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# ATINER's Conference Paper Series SME2013-0741

Assessing Organizational Learning Culture in the Context of Business Excellence: A Case Study

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URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm

Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research.

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ISSN **2241-2891** 11/11/2013

# An Introduction to ATINER's Conference Paper Series

ATINER started to publish this conference papers series in 2012. It includes only the papers submitted for publication after they were presented at one of the conferences organized by our Institute every year. The papers published in the series have not been refereed and are published as they were submitted by the author. The series serves two purposes. First, we want to disseminate the information as fast as possible. Second, by doing so, the authors can receive comments useful to revise their papers before they are considered for publication in one of ATINER's books, following our standard procedures of a blind review.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos President Athens Institute for Education and Research This paper should be cited as follows:

Kumar Bandyopadhyay, P. (2013) "Assessing Organizational Learning Culture in the Context of Business Excellence: A Case Study" Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: SME2013-0741.

# Assessing Organizational Learning Culture in the Context of Business Excellence: A Case Study

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#### **Abstract**

Organizational learning culture plays an important role in the successful implementation of business excellence model at the firm level. Although an organization has introduced various improvement initiatives and has implemented collaborative and team playing platforms like Quality Circle and Kaizen, it still may not be having a supportive learning culture. The anecdotal experience of the author as an in-house resource person for implementing the model in a firm and also as an external assessor suggests that the learning culture of an organization plays a great role in effective implementation of the model. This observation is also supported by various authors in the literature, some of which are referred in this paper. Various approaches to measuring learning culture in the existing literature are reviewed in this paper. Proposing that Garvin, Edmondson and Gino's tool gives actionable findings in assessing organizational learning culture, I present an application of this tool in a firm which is in the process of implementing business excellence model for the last three years. I also discuss how the organization has formulated strategic intervention to improve the learning culture in the organization based on a diagnostic assessment that was made through an analysis of the descriptive statistical data captured in the perception survey of various levels of executives.

# **Keywords**:

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# **Introduction and Literature Survey**

Business Excellence

In the absence of a universally accepted definition of Total Quality Management (TQM) and an approach for implementing it, different business excellence models (BEM) have emerged, which are now being considered as a proxy model for TQM. Talwar (2011) has identified 100 BEMs and a National Quality Award Model being practiced in 82 countries. The most well-known recognition for business excellence at an international level is through the Deming Prize, introduced by Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE) in 1951, which is the first globally known excellence model; Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) in the United States established in 1987; and the European Quality Award (known as 'European Excellence Award' since 2004), based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model, established in 1991 (Benavent, 2006). In India, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank) jointly instituted the CII-EXIM Bank Award for Business Excellence in 1994, which is based on EFQM model (CII, 2010). This award has proved to be a catalyst in promoting the business excellence model in India. Initially the lead was taken by multinational companies. Rajpal et al.(2003) have commented:

'In the Indian scenario, it is mainly the MNCs, driven by their global processes that are driving business excellence. The same culture needs to be cultivated by the Indian companies be they large or medium ones.'

It is encouraging to note that many Indian companies including the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are also now showing more interest in business excellence and CII has launched separate Business Excellence Award for SMEs since 2009 (Bandyopadhyay, 2011). As the CII-EXIM Bank model is based on the EFQM model, this model is also described briefly.

Anecdotal experience of the author as an in-house resource person for implementing the model in a firm and also as an external assessor suggests that the learning culture of an organization plays an important role in an effective implementation of the model. This is also supported by various authors in the literature, some of which are referred in this paper.

This paper presents a case study of measuring learning organization culture in an organization in the context of business excellence model adaptation and how it could be of help in diagnosing the cultural impediments and take corrective actions for tapping individual potentials for the benefit of the organization.

### European Quality Award (EFQM Model)

European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) is a non-profit organization established in 1988 by fourteen well-known European companies

(Bosch, Renault, Fiat, BT, Boll, Electrolux, KLM, Nestle, Olivetti, Philips, Solzer, Volkswagen, Razalet, Siba) with a mission to promote performance excellence and to create organizational competitiveness in Europe as well as in European organizations throughout the world (Arash Shahin, 2011). The European Quality Prizes and the European Quality Award (EQA) were launched in 1991 by the EFQM, with the support of the European Organization for Quality (EOQ) and the European Commission. The model is periodically reviewed and most significant changes were introduced to it in 2003 and in 2010. Figure 1 depicts the model.

Results Enablers People **Products & Services** People Results Key Results Leadership Processes, Customer Strategy Results Partnerships & Society Results Resources Learning, Creativity & Innovation Source: EFQM (2010), EFQM Excellence Award, http://www.efqm.org/.

Figure 1. EFQM 2010 Framework

The EFQM model is based on eight fundamental concepts of excellence that are adopted from eight principles of quality management defined in the ISO Standard ISO9001:2008 and Total Quality Management. These are (1) achieving balanced results, (2) adding value for customers, (3) leading with vision, (4) inspiration and integrity, (5) managing by process, (6) succeeding through people, (7) nurturing creativity and innovation, and (8) building partnerships and taking responsibility for a sustainable future.

The EFQM model is grouped into two categories of criteria: enablers and results. Under 'enablers', five criteria are included: leadership; people; strategy; partnerships & resources; and processes, products & services. The category 'results' has four criteria: people results, customer results, society results and key results (EFQM, 2010). In order to make the criteria comprehensible and actionable, each criterion is divided into several subcriteria. There are in total 32 subcriteria.

It is through performing the enabler criteria that the organization achieves results. Thus EFQM model allows managers and leaders to understand the cause–effect relationship between what an organization executes and the results it achieves. Maria Leticia Santos-Vijande and Luis I. Alvarez-Gonzalezet have shown that there exists a positive causal relationship between

the EFQM's enablers and firms' results (Maria Leticia Santos-Vijande et al., 2007). This is also evidenced by the study carried out by Eskildsen, Kristensen, and Juhl through a survey of 750 Danish companies (Eskildsen et.al, 2000). Both the enablers and the results are given equal weightage of 50% each. The total score is 1000. The study carried out by Moeller revealed that the best score obtained in an industrial setting was between 650 and 750 (J Moeller, 2001).

The EQFM model suggests a measurement system known as RADR. It consists of four elements: Results, Approach, Deployment, Assessment and Refinement. The 'results' criteria are scored for scope and relevance, integrity, segmentation, trends, targets, comparison, and causes (whether or not they are caused by approach). The 'enabler' criteria are rated on approach, deployment, assessment, and refinement (EFQM, 2010). The model mentions 'creativity'/ 'innovation' exclusively in sixteen places. Apart from this, the requirement of measuring assessment and refinement across the enabling parameters makes 'learning' an integral part of the EFQM Model®. There are two outputs from the assessment process: (a) score, an indicator of level of success for each criterion and the total where the highest score obtained by any organization in the year of assessment is also indicated and (b) a feedback report, which gives the strengths and opportunity for improvement.

# Learning Organization

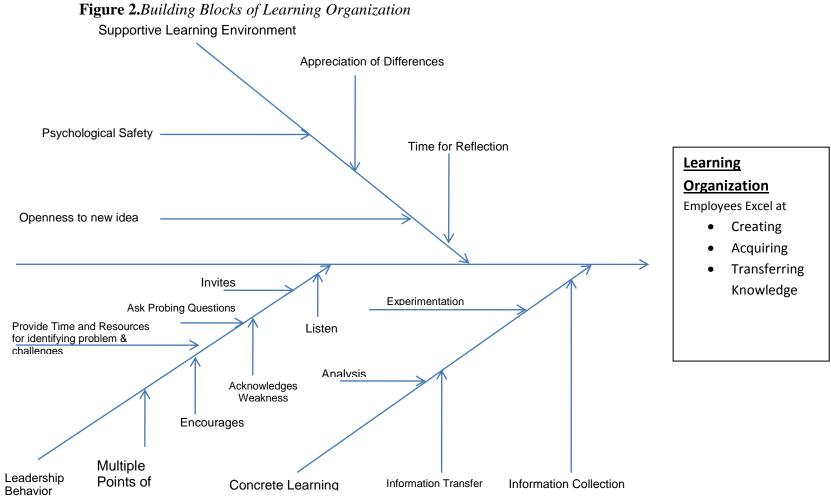
Roche et al. (2002) presented a summary of different definitions of organizational learning and learning organization. The common theme that emerges out of these definitions may be put as: Organizational learning is a process that encourages an individual to learn from his day-to-day activities and interact within a subgroup, leading to adaptation at the organizational level that results in improvement in individual's actions through better knowledge and understanding. Organizational learning may be viewed from six perspectives: psychology, management science, sociology and organization theory, strategic, production management, and cultural (Easterby-Smith, 1997). Organization structure and culture seem to be critical organizational factors affecting learning (Stuart, 1984). Schein identifies existence of three cultures that hinder learning: CEO culture, engineering culture, and the operator culture (Roche, 2002). Past success achieved by previous learning often poses a major hindrance to questioning the existing practice and discovering new, effective solutions (Edmondson & Moingeon et.al, 1996). While numerous papers exist in the literature on learning organization, they offer little guidance on how to put the concept into practice. Considering the vagueness that exists in the concept of learning organization, Ortenbold (2004) presented an integrated model of the learning organization and introduced the concept of learning structure, organizational learning, and learning climate. But Ortenbold's model fails to help derive a measurement model, which aids diagnosis of the existing status of an organization on these three components. There exists a huge gap between practical application and academic work in diagnosing a learning organization (Moilanen, 2001). Moilanen (2001) has analyzed eight different

measurement tools and concluded that it is not clear how a practicing organization will be benefited from the feedback of the diagnosing process. Then he (Moilanen, 2005) presented his learning organization diamond model. The model is applicable at two levels: whole organization and at the level of individual. The model has five focus areas at each level: driving forces, finding the purpose, questioning, empowering and evaluating. The author has shown how the results of the findings on using this tool may be used for interfirm comparison from the learning culture point of view. But the findings are not actionable. Cambel et al. (1994) has emphasized that the concept of learning organization is not enough, understanding the behavior inherent in it is essential to formulate a tool for measuring the learning organization, which will ultimately help an organization to go forward. They have proposed surveybased measurement methods, which were based on 'behaviorally anchored rating scale' (BARS). Farr et al. (ibid.) has opined that BARS is an expensive and complex instrument to put into practice. BARS focuses on the following behaviors only:

- The manner in which information is handled
- The style of communication
- The manner and magnitude in which changes are made
- The approach taken to errors and experimentation in actions and decision making
- The reward and remuneration system.

In addition, eight categories of items are also considered: communication; learning and innovation; strategic thinking and vision; information; decision making; managing change; measurement; reward and recognition. The detailed model is not available and the behaviors are not exhaustive, which the authors have also pointed out.

This gap has been filled by Garvin et al. in their article, "Is Yours a Learning Organization?" (Garvin, 2008). They define learning organization as made up of people skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge so that they could help their organizations cultivate tolerance, foster open discussion, and think holistically and systematically. This will probably address the politics and political behavior, which has been identified by Huber (1991) as the major drawback in establishing a learning organization. Garvin et al. has provided a survey instrument (online) in their paper (Garvin, 2008) for assessing learning culture within an organization. The tool is structured around three building blocks: supportive learning environment; concrete learning processes and practices; and leadership that reinforces learning. Each building block is made up of different constructs. The relationship among the building blocks along with their respective subconstructs and the main theme is depicted in Figure 2. The authors have presented baseline benchmark data, stratified into quartiles. An organization can use this for comparison and reflect on as to how they perform and where they are good and where they need improvement. If the same survey is done periodically, then it will give the organization a picture of how they are performing in each building block or in sub-block over a period of time.



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The most interesting feature of this tool rests with the questions pertaining to each subconstructs/subcomponents. These questions make the related concepts clearer. For example, 'psychological safety' is defined and explained in the paper but the questions pertaining to this component such as "In this unit, it is easy to speak up about what is on your mind" and "If you make a mistake in this unit, it is often held against you" make the concept understandable by all in a uniform way, thus making the data obtained from the survey more reliable.

# Importance of Organizational Learning in Business Excellence

Many authors recognized that building a creative and learning organization is a prerequisite for business excellence (Evans & Lindsay, 1999; Roche, 2002; Bharadwaj, 2003). Business excellence models like EFOM go beyond problem-solving for using creativity and learning. In evaluating enabling parameters, the model demands refinements of different practices of an organization over a period of time.

Jacob et al. (1999) have reported that there exists a strong relationship between the three standardized latent variables: the creative organization, the learning organization, and business excellence based on the result obtained by an empirical study.

Deisesr (2011) has commented:

'Effective corporate learning must extend its traditional professional domain and focus not only on people excellence, but also become a key enabler of organizational and strategic excellence.'

He has stressed that comprehensive learning must address three areas: people excellence, organizational excellence, and strategic excellence. In other words, excellence in all these areas cannot be achieved without a strong learning environment. He has argued that a smart corporate learning architecture needs to provide common spaces that instigate cross-boundary dialogue and ultimately create enabling mechanisms that foster collaboration, trust, and openness, which are important conditions for high-performing networks (ibid).

Therefore, it will be prudent for an organization, intending to work with EFQM business excellence model, to assess periodically to what extent it is working as a learning organization.

# **Case Study**

Company X is a metal industry having an annual turnover of around 40 billion INR. In order to achieve all-pervasive continuous improvement, it has adopted EFQM business excellence model as the umbrella concept under which total productive maintenance (TPM), Six Sigma, Quality Management System, and Environment Management System are functioning. The company has achieved ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certifications and received Excellence in Consistent TPM Commitment Award given by Japan Institute of Plant Maintenance (JIPM). It has also implemented a performance management system. The company takes part in the CII-EXIM Bank Award competition as a means to learn and excel from the assessment feedback, thereby increasing its competitiveness. Business excellence cell has been created comprising Six Sigma, TPM, and excellence model coordinators. The cell acts as a support structure to facilitate the smooth running of all initiatives in a coordinated way to strengthen implementation of business excellence model, which is based on EFQM. Routine continuous improvement is carried out by kaizen teams operating under JH Pillar of TPM. This is also done by corrective and preventive action activities under ISO 9001 and ISO14001 systems. Special strategy-oriented improvement projects are undertaken by Six Sigma. All heads of departments are involved in Six Sigma projects either as a project champion or as a Black Belt. A core team has been formed to carry out the selfassessment for business excellence as per EFOM model. Successfully implementation and execution of different initiatives is a collective responsibility of the top management and it is a part of key performance indicators (KPI) of all managers at all levels. The implementation of EFQM model started with imparting an intensive training program on EFQM Model and 25 executives were trained by consultants who in turn imparted the appreciation program to all the officers and senior operators/staff. Periodic assessment of people and customer satisfaction by third party are being carried out.

# **Motivation for Assessing Learning Culture**

Though the organization's score was improving every year and it had achieved the level of 'strong commitment to excel' it still was not up to the expectation of the management. With respect to the use of creativity and innovation, the following comments were appearing repeatedly in successive assessment feedbacks:

- 1. Improvement initiatives exist in the system but the process of encouraging creativity was not evidenced.
- 2. Evidence of assessment and refinement of various deployment processes were not present.

3. How the organization was learning and taking forward the lessons for further improvement was not evidenced.

Postassessment discussions with the assessors revealed the absence of an ecosystem of learning, creativity, and innovation in the organization.

This was quite a disturbing observation for the management and it decided to go in for some soul-searching activity. In this context, assessing the learning culture of the organization was taken up. Based on the literature survey as mentioned earlier, the online tool provided by Garvin et al. (2008) was used for assessing employees' perception on the learning environment covering the employees whose positions were executives and above.

### Administration of the Survey

All the executives were given the URL: https://surveys.hbs.edu/perseus/se.ashx?s=381B5FE533C282FF:,

On getting the response the survey uses its in-built logic to synthesize the ratings and yields an estimated score for each building block and the subcomponent. Synthesized scores are then converted to a 0-to-100 scale and the ratings are presented against the benchmark – building block-wise and subcomponent-wise for ease of comparison. The individual executives submitted the summary sheet of the output and all the individual sheets were compiled and the average score – organization-wise – have been worked out. For better analysis the results are segmented in two groups: executives up to Senior Manager (Sr. Manager) and Assistant General Manager (AGM) and above. The results are presented in Tables 1 to 6. Firm-specific data is given within brackets:() in the relevant quartile.

**Table 1.** Overall Firm Level Summary

		Building blocks and their subcomponents	Bottom Quartile	Second Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	Top Quartile	
1	Supportive Learning Environment							
	О	Psychological Safety	31–66	67–75 (71.04)	76	77-86	87-100	
	О	Appreciation of differences	14–56	57–63	64	65-79(66.8)	80-100	
	О	Openness to new ideas	38–80	81–89 (78.39)	90	91–95	96–100	
	О	Time for reflection	14–35	36–49	50	51-64 (60.5)	65–100	
	O com	Learning environment posite	31–61	62–70 (68.46)	71	72–79	80–90	
2		Concrete Le	earning Pr	ocess and	Practice	S		
	О	Experimentation	18–53	54–70	71	72–82 (73.65)	83–100	
	О	Information Collection	23–70	71–79	80	81-89 (80.94)	90–100	
	О	Analysis	19–56	57–70	71	72–86 (74.33)	87–100	
	О	Education and Training	26–68	69–79	80	81–89 (85.52)	90–100	

	O Information Transfer	34–60	61–70	71	72–84 (81.23)	85–100	
	O Learning Process Composite	31–62	63–73	74	75–82 (79.22)	83–97	
3	Leadershi	p That Re	inforces Le	earning	•		
	O Composite for this block	33-66	67-75	76	77-82(82.22)	83-100	
	OVERALL LEARNING ORGANIZATION						
	SCORE SUMMARY						
1	Learning environment composite	31–61	62- 70(68.46)	71	72–79	80-90	
2	Learning Process Composite	31–62	63–73	74	75–82(79.22)	83-97	
3	Leadership That Reinforces Learning Composite	33–66	67–75	76	77–82(82.22)	83-100	

**Table 2.** Scores of Executives Up To Sr.Manager

	2. Scores of Executives Up 10 Sr. Manager						
	Building blocks and their subcomponents	Bottom Quartile	Second Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	Top Quartile	
1	Supportive Learning Environment						
	O Psychological Safety	31–66	67– 75(70.27)	76	77–86	87–100	
	O Appreciation of differences	14–56	57–63	64	65–79(65.38)	80–100	
	O Openness to new ideas	38– 80(77.18)	81–89	90	91–95	96–100	
	O Time for reflection	14–35	36–49	50	51-64(60.38)	65–100	
	O Learning environment composite	31–61	62–70	71	72–79(67.92)	80–90	
2	Concre	ete Learnin	g Process	and Prac	ctices_		
	O Experimentation	18–53	54–70	71	72–82(73.55)	83–100	
	O Information Collection	23–70	71–79	80	81–89(81.44)	90–100	
	O Analysis	19–56	57–70	71	72–86(73.60)	87–100	
	O Education and Training	26–68	69–79	80	81–89(86.60)	90–100	
	O Information Transfer	34–60	61–70	71	72–84(81.73)	85–100	

	O Learning Process Composite	31–62	63–73	74	75–82(79.32)	83–97	
3	Lead	Leadership That Reinforces Learning					
	O Composite for this block	33–66	67–75	76	77–82(81.59)	83–100	

 Table 3. Scores of AGM & Above

Tai	ole 3. Scores of AGM & Above								
	Building blocks and their subcomponents	Bottom Quartile	Second Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	Top Quartile			
1		Suppor	tive Learni	ng Enviror	<u>nment</u>				
	O Psychological Safety	31–66	67–75	76(76.09)	77–86	87–100			
	O Appreciation of differences	14–56	57–63	64	65–79(76.18)	80–100			
	O Openness to new ideas	38–80	81– 89(86.45)	90	91–95	96–100			
	O Time for reflection	14–35	36–49	50	51-64(61.27)	65–100			
	O Learning environment composite	31–61	62–70	71	72–79(72.09)	80–90			
2		Concrete 1	Learning Pr	ocess and	Practices Practices				
	O Experimentation	18–53	54–70	71	72–82(74.36)	83–100			
	O Information Collection	23–70	71– 79(77.64)	80	81–89	90–100			
	O Analysis	19–56	57–70	71	72–86(79.18)	87–100			
	O Education and Training	26–68	69– 79(78.36)	80	81–89	90–100			
	O Information Transfer	34–60	61–70	71	72–84(77.91)	85–100			
	O Learning Process Composite	31–62	63–73	74	75–82(78.55)	83–97			
3		Leadersh	nip That Re	inforces L	earning				
	O Composite for this block	33–66	67–75	76	77–82	83– 100(86.45)			

 Table 4. Learning Organization Scores Summary

Total sample: 85 (Responded) out of 104 Executives

in total

AGM and above: 11 (Responded)

Executives up to Sr. Manager: 74 (Responded)

# EXECUTIVE UP TO SR.

# MANAGER

	-	0 1	Learning enviornment composit
	learning	composit	composit
AVERAGE	81.59	79.32	67.92
STDEV	12.87	8.40	7.50
Position in Benchmark Quartile		3rd Quartile	2nd Quarterly

# AGM & Above

	that reinforces	U 1	Learning environment composite
	learning		
AVERAGE	86.45	78.55	72.09
STDEV	9.19	8.76	8.72
Position in			
Benchmark	Top quartile	3rd Quartile	3rd Quartile
Quartile	1 1	,	

**Table 5.** Concrete Learning Process and Practices, Executives Up To Sr. Manager

Manuser						
	E	xperimentation	Information Collection	Analysis	Education & Training	Information Transfer
AVERAGE		73.55	81.44	73.60	86.60	81.73
STDEV		17.59	21.43	11.51	11.71	10.19
Position in Benchmark Quartile		3rd Quartile	3rd Quartile	3rd Quartile	3rd Quartile	3rd Quartile
			AGM & ABOVE			
		Experimentation	Information Collection	Analysis	Education & Training	Information Transfer
AVERAGE		74.36	77.64	79.18	78.36	77.91
STDEV		17.95	28.57	10.93	25.70	8.76
Position in Benchmark Quartile		3rd Quartile	2nd Quartile	3rd Quartile	2nd Quartile	3rd Quartile

 Table 6. Supportive Learning Environment, Executive Up To Sr. Manager

	Psychological Safety	Appreciation of Differences	Openness to new ideas	Time for Reflection
AVERAGE	70.27	65.38	77.18	60.38
STDEV	10.80	11.95	12.45	12.55
Position in Benchmark Quartile	2nd Quartile	3rd Quartile	1st Quarterly	3rd Quartile

# AGM & Above

	Psychological Safety	Appreciation of Differences	Openness to new ideas	Time for Reflection
AVERAGE	76.09	76.18	86.45	61.27
STDEV	11.71	13.33	9.46	16.82
Position in World Benchmark Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile	2nd Quartile	3rd Quartile

# **Analysis**

At the overall organizational level, score on learning process composite and the leadership behavior are at the third quartile level of the benchmark score, which was considered to be a reasonably good figure as the benchmark data is set at the international level. For 'learning environment' the score is below the median, which needs immediate focus. Further analysis indicates that the score on 'Psychological safety' and 'Openness to new ideas' are below the median range, which has brought the overall score down. It may also be noted that the absolute score in the area 'Time for reflection' is low though it falls in the third quartile of the benchmark score. This suggests that though organizations collect information and analyze such information, but from the analysis, efforts put to learning needs improvement.

Segment-wise data analysis shows that both the levels, Sr. Manager and below, and, AGM and above, have given below median score for 'Psychological safety'. In case of 'Openness to new ideas' the score of Sr. Manager and below falls in the bottom quartile and for the AGM and above, it is in the second quartile. The score for 'Leadership behavior' for this group falls in the top quartile. It is relevant to note that the firm has got highest score in Leadership criteria in CII-EXIM bank Award assessment too. Contrary to the views of Sr. Manager and below executives, the AGM and above group of executives feel that information collection and education and training need improvement.

The standard deviation of the scores indicates that within group variation is high for 'Experimentation',' Information collection', and 'Education and training'.

# **Actions Taken**

A workshop was organized for the executives from AGM and above and the data was shared with the group. All aspects of the findings were discussed in detail. In case of low score in 'Education and training', it was identified that some executives were getting relatively more training when compared to others, which might have been reflected in the score. The most serious concern was low perception score in 'Psychological safety' and 'Openness to new ideas'. The construct of 'Openness to new ideas' was appreciated by all, but the construct 'Psychological safety' was not clear to many respondents. The questions regarding psychological safety were revisited and discussed in detail so as to get further insight into this aspect. As the organization was practicing kaizen and TPM for a long time and number of kaizens received from workmen and executives was improving, it was not clear as to why the firm's score on these items were low. It was decided that the executives particularly those at the level of AGM and above shall regularly interact with the all employees at their respective work area and reassure everybody that the top management was keen to improve in these aspects. The Managing Director called an open house discussion with all workmen and executives and made it clear that no one should hesitate to put forward their suggestions and assured that if their suggestions were not accepted the reasons for it will be made known, which was not being practiced.

Though the score in 'Time for reflection' falls in the third quartile but as the absolute score was low, the top management took up this as an area of concern. The low score may be attributed to two factors: people may be busy in their day-to-day work and firefighting, which was not good for the organization, or people found lack of space for group thinking and group learning. In this context, the management looked into this aspect deeply. As the feedback reports of the successive assessments for the last three years were giving stress on the aspect of 'Assessment and refinement' cutting across all processes, a soul-searching exercise was carried out where the nature of improvements that were being done were examined and it was found that mostly all improvements are routine kaizen types for improving the performance. In the learning theory parlance, this type of improvements is known as 'single loop' learning (Tosey et al. 2011). In contrast, the criteria for performance excellence as per EFQM Award seek application of learning and creativity, and, improvement and innovation for the assessment and refinement of organizations' key processes. Such an effort requires examination of frameworks, assumptions, norms, and policies in organizations' processes and systems (ibid), which is known as 'double loop' learning. Even the process of learning may be required to be examined to make double loop learning effective. This is known as 'triple loop' learning (Georges et al. 1999). Realizing the complexity involved in this process of reviewing of organization's processes, it was decided to get all the executives, AGM and above, trained on learning and knowledge management. It was also decided that the project teams engaged in Six Sigma or managerial kaizens would give presentations periodically before the executives. This exercise was intended not only inform the status of the project but also to point out the challenges the project team was facing with the hope of generating solutions from outside the area of the project. Further, mention would be made of the learning individuals gained from carrying out the projects by highlighting the assumptions and the hypothesis they made, indicating which assumptions/hypothesis were found to be correct or which ones were wrong. Whether "Reflection' may be identified as a key business criterion was debated upon.

## **Conclusion**

It is evident from the study that assessing organizational culture may be a regular practice of an organization that is implementing business excellence model for generating greater benefit from the model. If done properly, it gives valuable insights into the culture of the organization for diagnosing the true strength and weakness and for developing a strategy to strengthening the organization further. This experience also suggests that Garvin, Edmondson,

and Gino's tool offers a workable practical solution to the problem of assessing organizational learning culture.

# **Limitation of the Study**

The benchmark figures are from international organizations and the responses are greatly influenced by individuals' perception. Therefore rationale of comparison may be questioned. But in absence of any other data, this gives some direction. Similar survey should be carried out periodically and the results may be compared, which will be more relevant. Though this survey was anonymous but as number of executives in certain departments was very few there might be a possibility that the concerned executives might not have given their true feelings.

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