unpredictable business environment is agility. In order, to survive in a aggressive and dynamic environment organisations require an agile workforce so that the response is quick and reliable. There are hardly any empirical studies on workforce agility's enablers (Sherehiy et al., 2007). Furthermore, Sumukadas and Sawhney (2004), indicated that the research on organisational practices that can foster WA is mostly comprised of unproven guidelines. The relevance of organisational practices, such as OLT, in fostering WA is supported by empirical data in this research. Our finding confirms the assumptions made apparent in the literature and emphasises the possibility that organisational practices may help to promote WA

(Muduli et al., 2016). This finding demonstrates how crucial it is for managers looking to foster WA to make use of organisational practices like OLT and implement them effectively so that the organisation can react quickly to a unstable, uncertain and complex business environment. Organisational learning is discovered to be strongly associated with WA, which is supported by empirical findings (Latukismo et al., 2023). The agility of the workforce is promoted by OLT. The study's findings confirmed earlier research of Alavi et al. 2014, demonstrating how an organisational climate that fosters skill development can improve a workforce's capacity to be employed as and when needed. According to the report, an organisation's learning & training environment fosters a culture of knowledge to support the growth of an adaptable workforce. According to empirical evidence (Hosein and Yousefi, 2012; Varshney and Varshney, 2020), EI has a strong relationship to WA.

A. Implications

First, from the standpoint of management implications, the study findings advise business managers to support an appropriate OLT climate in their business that can support agile behaviour. In order to create policies and behaviours that support agility, leaders must first understand the crucial role that OLT play in this process. Organisational leaders must therefore consider how current practices impact learning. Organisations must have an effective feedback system to help managers understand practices that impede WA. While highlighting the fact that not every situation necessitates the same degree of agility as others and that not every approach is appropriate in every setting, organisations should educate employees about various tools and techniques that can assist in their ability to perform in an agile manner. It is the responsibility of the employee to make sure that the procedures they employ are appropriate for the situation. Finally, WA is influenced by how managers support areas such as the use newest technologies to improve accessibility to data. Business owners should therefore make investments in innovative technology that helps staff members accomplish their duties and stay informed of industry developments.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this study, businesses may foster their employee's agility by teaching them to be more flexible, quick to adjust to changes, responsive to the requirements of their customers, and more competitive. By offering a training and learning environment, they can increase agility. The new business buzzword is agility. This study assists HR in implementing policies and procedures that encourage employee adaptable behaviour, allowing the organisation to cope with a turbulent business climate. The ongoing digitalization of the business world, which necessitates that firms constantly adapt to a changing environment, makes this topic particularly significant.

A. Limitations and Future Research Directions

First of all, this study was only conducted in Indian perspective. The effectiveness of organisational practices including learning and training, reward systems, involvement, teamwork, and information systems may differ from one region to another. To make the results more broadly applicable, we think that the size of the sample and the number of nations should be increased. This research only includes employees from the service industry. Future studies could be carried out

in other countries and sectors. To strengthen the reliability of the results, the interview method can be adopted. Future research studies can be undertaken longitudinally, allowing managers to determine whether the training or learning culture they provide is indeed beneficial to employees or not.

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