

Linkage between Supply Chain Operation Reference model and Learning Style Diversity- an Empirical Study in Indian Logistics Industry

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Abstract—Due to intense competition and dynamism in the environment the concept of psychological diversity has attracted the attention of many researchers. Earlier, the concept of surface level diversity has gained the attraction of many researchers but now slowly and gradually psychological diversity i.e. learning style diversity has gained attention. Based on the available literature, it is implied that learning style of the individual influences the different stages of the team learning process. It has been analyzed that due to advancement in technology and transformation in logistics industry, diversity at workplace has become a key priority for the logistics and supply chain management industry. People from diverse background such as driver, planners, warehouse operators etc. are performing the job. It has been analyzed that logistic companies manage relation globally and so the level of diversity is very high in logistic industry. According to available literature, the relationship between learning diversity and the different stages of the learning process was examined and authors were interested to explore the relationship between different variables. To collect the data mix method has been used i.e. both qualitative and quantitative method is adopted and under this questionnaire method has been adopted by the researcher. To conduct the study 377 respondents working in 36 teams in 16 organizations as middle level managers in an Indian logistic industry have been considered and also the interview of 36 team leaders has been taken to study the phenomena in detail. The data is analyzed by the correlation method and codifying the interview. Finding of the research suggested that some of the team learning stages is influenced by the learning style of the individual and due considerations should be taken during the forming stage of the team.

The study is being conducted to explore the role of learning style diversity in logistic companies and how it is influencing the different stages of supply chain operation reference model which is referred as team learning process in current study. The logistic companies are taking various strategic initiatives to address surface level diversity; company should also focus on deep level or psychological diversity. The current study will be highly beneficial for the logistic industry to understand the implication of psychological aspect Current study has only considered the middle level

managers working so future studies can be conducted by considering the other aspects of logistic industry.

Keywords: Learning style diversity, Team learning process, team performance.

1. Introduction

Teams are considered as a building block for any organization. Team based structures has become a phenomena in most of the organizations and most of the organizations are adopting team based structures to perform the key activities of the organization. Many scholars believed that to accommodate according to dynamic and competitive environment team –based structures are more favorable as compared to individual working alone. To survive and to retain position in the competitive world, it has been observed that organizations work as a system which interacts with both inside and outside world. The success of any team in constantly changing and dynamic worlds is dependent upon its ability to continuously learn. It is considered that presence of team will provide stronger stimuli for the need of consciousness in maintaining quality, flexibility and innovation [1] [24] because it provides platform to the team members for generating creativity and problem-solving competences among them.

In today's context, most of the organizations are dependent upon their teams for strategy development, service delivery, product designing and manufacturing and other critical and operational tasks which influence the organizational performance. It is implied that, an organizations learning ability will depend on the capability of the team to learn [30] [7] and thus improving their outcomes by generating better insights and knowledge [8]. Organizations consider team as fundamental building blocks and strategies are developed on the basis of their assumption that, to yield effective outcomes diverse information, background and values will be gathered by the team [14]. It has been observed that work performed by individual as a team, will help to stimulate the collective bargaining [6] [18] [19] [30]. Experience and complementary skills brought together by team will always exceed that of individual working alone

[18]. However, it has been observed by many organizations that teams have certain liabilities and can stifle because of intense discussion, which in turn, influence the overall team performance. So, the study of process of team learning and diversity in learning style becomes imperative to understand in Indian context.

In the management literature in Since the 1990s, the theme of group learning has evolved as a research topic and further in 2000s the research has been expanded in different forms and volumes. Perhaps, this term has been coined first by Peter Senge [30] in his book: *The art and practice of the learning organization*. Senge has demonstrated in his definition that team has reflected that team performs the critical task that of the individual. Senge's notion has been later elaborated and expanded by many researchers of organizational behavior, that teams are fundamental building blocks of any organization. Most of the industries in India are following the team based structure and the one among them is the logistic industry. Logistic industry is considered as backbone of the economy as the efficiency of other commercial sectors also depends on the efficiency of the logistic companies. The growth of logistic industry in India is evolving rapidly and it is the integration of technology, infrastructure and other service provider. Due to growth in e-commerce, retail and manufacturing sectors. In the past few years the logistic industry in India has witnessed the exponential growth. The growth in the logistic industry is phenomenal in nature and its contribution in our country's total GDP is around 14%, by the year 2020 it is expected that logistic industry will move to staggering \$ 301.89 billion and will be considered as a backbone to the country. In the recent years due to the advancement in the trade options and increase in the investment the requirement for the logistic industry is increasing tremendously and which is in turn providing more opportunities for the service providers. More investment is coming in this industry as it is still in the developing stages. So, this has increased the curiosity of the authors to understand the role of team learning in logistic industry. Due to changing competitive scenario and globalization, diverse workforce i.e. demographically and psychologically has become a need for an organization. Additionally, logistic industry is considered as knowledge based industry and so it requires workforce having diversified learning orientation and perspective. In logistic industry supply chain management plays an important role and it is one of the determining factors for the success and survival for the organization [32].

According to the study conducted by Forbes 2015 "workforce diversity and inclusion are considered as a key driver of internal innovation and business growth". In the year 2015 Forbes has also added "that to adapt in fast changing environment and an organization's capability to innovate, Diversity is considered as a

critical issue for the growth and prosperity of any company such as: diversity of perspectives, experiences, cultures, genders, and age". Team members when working together bring diverse form of information, expert solution to the problem and creativity into the process but in addition managers and teams encounter many problems while they perform the various tasks. Harvard Business Review answer exchange, 2010 have concluded in their report that the team encountered many challenges while they perform various functions such as difficulty in making decisions, lack of creativity, lack of lateral thinking, team conflicts, lack of participation, absence of team identity and ineffective leadership. Creativity, lateral thinking, decision making, and participation these issues can be resolved by addressing the psychological attribute of the team members. At the workplace the meaning of diversity is not only related to the attributes which are easily visible or observable but also includes the unobservable characteristic such differences in educational background, problem solving ability, comprehension, creativity and learning styles. Many logistic companies have realized the importance of diversity beyond surface level. As discussed by a Mr Kumar Bagrodia, CEO, LeapVault, said, "An organization's capability to unlearn and learn will not only be a key differentiator but will also be a source of competitive advantage in terms of its ability to attract and retain talent, customers and investors". In the current study the psychological diversity among the team members has been taken into consideration. Because of this fact, many logistic companies are focusing on the various diversity initiatives. Behaviors which are diversified in term of learning will surely leads to the generation of different perspective and viewpoints, which will in turn contribute to increase the level of flexibility, innovation and creativity within organization. Many companies have adopted the various strategies to address the issues related to surface-level diversity, but very few companies are focusing on deep-level diversity. Many studies have suggested researchers to pay attention towards different types of diversity that has been considered, as the result of different character of diversity is different along the team performance [11].

Almost all the logistic companies are following the team based structure to perform their crucial and operational activities and to accomplish the work most of the companies are adopting SCOR model to accomplish the work. In this study, SCORM adopted by logistics companies was reported as a process of learning in a team or group. Therefore, role in team learning process and role of diversity of style learning in the different stages of the group learning process were examined. Therefore, the main concern of this study is to understand how the different stages of people's learning refer to the different stages of the group learning process. Main purpose of the

paper is to understand how diversity of learning among course members influences the group learning process i.e. SCORM in context of logistic companies.

1.1 Research Problem: Many researchers have performed the research in the field of surface level diversity. In the review of literature, it has been analyzed that very few works have concentrated on the deep-level diversity and its linkage with the team carrying out different activities. There are many surveys which have considered both visible and psychological level attributes linked with the behavior of the team [12] and performance of the team [17] [18], but less focused has been done in the area of different aspects of deep level diversity. Through this study the linkage between different style of learning and team learning process has been explored and the linkage is understood. .

1.2 Problem Description: Deep level diverse team's significance is obvious for team learning process but how much diversity is important for different stages of team learning process so that an understanding and exploring on the proper team forming may be done. Therefore, the role of diversity learning in group performance should be studied and focused to understand and explore the relationship between diversity in learning style and the different stages of the group learning process to fully understand the group performance cycle.

1.3 Contribution: By extending the application of experiential theory of [20] that explain its applicability in the area of designing training program and improving teaching learning process, the findings put forth its applicability during the forming stage of the team building and its application in different stages of team learning process. According to the finding of the study the forming stage of the team development is a crucial component in determining team performance. In line with the previous researches the results of this study have also reflected the positive linkage between learning style diversity [20] and team performance.

Based on the above discussion, this study has evolved the concept of Person-Group fit. The study is based on the premise that Person-Organization theories might have gaps without the understanding of Person-Group theory. Such theories are at nascent stage and have explored yet only the some phases of group dynamics. As organization usually verify the individual's profile fitness in terms of diversity during team formation process. Similarly during the forming stage of the team building, the organization should focus on psychological characteristics of the individual rather than only emphasizing on surface characteristics of the individual

2. Review of Literature

Much attention has been given by the researcher to understand that in what way knowledge and insights

are created by the team as compared to the knowledge created by member of the team at the individual level [29] has presented the view that in the present context organizations are facing diverse challenges due to presence of diversity in the workplace and many changes are coming due to raising expectation of customer and demographic factors due to changed policy, globalization and intense competition. Researchers must be done to manage the things in strategic way.

Most of the organizations are dependent on the team to perform and accomplish the goal through different performance of the task [11]. Recent researches on the knowledge emerging on the concept of team have shown that if the employees with diverse perspectives interact with each other in a team due to team restructuring within the members of the team and which in turn give rise to new insights. [3] has raised the issue that diversity at workplace is a strategic and most discussed phenomena in most of the organizations in present scenario. It furthermore added that the awareness among HR managers should be increased regarding the phenomena and they should be trained in handling and managing the diversity at work place.

According to [26], emphasized on managing the workforce diversity in case of mergers and acquisition. In the year [2] has emphasized that diverse workforce is an asset to any organization and it become very crucial to handle the diversity as influence the decision making and problem solving skills of the organization. It also influences the idea generation capability of the organization which provides competitive advantage to the organization. As per the [15] have raised the issue that workforce diversity cannot be merely treated as one of the option for generating economic benefit infect company should focus on understanding increasing the diversity at workplace. According to the literature available on diversity have shown the intense argument and discourse around the advantages and disadvantages of diversity on the performance of team and organization. Many researches in the expansion of diversity have yielded that there are mixed impact of diversity of team on functioning of the group [12], [11] [12]. There are certain positive effects such as the idea-creation, innovation, increase in group member, perceived group performance [16] and certain negative effect such as conflict, problems in communication, decrease in job satisfaction and commitment [15]. According [31] the perception and awareness of the people towards workforce diversity should be increased and also the initiatives should be initiated by the companies to address this diversity. Additionally, India has been considered as the social environment of India is quite different from western countries [5].

Based on the earlier research by [20] has shown the findings that there are various factors which influences the learning style are career choice, type of personality, specialization area, present job role and tasks performed by the individual. It has been analyzed that the inclination of the individual towards different learning situation will have influence on the learning outcome, and which in turn will have an impact on team learning process. During team development in the forming stage different types of individual come together and bring diverse learning

preferences with them which is detrimental in shaping the perception of the people and also influences the learning outcome. Experiential learning theory has been considered to understand the diverse concept of exploring, thinking and learning [19] defines "Experiential learning theory (ELT) as a process by which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience". Experiential learning theory (ELT) stated that integration of different dialectics of the learning process has led to the development of sophistication in the learning styles. In the experiential learning cycle the four basic styles of learning i.e. accommodating, converging, assimilating and diverging characterize the different phase (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation). There are numerous studies which have been conducted in the domain of learning behavior [9], communication frequency, and performance of the team [10]. But only few studies have done research in the domain of psychological diversity i.e. diversity in learning style and team learning process.

This has been analyzed that if the organizations have policies and strategies supporting workforce diversity in place it will surely influence the employee and their perception [28] and that the organizations is putting an effort towards diversity leveraging and managing [4]. This actually improves the perception of the employees [22] and in turn will influence the feeling of belongingness towards the organization [23], and thus, employees respond by valuing diversity among their organizations and their customers.

Diverging style and idea creation: Idea creation stage of a team learning process requires the team members to identify the problem, or to create new ideas or an opportunity to exploit. Individuals with diverging style are specialized in looking at their immediate experience and concrete situation from different perspective. Reflective observation (RO) and concrete experience (CE) are the prominent abilities to learning towards the diverging style of learning [22]. There are different set of people which work in the organization setting. Some of them respond better when there is a call of innovative ideas for example in brainstorming session [22]. This type of people generally prefers to work in a setting which is formal in nature, receive the feedback and suggestion with open mind. Hence, it can be assumed that:

Hypothesis 1: Idea creation stage of team learning process has positive linkage with team learning process and with diverging style of learning which is characterized by reflective observation (RO) and concrete experience (CE).

Assimilating style and Planning: Planning stage of a team learning process requires the members to identify and consider all the options and possibilities and to engage in a reflective discussion with other team members according to the demand of the situation. This category of individuals is specialized in understanding the variety of information and organizing them into precise and logical way [21]. In organizational setting

individual having this learning style prefer reading, and thinks thing through before reaching the final decision. We can conclude that:

Hypothesis 2: Planning stage of the team learning process is positively linked to the team learning process and with assimilating style of learning which is characterized by reflective observation (RO) and abstract conceptualization (AC).

Converging style and the decision-making: This stage of the team learning process requires the team members to analyze the available options and selecting the most appropriate option or solution to solve the problem. The prominent abilities of the converging style of learning are abstract conceptualization (AC) and active experimentation (AE) (Kolb, 1999) [21]. These types of individuals are specialized in identifying the practical application for different theories and ideas. They have decision making ability based on finding an appropriate solution to the problem, according to the requirement of the situation (Kolb, 1999) [21]. When people with this learning style work in a team they prefer to go for the feasibility check of nascent idea, identifying practical applicability and simulations. Thus:

Hypothesis 3: Decision making stage of team learning process has positive linkage with converging style of learning which is characterized by abstract conceptualization (AC) and active experimentation (AE).

Accommodating style and implementation: This stage of the team learning process will deal with the implementation of the final solution selected for the existing problem or situation. The accommodating style's dominant learning abilities are active experimentation (AE) and concrete experience (CE) [21]. These types of individual have the potential to learn from their own experience faced by them [21]. They love facing the challenges and also testing the implementation of plans and ideas in new and uncertain situation. In out of the organizational setting this type of individual looks for other to support them and work with them and identifying different ways to complete the task.

Thus, it can be assumed that:

Hypothesis 4: Implementation stage of team learning process have positive linkage with accommodating style of learning which is characterized by active experimentation (AE) and concrete experience (CE).

3.2 Sample Size: Mixed method is approach is used in the paper to conduct the study i.e. both qualitative and quantitative method has been used. Sample size of 377 employees working in logistic companies at middle level manager has been considered to collect the data. For the

interview 36 team leaders is considered. Data was collected from 377 different employees working in 36 teams and total 16 organizations were considered.

4. Data analysis & Interpretation

This hypothesis has been tested by conducting the correlation analysis. This hypothesis is dealing with first stage of the team learning process i.e. idea-generation and analyzing its relation with learning style i.e. diverging style characterized by learning modes. Result of the study indicated no significant relationship between idea creation and concrete experience and reflective observation.

Table 1. Result of correlation analysis between idea generation and diverging style

Idea Creation	N	R	Result
CE	377	-0.083	NS
RO	377	-0.075	NS

Inference:

Idea creation is non-significantly negatively correlated with concrete experience (CE) and reflective observation (RO).

Hypothesis 2: Planning stage of team learning process is positively associated with assimilating style, characterized by reflective observation (RO) and abstract conceptualization (AC).

This hypothesis has been tested by conducting the correlation analysis. This hypothesis is dealing with second stage of the team learning process i.e. planning and analyzing its relation with learning style i.e. assimilating style characterized by learning modes. To conduct this analysis reflective observation (RO) and abstract conceptualization (AC) learning modes has been taken into consideration. The results indicated positive relationship among planning and reflective observation while no significant linkage between planning and concrete experience as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Result of correlation analysis between planning and assimilating style

Planning	N	R	Result
CE	377	-0.129	**
RO	377	0.157	**

Inference:

Planning is significantly positively correlated with reflective observation and negatively significantly

correlated with concrete experience.

Hypothesis 3: Decision-making stage of team learning process has positive linkage with converging style, characterized by abstract conceptualization (AC) and active experimentation (AE).

This hypothesis has been tested by conducting the correlation analysis. This hypothesis is dealing with third stage of the team learning process i.e. decision making and analyzing its relation with learning style i.e. diverging style characterized by learning modes. To conduct this analysis abstract conceptualization (AC) and active experimentation (AE) learning modes has been taken into consideration. The results reveal that decision making is significantly related abstract conceptualization (AC) and none significantly related to active experimentation.

Table 3. Result of correlation analysis between decision making and converging

Decision Making	N	R	Result
AC	377	0.086	*
AE	377	0.084	NS

Inference:

Decision making is significantly positively correlated with abstract conceptualization (AC) and non-significantly positively related with active experimentation (AE).

Hypothesis 4: Implementation stage of team learning process is positively associated with accommodating style, characterized by active experimentation (AE) and concrete experience (CE).

This hypothesis has been tested by conducting the correlation analysis. This hypothesis is dealing with fourth stage of the team learning process i.e. implementation stage and analyzing its relation with learning style i.e. accommodating style characterized by learning modes. To conduct this analysis active experimentation and concrete experience (CE) learning modes has been taken into consideration. The results reveal that there is significantly relation between implementation and active experimentation while it has non significant relation with concrete experience.

Table 4. Result of correlation analysis between implementation and converging

Implementatio n	N	R	Result
AE	377	0.135	**
CE	377	-0.077	NS

Inference:

Implementation is significantly positively correlated with active experimentation and negatively non-significantly correlated with concrete experience.

In addition apart from analyzing the relationship between different stages of team learning and learning style diversity individually, table 5 is representing the combined values of learning style diversity and team learning process.

Table 5. Combined summary

	Idea Creation	Planning	Decision Making	Implementation	Team Learning Process
AC	0.093 *	0.157 **	0.086 *	0.081 ^{NS}	0.157 **
CE	-0.083 ^{NS}	-0.179 ***	-0.013 ^{NS}	-0.077 ^{NS}	-0.137 **
AE	0.077 ^{NS}	0.179 ***	0.084 ^{NS}	0.135 **	0.182 ***
RO	-0.075 ^{NS}	-0.129 **	-0.148 **	-0.122 **	-0.176 ***
LSD	0.131 **	0.257 ***	0.134 **	0.167 ***	0.262 ***

Q1. Does your team undergo the various phases such as idea creation, planning, decision-making and implementation?

Table 6. Team learning process

Responses	Percentage	No of responses	Respondents
No, due to deadlines and pressure.	20%	7	(R4, R9, R20, R25, R27, R32, R34)
SDLC-Water fall model	80%	28	(R5,R6,R7,R8,R10,R11,R12,R13, R14, R15,R16,R17,R18,R19,R21,R22, R23,R24,R26,R28,R29,R30,R31, R33,R35).

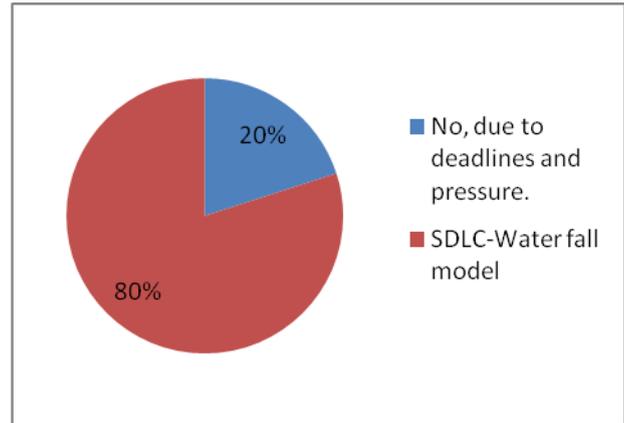


Figure 1. Coded responses of team learning process Q2. Do you think that the different stages of team learning process (referred as SCORM in logistic companies) influence the learning style of the team members and if yes, then how?

Table 7. Different Stages of team learning process

Responses	Percentage	No of responses	Respondents
Yes, planning stage- Creative person more active. Organized person- Active in implementation and decision making	27%	10	(R6, R8, R9, R25, R28, R29, R31, R32, R33, R35)
Yes, some believe on new idea some on past trends. Different stages – different behavior	32%	12	(R2, R3, R7, R10, R11, R12, R13, R18, R19, R21, R23, R30)
No, not analyzed	14%	5	(R1, R5, R7, R17, R26)
Not always follow SCORM. Still observed some are good at initial stage t and some are in middle and at the implementation	27%	10	(R2, R4, R14, R15, R16, R20, R22, R24, R27, R34)

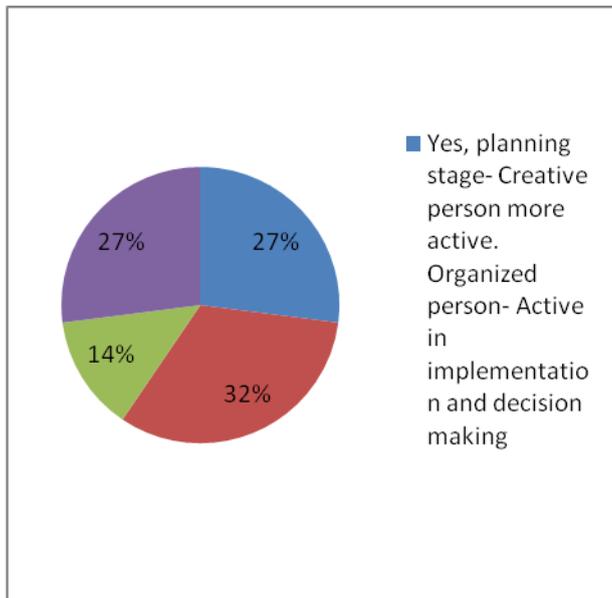


Figure 2. Coded responses different stages of team learning process

5. Finding

The finding of the study indicates the linkage between diversity in learning style and team learning process. Moreover, it also indicates that if the composition of the team is diverse in nature in term of psychological diversity i.e. learning style diversity it positively influences the team learning process. It implies that when team has to take decision or execute task, then the diverse learning behavior of the individual will helps to generate the variety of ideas and views which in turn will help to increase the team performance. In addition diversity in term of learning style will not only generate idea but it will also be beneficial in all the other stages of the team learning process. As logistic industry is adopting the SCORM to accomplish the work which has been referred to as a team learning process in current study. So the importance of team learning process increases in term of the context of task and the type of task being performed by the company. Possibly the result may vary according to industry but there is need of team learning behavior in logistic industry as they are dealing with the fast rate of knowledge development and rapid technological changes. However to improve the quality of the process knowledge sharing and exchanging information is very crucial.

5.1 Findings of Qualitative study: According the response of the team leader, it has shown the positive association between different learning style of the individual and team learning process. This has indicated that if the nature of the team is heterogeneous in context of learning style, it will show a positive impact on team learning process i.e. SCORM and its different stages. According to the interaction between the team members the impact of visible diversity decreases and impact of psychological diversity becomes prominent. There are many managers who believed that different learning

styles are useful in different stages of team learning process and this should be considered during the forming stage of the team. Additionally, manager has responded that if the task is non routine and complex then the role of learning style diversity gets increased.

6. Conclusion

In order to survive and adapt themselves in dynamic environment teams have to continuously learn and it becomes imperative for the organizations to understand what are the various factors affecting team learning and team performance. I believe that the findings of this study will add to the existing literature of psychological diversity. This study will be quite beneficial for the management scholars and organizational psychologist to understand the working of an organizational team. Current study has reflected the relationship between learning style diversity and team learning process. The findings of the study has shown the empirical support for the team learning process and also reflects that how learning oriented behavior among team members influences the healthy team functioning. The finding of the study has shown that idea generation and implementation has a significant contribution in team learning process. This study has also reflected that organizations apart from surface level diversity need to understand the importance of deep level diversity. Findings suggest that learning style diversity play an important role in different stages of team learning process. So, Indian logistic industry should also take initiatives to address the psychological or deep level diversity apart from surface level diversity. The most important managerial and practical implication for this paper is that the finding will help them to understand the different attributes they have to consider while forming stage of team development. Additionally, if the similar study can be conducted in different industry the result may vary. Further, studies can be conducted to explore how team can be formed according to psychological attributes of the people.

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