A LEARNING ORGANISATION PERCEPTION SURVEY OF MANUFACTURING ORGANISATIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MR C.B MASHAVIRA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION (BUSE) IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE MASTER OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP (MBL)

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DECLARATION

I Lucia Madamombe declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been identified and acknowledged as complete reference in my bibliography.

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Lucia Madamombe (B1024739)
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the crucial people in my life who I recognise as invaluable. Firstly my husband, Martin Madamombe, secondly, my children, Sherpherd, Orpah, Munashe and Tinotenda, lastly, my son in law Nigel, daughter in law Tambudzai and grandson Tafadzwa who sacrificed their deserved quality family time as I pursued my academic and professional dream of earning a master’s degree. I love you all very much.
ABSTRACT

A learning organisation has been regarded as “an organisation that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (Senge 1990:4). There is extensive discussion of the learning organizations in the literature but there is very little empirical evidence to demonstrate its existence. The main aim of this research study was to conduct a survey to determine the extent to which the learning organisations concepts exist and to what extent they are practiced in manufacturing organisations in Zimbabwe. The research question for this study was ‘Do Zimbabwean manufacturing organizations display the characteristics of the learning organisation at the individual, team and organizational level?’ An in-depth literature review was undertaken by the researcher in order to develop a conceptual framework to aid the study.

The target population was executive directors and human resources managers of Harare based manufacturing firms which are registered with the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI). A sample of 53 individuals was selected using the purposive sampling method from various companies in the manufacturing sector. In order to collect qualitative data, interviews were conducted with 11 participants. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used with mixed research methodologies in data analysis in order to improve the quality of the arguments. A 21 item structured self administered questionnaire was used as the instrument of collecting quantitative data to test the learning culture in the studied organisations. Face to face interviews were conducted with 11 participants to collect the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were used to present the collected data and analysis was done using the pencil and paper method. Finally conclusions of the study and recommendations were made.

As a result of the research, based on a literature review and empirical data analysis, the researcher found out that learning organisation dimensions featured moderately in the participants’ responses not enough to consider Zimbabwean manufacturing companies as learning organisations. The study suggested the need for more studies on learning organisations in order to understand the barriers of practicing organizational learning.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No undertaking of a project as intense as this study is possible without the contribution of many people. It is not possible to single out all those who offered support and encouragement during what at times seemed to be a ‘never ending journey’. However, there are individuals without whom this dissertation would not have been completed, and to them go my special thanks and acknowledgement of their contributions.

Firstly, I am indebted to my husband Martin who believed in me, encouraged me to pursue my degree and provided emotional support. I am truly grateful for the sacrifices he made on my behalf. Secondly, my appreciation goes to my mother for praying for me through the journey. Finally, a big thank you goes to Mr. C.B. Mashavira, my supervisor, for all his advice, assistance and support. Without his guidance this dissertation could not have been possible.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a detailed historical background of Zimbabwean companies. It establishes the reason for undertaking the research and demarcates study boundaries. It also presents the statement of the research problem, outlines purpose of the study, lists research questions, sets down research objectives, outlines research hypothesis, significance of the study, defines essential terms, marks down research assumptions, scope and delimitations of the study, literature review, the research methodology and concludes with a summary.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Zimbabwe, officially referred to as the Republic of Zimbabwe, is a landlocked republic located in Southern Africa between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers. The country is bordered on the northwest by Zambia, east by Mozambique, on the south by South Africa and on the southwest by Botswana and the Caprivi Strip of Namibia. The total area of the country is about 390,757 square kilometres and it has a population of approximately 13,120,000 people. The capital city which is Zimbabwe’s largest city is Harare. It is the main commercial and cultural centre and also Zimbabwe’s administrative, commercial and communications centre. It is a trade centre for agricultural products like tobacco, maize, cotton, vegetables and fruits. The private sector economy of Harare is dominated by manufacturing and service industries.

Zimbabwe is endowed with resources in the form of a wide range of minerals that include gold, platinum, coal and diamonds, agricultural and other resources such as vast timber plantations and natural forests, a diverse wildlife in the country’s many parks and sanctuaries. Zimbabwe has got a relatively well developed infrastructure in the form of well-maintained road and rail network connecting it to its neighbours Zambia, South Africa, Mozambique and Botswana.
The economy of Zimbabwe is characterized by a dualistic structure. There is on one hand the formal modern sector which comprises the commercial agriculture, mining, manufacturing and service sector and on the other hand, an informal traditional sector that is dominated by small scale enterprises, including communal farmers.

Business enterprises in Zimbabwe range from sole traders, partnerships, state enterprises, parastatals and companies. A sole trader business is one which is fully owned by one individual and has unlimited liability. Partnerships are businesses started by two or more individuals having unlimited liability and partners are personally liable for debts. Parastatals are entities that are governed by Acts of Parliament for their operations and are wholly owned by Government. State Enterprises are entities that are governed by the Company’s Act and they can be wholly or partially owned by the government as the major shareholder. Companies can either be private, public or public listed and are governed by the Companies Act 24.03 and should be registered by the Registrar of companies. The SME Association of Zimbabwe defines small enterprises as those with a turnover of less than $240 000 or assets not exceeding $100 000.00 and medium enterprises as those with a turnover above the $240 000.00 but not exceeding $1 000 000.00. Privately held small and medium enterprises can be registered under the Private Business Corporation Act 24.11 which is similar to the Companies Act but easier and cheaper to register and maintain. The SME sector is a vehicle for employment creation and economic growth of the country.

The largest companies which represent a small percentage of the several thousand of companies incorporated in Zimbabwe are listed on the stock exchange. The Zimbabwe Stock Exchange is the second largest stock market in Sub Saharan Africa behind South Africa where shares are exchanged between local individuals, institutional investors, government institutions, foreign individuals and institutional investors. It is governed by the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange Act 24.18.
Zimbabwe is an agro based economy whose agricultural sector employees the largest number of people. Agricultural activities include horticulture, floriculture, food production, cash crops, poultry and livestock farming, dairy farming, fish farming and wildlife ranching. The mining sector contributes the maximum amount of foreign earnings as compared to the other sectors of the economy by exporting gold, coal, diamonds, platinum and nonmetallic ores. The tourism sector is a rapidly growing sector of the economy, accounting for a sizeable proportion of the country’s foreign exchange earnings. The service sector includes transport and construction. The manufacturing sector is a sector of the economy responsible for producing a wide range of commodities ranging from food processing, beverages, textiles and footwear and chemicals, plastics and different metal products. Manufacturing provides approximately 20% of formal employment in Harare.

The country experienced strong fiscal recovery since 2009. This is attributable to the adoption of the United States dollar and the South African rand as Zimbabwe’s official currencies and political agreement in 2008 between the ruling ZANU PF and two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) factions, followed in February 2009 by the forming of the Government of National Unity (GNU). The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 20% between 2009 and 2011. The Gross Domestic Product for 2012 stood at $6.9 billion and the GDP per capita was $500. The mining sector in 2012 experienced a growth of over 100% followed by agriculture and services. Manufacturing sector however performed below expectation and exports did not increase. The September 2012 debt sustainability analysis report confirmed that Zimbabwe was in debt distress, with arrears to most of its creditors.

The Government of Zimbabwe launched the Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP1) in February 2009 followed by (STERP2) in December 2009. The key objective was to resuscitate manufacturing activity and increase capacity utilization levels. The Buy Zimbabwe Campaign was also launched with the aim to realize higher production and consumption and to promote competitiveness of local goods and services.
The 2012 Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) Manufacturing Sector Survey indicated that capacity utilization in the sector has declined from 57, 2 percent to 44, 2 percent. The survey further noted that the worst performing manufacturing sub-sector, leather and allied products, for 2012 was operating at capacity utilization of as low as 27, 5 percent while the best performing sub-sector, battery, was operating at 76, and 5 percent. The CZI president in the Manufacturing Sector Survey called for action from all stakeholders, to avoid what he referred to as the “de-industrialisation of Zimbabwe”.

The Zimbabwe Stock Exchange Overview of May 2013 reported that Delta Corporation had reported a 39 percent rise in income to US$104 million during the year ending 31 March 2013 while on the other hand SeedCo’s after tax profits had plunged by percent for the same accounting period. The query is how does one manufacturer manage to flow against the wind in the same economy where others are going down?

The Zimbabwean manufacturing sector makes a good case study since it has evolved through periods of turbulence especially in the period since the dollarization of Zimbabwe. The sector has subsectors such as agro processing, clothing and footwear, chemicals, plastics, food and beverages.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Most of Zimbabwean companies are not learning organisations. This is evidenced by newspaper and official reports indicating low profits, poor manufacturing, capacity underutilization, inefficiency of operations, poor service, bad public image, decreased market share and lack of economic growth. All other signs of a company that is performing badly are evident in Zimbabwe manufacturing organisations such as lack of skill and knowledge of the workforce,
lack of communication between individuals and teams, unmotivated staff and the occurrence of the same problems and mistakes over and over.

Manufacturing firms have in the past emphasised on production only while ignoring such aspects as competitiveness in the market. In recent years, due to global changes, organisations have been compelled to change focus and put more emphasis on the learning of their workforce in order to continuously sustain or improve organisational performance. Organisational learning has become the most widespread and fastest growing activity and intervention in human resource practice in the past decade. Becoming a learning organisation became the logical step for all companies to follow. The question is, do Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations embrace and practice the concepts of organisational learning? If so are there any learning organisations in Zimbabwe and in particular in the manufacturing sector? Little is known about whether there are any learning organisations in the Zimbabwe.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

After having conducted part of the literature review the researcher realised that there was a need to investigate whether there were any learning organisations in Zimbabwe and through a survey to assess, quantify, measure and compare the extent to which selected organisations practice the key learning concepts at the individual, team and organisational level. The study aims to fill the gap in the literature by examining why some Zimbabwean organisations have not been able to transform into learning organisations. In addition, it is mandatory requirement for my programme to do a research project in partial fulfillment of the degree Master of Business Leadership.

Based on Watkins and Marsick (1996), the seven dimensions or action imperatives of the learning organisation questionnaire (DLOQ) (Marsick & Watkins, 1993; Yang et al, 2004) was used as the instrument for assessing learning organisation culture for the sampled organisations. Do they; (1) create continuous learning opportunities, (2) promote inquiry and dialogue, (3)
encourage collaboration and team learning, (4) create systems to capture and share learning, (5) empower people toward a collective vision, (6) connect the enterprise to the environment, and (7) provide strategic leadership for learning? The results of the study could help the companies under study to identify their strengths and weaknesses so they can strategically reposition themselves to survive the contemporary turbulent business environment. The study will provide guidance to organisations in Zimbabwe and other developing countries on how to build a learning organisation by providing useful recommendations for practice and may be a suitable base for other researchers for more studies in this important aspect.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study will be guided by the following research objectives;

1.5.1 To develop a theoretical framework, based on the learning organisation literature (Watkins and Marsick’s 7 dimensions), for the evaluation of Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations as learning organisations.

1.5.2 To assess the learning organisation practices of Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations according to the minimum learning organisation (LO) characteristics necessary for a company to be called such.

1.5.3 To investigate and visualize the existence of “learning” and ‘non-learning” organisations.

1.5.4 To examine the possible barriers in achieving learning organisation at sampled organisations.

1.5.5 To make recommendations to improve organisational learning within the sampled organisations so they can transform into learning organisations.
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The persistence of the current research problem as experienced by Zimbabwean companies has generated several investigative questions within this research. It is necessary for these questions to be effectively responded to if a long lasting solution is to be found. The main research question was “Do Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations display the characteristics of the learning organisation at the individual, team and organisational levels?”

The follow up questions are listed below:

1.6.1 What are the various perspectives to the learning organisation theory?

1.6.2 What are the learning organisation practices of Zimbabwean organisations?

1.6.3 Are Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations learning organisations?

1.6.4 What are the factors that prevent learning in Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations?

1.6.5 What recommendations can help organisations improve their learning in order to become learning organisations?

1.7 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

All stakeholders in the groups of the organisation have a part to play in building a learning organisation. Government Ministers responsible for industry and commerce and Small and Medium Enterprises should enforce training programmes that can equip corporate managers with the knowledge of how they may transform their organisations into learning organisations. Organisational leaders should undergo formal education and endeavour to acquire master degrees such as MBA and MBL where concepts of LO are taught. The top management should create a learning culture and support the process by funding learning and development initiatives. Organisational leaders should lead by example by sharing learning through seminars, workshops, conferences and team building retreats. The human resources practitioners should promote the adoption of reward systems to encourage learning and promote desired behavior. They should
also integrate learning with day to day work and HR processes. Line management should encourage all staff to learn on the job, and encourage exchange of information and skills within teams and across the whole organisation. Individuals ought to take responsibility of their own learning for their own career advancement. Once this is done an ever increasing number of organisations will acquire capability of how they can transform their businesses into learning organisations.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.8.1 The Company

By transforming into a learning organisation, an organisation will have in place an incentive system that rewards risk-taking and innovation so it can attract and retain the best talent in the market. Employee performance will improve as a result of motivation and their feeling more as a part of the company. Employees become more creative and adapt faster to cope with their customer’s changing requirements. A learning organisation will have at its heart the concept of continuous learning therefore it will always be improving in its techniques, methods and technology to become superior to competitors. Better quality improves sales, increases demand hence market share leading to higher profits and improved corporate image. The Company will be set apart from the competition and become an industry leader.

1.8.2 Management

With a team of learning individuals in a learning organisation, management will find it easier to delegate because employees become more proficient and need less supervision. Time management will improve because of fast work rate, less downtime, and shorter lead time to obtain proficiency. There is better staff performance resulting from improved employee morale which translates to less absenteeism, less grievances, fewer accidents, and less staff turnover. Productivity increases because of faster work rate with fewer rejects, less scrap, improved quality and proficiency.
1.8.3 Employees

Benefits of developing learning individuals in a learning organisation are that employees learn faster, improve their personal skills, and become more proficient and innovative. They become confident because all opinions are appreciated and respected. Learning individuals are empowered and generally more motivated, more committed, have more initiative and take on more responsibilities. A learning organisation promotes improved social interaction and interpersonal skills in employees promoting team spirit. High performance teams are afforded an environment to learn, grow and develop. Learning individuals are able to see the gap between their current position and where they would like to be. They develop and benefit from their own and other people’s experience whether negative or positive. Learning organisations are a vehicle for career advancement.

1.8.4 Shareholders

A learning organisation achieves increased profitability, a sustainable competitive advantage and increased market share. Shareholders will benefit in the form of higher dividends and/or increased share value.

1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.9.1 Organisational learning

Organisational learning is the process in which members of or groups in an organisation transfer knowledge quickly and efficiently to improve their actions.

1.9.2 Learning organisation

A learning organisation is a consciously managed organisation that invests in the continuous learning of its members making learning a vital component of its existence by creating enabling structures and eliminating obstacles for knowledge transfer and adaptation to the changing environment.
1.9.3 Learning culture

A learning culture is one in which there is clear and consistent openness to experience, encouragement of responsible risk taking and willingness to acknowledge failures and learn from them.

1.10 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions are made:

1.10.1 This researcher will find it easy to gather relevant literature to the study because she is a registered member of two public libraries within Harare in addition to Bindura University of Science Education library.

1.10.2 The study will obtain the necessary support (and access to the organisations) from all the relevant officials and that the decision makers in the studied organisations will use the findings to reflect on current practices.

1.10.3 The potential participants will have a basic knowledge about the concept of the learning organisations to be able to articulate their responses clearly. All participants will however be given a short written description to explain the concept as well as to promote understanding with regard to the overall purpose and usefulness of the study.

1.10.4 That all participants in the survey will provide honest opinions and that the participants will provide an accurate perception of the learning culture of their organisations.
1.11 SCOPE (DELIMITATION) OF THE STUDY

The research study will be undertaken from Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe. The target population is three thousand people employed in the entire manufacturing sector in Harare Zimbabwe. The researcher intends to issue 60 copies of a self-administered questionnaire based on the Dimensions of a Learning Organisation Questionnaire to a sample by picking the executive directors and/or human resources practitioners of targeted 30 manufacturing organisations because based in Harare. The directors and HR are targeted because they are aware of all the learning capabilities of their companies.

1.12 ETHICAL STATEMENT

Permission to access official documentation and to conduct the study on organisational premises will be obtained from the management of the respective organisations. Voluntary consent and participation and confidentiality will be upheld in this research study.

1.13 RESEARCH LIMITATION

The research had several limitations. Firstly the study included only manufacturing firms in Harare excluding organisations from other parts of the country. The second limitation was that the sample was purposive and had the potential for bias. Also the sample size was limited to 60 individuals because of time and financial constraints. Lastly, only the manufacturing sector was studied therefore generalizing the findings was not possible.

1.14 SUMMARY

This chapter presented a detailed historical background of Zimbabwean companies. It also presented the statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, research objectives, hypothesis, significance of the study, definitions of terms, research
assumptions, scope and delimitations of the study, literature review, the research methodology, and summary.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this research study provided a critical analysis of the background and justification of the study, the statement of the research problem, introduced the research questions, the aims and significance of the research. The aim of this study is to explore the existence of the learning organisation dimensions and the extent to which they are operationalised in the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe through the lens of a conceptual framework developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993). In this chapter a comprehensive literature review of earlier researchers’ works on learning organisations will be undertaken in order to develop a theoretical framework which ties together the research problem, the questions, objectives and propositions for the evaluation of Zimbabwean companies as learning organisations. The literature is reviewed in the context of manufacturing companies in Zimbabwe. The literature review aims to identify the core concepts pertinent to the Learning Organisation (LO), opportunities, strengths and challenges, of learning organisations as well as diagnostic tools of measuring the learning organisation and to explore the benefits or otherwise that may stem from Zimbabwean organisations adopting these concepts.

2.2 JUSTIFICATION OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review on learning organisations was undertaken with the aim to solicit various views, frameworks and experiences in learning organisations. A critical review of the literature was done for various reasons. It helped further refine the researcher’s original research questions and objectives highlighting research possibilities that had been overlooked in previous research. Through the review of literature, the researcher was able to discover recommendations for further research by past researchers. Research approaches, strategies and techniques appropriate to the learning organisation were discovered through literature review. A lot of research had already been done by past researchers and the review helped the current researcher not to simply
repeat work that had been done already. The review also gave new insight to the researcher about the concept of the learning organisation in order to formulate a theoretical framework to guide the research study.

2.3 SOURCES OF LITERATURE REVIEWED

Literature sources that usually assist in the review of literature include the Internet, magazines, professional journals, textbooks, organisational memorandum, minutes of meetings, presented papers, unpublished scholarly works etc. However in this particular research study literature reviewed was sourced from secondary sources such as Government publications, theses, dissertations, books, scholarly journals and tertiary sources such as abstracts and bibliographies.

2.4 DISCUSSION OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section of the research report presents the literature that was quoted from earlier studies. Occasionally, the research will explain the areas of agreement and those of disagreement in relation to the literature quoted. The authors of the literature will be adequately acknowledged as per the requirements of the copyright law regulations and also as this researcher’s appreciation and gratitude since their works will be copied into this researcher’s dissertation. The researcher will occasionally, comment on the literature quoted.

2.4.1 The Zimbabwean manufacturing sector

Before defining and distinguishing LOs from organisations in general the Zimbabwean manufacturing sector will be discussed briefly. The manufacturing sector is one of the sectors in Zimbabwe along with mining, agriculture and services. The agro processing subsector includes tobacco, leather and leather products, food and beverages, clothing and textile and wood and furniture. Other subsectors are fertilizer, pharmaceuticals, paper and packaging, rubber and tyre and metals and electrical. In accordance with Statutory Instrument 119 of 2009, some goods are zero rated for customs duty purposes under both SADC and COMESA trade regimes. The Government launched the Industrial Development Policy (IDP) in February 2011 with the
objective to restore the manufacturing sector’s contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the then 15% to 30% and contribution to exports from 26% to 50% by 2015. The strategies of the IDP were to provide lines of credit to manufacturers for procurement of materials, packaging, spares and recapitalization of distressed companies. The problem is in spite of all the effort manufacturing firms are still not performing to expected or forecasted levels and the problem could be because they are not learning.

The manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe has been challenged in many ways in recent years, since the environment has become more complex in the face from the stiff competition of cheaper imports from China. Recent research has suggested that to be able to cope with this competitive situation, manufacturing organisations ought to practice efficiency maximization, and focus on productivity in order to become more competitive and effective (Kapp 1999). There have also been calls that manufacturing organisations should become learning organisations (Balkinssoon and Pun, 2012).

Manufacturers spend very little on the learning of their employees compared to what they spend on durable equipment purchases. Yet literature says that the most valuable resource of an organisation is its human resources. Kapp (1999) says that manufacturing firms that implement training programmes will increase their productivity. Motorolla which is considered to be the “gold standard for corporate training” reported a training rate of return exceeding 1000%.

The CZI and ZNCC have been repeating the call for sustainable development, competency development and increased innovation. The pursuit to become a knowledge intensive country and get the competitive edge obtained by developing knowledge based industries with knowledgeable workers. It includes the establishment of a learning organisation culture in Zimbabwe manufacturing organisations particularly the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing organisations are facing survival difficulties due to severe competition and economic crisis.
They might be able to overcome some of these difficulties by the vision of becoming a learning organisation. It is on this sector that this research study intends to focus.

### 2.4.2 Concept evolution and the emergence of interest in LO

Organisations worldwide are experiencing the imperative to increase their performance: this equally applies to manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. Most corporations die prematurely from learning disabilities because they are unable to adapt and evolve as the world around them changes De Geus, (2003). This has called for organisational reforms, designed to meet this and other challenges and to make organisations more proactive, flexible and adaptable in the face of this continued uncertainty. This calls for a significant shift in the way in which work is to be done and workers are required to become knowledge workers. Several studies attest that learning is the most crucial activity an employee can engage in and that human resources is the most valuable resource of any organisation and learning is now seen as the most crucial activity in which organisations can be engaged (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The concept of the learning organisation gained momentum since the mid-1980s possibly due to the works of authors such as Argyris and Schon (1978) and Peter Senge (1990). The writings focused on the importance of learning and how learning can be incorporated into the culture of an organisation. “The concept evolved with a deep-rooted philosophy for anticipating, reacting and responding to change, complexity and uncertainty by sustaining organisational learning” (Khadra and Rawabdeh, 2006). The proponents of LOs purport that the outcomes of the learning organisations have a direct influence on an organisation’s capacity to be competitive, innovative and manage change hence performance improvement (Senge 1990). For Zimbabwean manufacturing companies to flourish into the future, they need to re-examine how they do business and learn new methods.

### 2.4.3 Learning Organisations in practice

Literature shows that there is proof of good results when organisations adopt the learning organisation culture. It can improve processes, productivity, quality, affords knowledge
accumulation resulting in improved organisational performance. The Virgin Group of UK has declared itself a learning organisation as well as several big companies such as IMB, Toyota, Visa International and Scania. The concept can be applied to profit making companies, not for profit organisations, the school or university, hospitals and government departments including the army according to Benjamin (2009).

2.4.4 Learning

The underlying cause for recent emphasis on learning organisations is because of the increased pace of change in the business climate, including uncertain market conditions, increasing complexity, and global competition according to Kontoghiorghes et al (1997:185). The importance of learning was first put forward by Confucious a Chinese philosopher who believed that learning was a ‘cradle to grave’ process hence people should be lifelong learners.

Learning, education and training are often used interchangeably yet should be distinguished. Education and training are processes that may lead to learning while learning is the outcome or result of a learning process (Mayo, 2007). In education, learning is defined as a relatively permanent change in behavior or cognition due to experience (Ormrod, 1995 as quoted in Nemeth (1997). Learning is reinforcement of knowledge (explicit and implicit) and results in a change in the way of thinking, attitude, behavior and performance of staff leading to an effective behavior in different situations (Argyris and Schon, 1996). Watkins and Marsick (1999) define learning as the way in which people make meaning of situations they encounter, and the way in which they acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to act in new ways.

2.4.5 Organisation learning

The Process of Learning

Table 2.1 provides examples of the categorization of organisational learning process by different authors.
Table 2.1 Levels of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Learning Type 1</th>
<th>Learning Type 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiol &amp; Lyles (1985)</td>
<td>Lower-level learning</td>
<td>Higher-level learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on short-term, surface,</td>
<td>Develop complex rules and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temporary learning and more</td>
<td>associations regarding new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>repetition of part behavior</td>
<td>actions that affect the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senge (1990)</td>
<td>Adaptive learning</td>
<td>Generative learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on learning within</td>
<td>Require new ways to look at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>existing routines on the</td>
<td>the world, question long-held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>traditional scope of the</td>
<td>assumptions and existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organisation’s activities</td>
<td>routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyrs &amp; Schon (1978)</td>
<td>Detect and correct errors in</td>
<td>Detect errors, recognize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>order to carry on present</td>
<td>underlying causes and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>policies or attain goals</td>
<td>effects of the errors in order to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>modify underlying norms,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>policies and objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source Mahbubul (2008)

Organisational learning is a dynamic process of creation, acquisition, and integration of knowledge aimed at the development of resources and capabilities that contribute to better organisational effectiveness (Argyris & Schon, 1978). Researchers have categorised learning processes in organisations into three stages that is single-loop learning, double-loop learning and triple-loop learning. Argyris and Schon (1978) originated two views regarding learning, namely single-loop learning and double-loop learning. Several other authors concur with them and have also come up with ways to describe the levels of learning. Several authors like (Kim 1993, March 1991 and Hedberg 1981) also distinguished the two levels of learning. Adaptive learning is defined as learning that is about coping (single-loop) while generative learning is about creating (double-loop) (Argyris & Schon, 1978). Kim (1993) calls it operational learning and

Organisations can safely adopt both forms of learning with more or less focus on one type over the other (Fiol and Lyles, 1985). Argyris (1993) argued that both forms of learning are important single loop in routine, repetitive situations, and double-loop learning in complex situation. Double-loop learning occurs when an organisation creates a solution to future problems by changing the way it operates. Future crises are avoided by adapting generative learning and organisations become better able to adapt to new and unexpected situations (Senge, 1990b).

Learning organisations can achieve higher order type of learning or triple-loop learning or meta-learning and not just accumulate single and double-loop lessons. This entails people in learning organisations taking stock, not just of the content of organisational lessons but the process by which this learning took place – a form of reflexivity for the betterment of the organisation. Higher level learning involves doing things differently as a result of radical shifts in knowledge structures. This form of learning tends to alter, or break away completely from the current system (Levit and March, 1993).

The main driver that compels an organisation towards higher level learning is a dissatisfaction emanating from uncertainty. It is considered as ‘learning about learning’.

2.4.6 Levels of organisational learning

Literature poses a common question, “Who learns in organisational learning?” Is it the individual, group, organisation, or populations of organisations? Organisational learning has been presented in the literature from three levels (Crossan et al., 1995). Researchers agree that learning takes place at various levels; individual, team and the organisation (Mayo, 2007; Watkins & Marsick, 1996).

Individual level

Crossan et al., (1995) define individual learning as individual interpretation, as well as acquiring new norms, values, and skills. It is believed that learning occurs in the minds of the individuals and the organisation learns through those individuals either directly or indirectly. Individual
learning aims at changes in skills, insights, beliefs and variation in individual knowledge (Senge, 1990). Individual learning has to be shared with others, by dialogue through which mental models can expand. It is characteristic of learning organisations that individual learning becomes collective, that there occurs “group” learning. Argyris and Schon (1978) believes that no organisational learning occurs without individual learning, yet individual learning is not the only source for organisational learning (p.20). Individual learning is necessary but it’s not adequate for organisational learning.

Team level

Group or team learning entails sharing lessons between individuals working together. It is made up of performance feedback, shared understanding and coordinated behavior. It creates organisational wealth, and helps organisations to face innovation. Senge, (1990) refers to team learning as the gate way of organisational learning by being the link between individual and organisational learning. Such a link becomes possible through dialogue, according to Dixon (1997). Team learning focuses on creating a culture in which people feel they are all part of the same team (Watkins and Marsick 1999:82). An example of group learning is the cross-functional learning such as sharing lessons between departments and sections. This includes making unconscious mental models conscious, according to Senge, and requires an internal dialogue, that is reflection, as well as external dialogue, with others. The LO therefore, ought to create organisational infrastructures that support this learning.

Organisational level

Organisational level learning is “aspiration level, intraplant and interplant learning, organisational information processing’ (Miner and Mezias, 1996: 91). “Organisational learning shows up when improvements are made in standard operating procedures, policies, the culture, work processes, and the information systems that maintain the memory of the organisation” Watkins & Marsick (1999:82). This type of learning requires that “People think systematically, look at how actions affect a variety of constituencies, and take the consequences of change over

2.4.7 Defining the Learning Organisation

Definition

There are too many definitions of learning organisations and researchers have not achieved a consensus (Ortenblad, 2004). Different authors proffered their definitions accompanied by the characterizations and the emphasis accorded to different aspects of the LO differ greatly (Jimali and Sidani, 2008). The literature tends to conceptualise the LO as an environment in which knowledge is created, acquired and utilized as a means to improve organisational performance (Garvin, 2000). Several authors define a learning organisation as an organisation that is involved in a continuous process of learning and knowledge creation while other researchers define a learning organisation as an organisation that is involved in performance improvement (Ahmad and Yunus, 2012).

Dixon (1994) defined a LO as the organisation’s ability to use the amazing mental capacity of its members to create process that will lead to improvements in performance. According to Marquart (1996), the LO is one “which learns powerfully and collectively and is continuously transforming itself to better collect, manage and use knowledge for corporate success”. Watkins and Marsick (1993) defined LO as one that “learns continuously and transforms itself”. Marquardt (1996) defines it as an organisation, which by empowering people within and outside the organisation, collectively learns and transforms itself to better collect, manage and use knowledge for corporate success. They proceed to say that the LO provides principles and practices and purposefully constructs structures and strategies that instill learning within the individual, team, and organisational levels as a foundation for improvement, change and performance (Senge 1990, Pedlar et al., 1993).
Table 2.2 below shows the summary of definitions of learning organisation

Table 2.2 Definition of learning organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition of learning organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senge (1990)</td>
<td>An organisation where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garvin (1994)</td>
<td>An organisation skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervis et al. (1995)</td>
<td>An organisation that has woven a continuous and enhanced capacity to learn, adapt and change. Its values, policies, practices, systems and structures support and accelerate learning for all employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gephart et al. (1996)</td>
<td>An organisation in which learning processes are analysed, monitored, developed, managed and aligned with improvement and innovation goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedler et al. (1997)</td>
<td>An organisation that facilitates learning for all its members and consciously transforms itself and its context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griego et al. (2000)</td>
<td>An organisation that constantly improves results based on increased performance made possible because it is growing more adroit and dexterous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowden (2001)</td>
<td>An organisation in which everyone is engaged in solving problems, enabling the organisation to continuously experiment, change, and improve, and increasing its capacity to grow, learn, and achieve its purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis (2002)</td>
<td>An organisation in which employees are continually acquiring and sharing new knowledge and are willing to apply that knowledge in making decisions or performing their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong and Foley (2003)</td>
<td>A learning organisation has appropriate cultural facets (visions, values, assumptions and behaviours) that support a learning environment; processes that foster people’s learning and development by identifying their learning needs and facilitating learning; and structural facets that enable learning activities to be supported and implemented in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moilanen (2005)</td>
<td>A learning organisation is a consciously managed organisation with learning as a vital component in its values, visions and goals as well as in its everyday operations and their assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watkins &amp; Marsick (1993)</td>
<td>Learning organisations are characterized by total employee involvement in a process of collaboratively conducted, collectively accountable change directed towards shared values or principles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Jamali and Sidani (2008)
Various approaches can be applied in assessing these definitions for LO; a systems perspective (Senge 1990): a learning perspective (Pedlar et al., 1991) and a strategic perspective (Garvin 1993; Goh, 1998) some authors define organisational learning from the perspective of building a culture and climate that supports learning.

The common themes of the different ways to look at LO fit into the following dimensions; Leadership, strategy, participative policy making, continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry team learning, empowerment and facilitation process and structures (Jamali et al., 2009).

2.4.8 The Learning Organisation Differentiated from Organisational Learning

Levitt and March (1988) note that the terms organisational learning and learning organisation used to be interchanged by writers. Clarification and differentiation of the two concepts has been attempted by several writers (Griego et al 2000). There is agreement that both terms are correlated but three distinctions were identified in the literature (Ortenblad, 2001). The first and most common distinguishing factor is that organisational learning is viewed as a process or set of activities, whereas the learning organisation is seen as a form of organisation or a systems level entity (DiBella et al, 1996, Tsang, 1997). Second, effort is required to develop a learning organisation while learning takes place naturally in organisations (Dodgson, 1993). Third, the literature on organisational learning emerged from academic inquiry, while the literature on the learning organisation is developed primarily from practice (Easterby-Smith, 1997). Another distinction is that in organisational learning, the focus is upon individual learners, whereas in LO the focus is on learners at the individual, team and organisational levels. In organisational learning, knowledge is seen as residing in individuals and the organisational memory in LO (Kontoghiorghes et al 2005).

Organisational learning is the activity and the process by which organisations eventually reach the ideal of a learning organisation (Tsang, 1997). Similarly, Ortenblad (2001) refers to a learning organisation as a place where people learn at work which is good at organisational
learning. All organisations practice organisational learning some beneficial others not, but only a few can develop to be learning organisations (Zhang et al., 2006). In summary, LO as a concept reflect an ideal feature of an organisation and OL may be regarded as actions to achieve such status.

Pedlar et al., (1991:1) describes the LO as one “that facilitates learning of all its members and continually transforms itself”. They view it as a metaphor rather than a distinct type of structure. Some researchers believe that LO and OL are two sides of the same coin. If an organisations wants to become a LO, it is creation of OL that is central and OL is the central activity in the LO. Differences of LO and organisational learning are summarized in Table 2.3 below.

**Table 2.3 Differences between the learning organisation and organisational learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organisational learning</th>
<th>Learning organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Potential organisational change</td>
<td>Organisational improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motive</strong></td>
<td>Organisational evolution</td>
<td>Competitive advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writings</strong></td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Prescriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective of writings</strong></td>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Building intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stimulus</strong></td>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targeting audience</strong></td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific background</strong></td>
<td>Decision theories, Organisation studies</td>
<td>Organisational development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Huysman (2010)

### 2.4.9 Characteristics of Learning Organisations

The literature provided a vast array of definitions and each LO model comes with its own critical elements or factors or disciplines or dimensions or subsystems which are argued as being needed
to become a learning organisation (Marquardt, 2002). Various research developing the
dimensions or attributes of the LO share certain common ground (Kontoghiorghes et al, 2005).
Ortenblad (2002) suggested that there are four perceptions to understandings the LO. They are:
(a) Learning at work perspective which views the idea of the LO as one for which individuals
learn at the workplace, (b) a learning climate perspective, which sees the LO as an organisation
that facilitates the learning of its employees, (c) a learning structure perspective, which regards
the LO as a flexible entity and (d) the old organisational learning perspective, which focuses on
the storage of knowledge in the organisational mind.

Table 2.4 Characteristics of learning organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Learning organisation constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senge (1990)</td>
<td>Personal mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systems thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participative policy making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open exchange of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formative accounting and control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reward flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enabling structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workers as environmental scanners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-company learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-development opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue and inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embedded system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Watkins & Marsick, (1993), Senge (1990) & Tobin (1993) take different but entirely complementary approaches to understanding the dynamics of a LO. Together these models paint a picture of what is required in terms of action, processes, and outcomes to create a LO. By examining the seven dimensions of the learning organisation by Watkins and Marsick, a conceptual model of a LO is formed for this research study.

**2.4.10 Conceptual framework**

To proceed with the survey of learning organisation perception, it was important to come up with a framework within which different for analyzing the subject. For the purpose of this study, the learning organisation constructs was identified on the basis of the seven indicators or dimensions of the LO developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993). Table 2.5 below diagrammatically shows the learning organisation indicators.
Watkins and Marsick (1993) suggested seven dimensions of organisational learning within the framework of three different learning levels. The first level comprises individual learning, which constitutes two dimensions of organisational learning (continuous learning, and dialogues and inquiry). The second level comprises the team or group level, which is reflected by the collaboration and team learning dimensions. The third, organisational, level encompasses four different dimensions of learning (i.e. embedded systems, system connection, empowerment, and leadership for learning).

Figure 2.1 The conceptual model for the study

(a) Individual Level

Create continuous learning opportunities

Watkins and Marsick (199:81) observe that “learning is ongoing, strategically used and grows out of the work itself”. They observe that learning is ongoing and grows out of work itself. Continuous learning requires workers to be willing to change, adapt, grow and take control of
work related decisions (p14). Opportunities for continuous learning can be created through planning for informal, just in time, desktop and on the job learning by management.

**Promote Inquiry and Dialogue**

Inquiry and dialogue are driven by an experimental mindset which is reflected in a culture in which people can freely ask questions, and are open to giving and receiving feedback at all levels (Watkins and Marsick, 1999: 82). The practice of dialogue and questioning can only occur if there is a climate supporting a developmental approach to learning. (Watkins and Marsick 1993). The above two indicators capture an organisation’s orientation towards individual learning. Dixon (1997) stresses the importance of dialogue when learning becomes collective or team learning as referred by Senge (1990) when internal processes of an organisation are characterized by the questioning. That is when the organisation is characterized as a learning organisation.

**(b) Team level**

**Encourage collaboration and team learning**

When viewing an organisation as a whole, teams, groups and networks become the human means through which learning and information circulate within the organisation (Watkins and Marsick, 1993). Although individual learning must take place before learning occurs at the organisation level, team learning appears as a possible centerpiece of OL, thereby establishing a link between individual and organisation learning.

Senge (1990) identified three important reasons for team learning within organisation. First, team learning allows for both collective thinking and learning, which establishes the potential for greater insight for engaging difficult problems. Second, team learning generates actions among team members that coordinate and complement the actions of others within the team. This in turn establishes an efficient alignment among members of the team, enabling them to learn and
work together effectively. Third, team learning affects the entire organisation as one team’s action may be the result of another team’s learning, resulting in the creation of continuous learning cycles through the organisation.

“Team learning is enhanced when teams learn the skills of framing, reframing, experimenting, cross boundaries, and creating an integrative perspective. Collaborative structures enhance the organisation’s ability to learn because they offer avenues for exchange of new ways of working (Watkins and Marsick 2003:14). Team learning is vitally important for organisational learning to occur. Therefore, is necessary to establish effective social structures within the organisation to develop and maintain collaboration and team learning to facilitate shared learning. However, collaboration and team learning will not have the desired effect upon organisational learning if the organisation does not establish systems to capture and share learning.

(c) Organisational level

There are four indicators pertaining to the organisational level of organisational learning. The last two are referred to as the global level of the LO, which involves the ability to cross boundaries of time, function, organisations and geographically. This type of learning like Senge (1990) suggested, requires that people think systematically.

Create systems to capture and share learning

The fourth dimension of the LO requires establishing systems to capture, share and preserve learning. This can be achieved in two ways. The first approach is a technology based initiative with which organisations can establish systems or repositories to capture and share learning; the second option is a low tech approach that can be attained by “bringing people together to redesign their work, planning more systematically for innovation, and to help a global workforce learn more effectively from one another across culture (Watkins & Marsick, 1993:15). Ability of organisations to learn depends on the congruence of organisational mission and factors which are supported by their mission such as strategy, culture, and structure. The systems empower people towards a collective vision.
Empower people towards a collective vision

Organisations have an increasing emphasis on vision driven change. The success of this action imperative depends on “the degree of alignment throughout the organisation around the vision, and the degree to which everyone in the organisation actively participate in creating and implementing the changes that follow from vision (Watkins & Marsick, 1999:83). Collective vision does not surface by itself, as it often requires organisation to create a culture and structure for shared authority (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). According to Watkins & Marsick, organisations empower their members by providing “them with opportunities to take control of the situation, encouraging a habit of learning and development, helping them set and achieve goals, providing resources, and rewarding achievements (p214). They further noted that teams empowered within the LO begin to function out of their team boundaries and facilitate collaboration often resulting in great organisational learning and performance outcomes.

Connect the organisation to its environment

This dimension requires an understanding of systems thinking concerning the organisation and its international and external environment. Watkins & Marsick noted that the LO is based on a close connection between the organisation and its external environment, which include the earth, society, community, competitors, and “other external groups, such as legislative bodies, whose actions impinge on the organisation (Watkins & Marsick, 1993:18). Organisations at this time of rapid globalization must learn to think of themselves as one company with one workforce and a shared market environment (Watkins & Marsick, 1999:83).

Provide Strategic Leadership for Learning

The LO is difficult to create without supportive and appropriate leadership in the organisation. Leaders provide strategic direction or using learning to leverage change and to move the organisation in new directions or into new markets (Watkins & Marsick, 1999:83). In addition,
“leaders help people create a collective vision towards which the entire organisation can work in a LO (Watkins & Marsick, 1993:17).

A Learning Culture

“Culture can be defined as the collection of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, and assumptions that guide the group members’ behaviours” (Mohr, 2000:42). Business cultures do not always lend themselves toward collaboration and communication which are key components of a learning organisation. Schein, (1990:111) defines culture as a pattern of assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore is taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, thinks, and feels in relation to those problems.

The researchers quoted in the theoretical discussion view learning organisations as characterized by a “learning culture”. This includes common mental models that are characterized by openness in communication and tolerance of diversity of thinking as well as tolerance of mistakes.

Such a culture requires dialogue both vertical as well as horizontal. The learning is characterised by a strong common vision and a sense of moving in the same direction while allowing individuals to have different opinions on how to fulfill the vision (Senge, 1999). Accordingly, the learning culture entails an organisation learning from itself resultantly, changing its mental models.

In learning culture, internal structures support communication and learning within the organisation on different levels and minimize the barriers of learning. The purpose of the structures is to support and reinforce the characteristics in a learning organisation, and integrate the activities and processes in different parts of the organisation. Characteristics of a learning
culture include high employee empowerment, participation, and organisational openness (Fiol and Lyles, 1985). The LO has conceptually been proposed as an appropriate organisational culture which learning capabilities result in improved organisational performance (Kontoghorghes et al, 2005).

Climate

Climate describes how an organisation operationalised its culture, the structures and processes that facilitate the achievement of the desired behaviours (Slater and Naver, 1995). Organisational processes include planning, structure, training and learning form the organisational climate (Slater and Naver, 1995).

2.4.11 Organisational Performance Improvement

The effective acquisition and utilization of new knowledge at the organisational level is a source of flexibility, adaptability and competitive advantage (Stata, 1989) and hence is likely to be associated with enhanced organisational performance. Organisational performance is complicated and may be conceptualised in a number of different ways. It can be either financial or non-financial measures of firm performance. Financial measures include profitability ratios, earnings per share and share price increase. Non-financial include things such as continuous improvement and service quality, efficiency of operations, public image and goodwill, sales growth and increased market share. One of the central doctrines of organisational learning theory suggested by the proponents of the ‘learning organisation is that learning organisation results in success Yang et al, (2004).

2.4.12 Past research on learning organisation diagnosis

Senge (1990) defines a learning organisation as a place where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire. Learning organisations have been proven to have improved organisational performance. In a study by Goh and Ryan (2008) LOs were found to
outperform their competitors with stronger financial performance over time. However, Kontoghiorghes (2005) mentioned that the presence of a learning organisation is not always accompanied by increased profit.

Other literature on learning organisations has shown that LOs outperform their competitors when non-financial variables are used as well Yeo (2005), Alegre & Chiva (2007). Learning organisations have been found to encourage more experimentation than their competition, leading to more new products and services being brought to market, greater customer satisfaction, more suggestions being implemented, more investment into innovation as well as a larger number of employees with new skills (Ellinger et al 2001). Findings by Goh and Ryan (2002) and Rose et al (2009) also found a positive relationship between an organisation’s earning capability and employee job satisfaction. Likewise, Chiva & Alegre (2008) not only provide support for the relationship between an organisation’s learning capability and job satisfaction but with emotional intelligence as well. As a result, for all these reasons, learning organisations are capable of adapting to change and do so better than their competition, therefore ensuring their survival. Table 2.5 summarises some of the studies done in the past.
Table 2.5  Previous Studies on Learning Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Subject of research</th>
<th>Findings/Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Msindo (2005)</td>
<td>Delta Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Delta is a LO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayinamura (2012)</td>
<td>Banc Abc Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Banc ABC is still evolving not yet a mature LO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asante et al</td>
<td>Ghana Post Office Company</td>
<td>Not a fully fletched LO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin D (2009)</td>
<td>South Africa School</td>
<td>Not a LO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snyders H (2008)</td>
<td>South Africa Municipality</td>
<td>Not yet a LO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dourodi H (2012)</td>
<td>Iran Broadcasting Organisation</td>
<td>Demographic characteristics have an effect on individual level learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkissoon and Pun (2012)</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturing enterprises</td>
<td>Still under study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernandez (2003)</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>The learning organisation environment has a positive influence on the transfer of tacit knowledge and in turn on performance improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akin Aksu and Ozdemir (2005)</td>
<td>Turkey hotels</td>
<td>Leaders have a fundamental role to play in promoting organisational learning by enticing individual learning through teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kid and Teramoto (1995)</td>
<td>Japanese firms in Europe</td>
<td>No significant evidence were becoming learning organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdthistle and Fleming (2005)</td>
<td>Irish family firms</td>
<td>Firms exhibit some, though not all, aspects of a learning organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharma (2005)</td>
<td>Australian local government</td>
<td>Not Los Need ‘unlearning and relearning’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimali &amp; Sidani (2008)</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Most of the companies studied were LOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nthurubele (2011)</td>
<td>South Africa Consultancy Firm</td>
<td>Company exhibited some characteristics of a learning organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moilanen (2005)</td>
<td>Finland various organisations</td>
<td>Organisational learning level was greater than individual learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria and Watkins (2003)</td>
<td>Indian organisations</td>
<td>The learning culture of the organisation has an effect on its innovation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4.13 MEASURING TOOLS FOR LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

There are as many tools or measurement instruments for assessing an organisation’s current status in relation to the learning organisation concept as there are definitions of LO found in the literature (Moilanen, 2001). This literature review will comment on only two such measurement instruments.
The Learning Company Questionnaire, by Pedler et al, (1999)

Peddler, et al. (1991) identified what they termed: “the eleven characteristics of a learning company” and developed an instrument to determine where the organisation is currently located on the way to becoming a fully-fledged learning organisation. The Learning Company Questionnaire implies that all the eleven elements need to be present to achieve the ‘the big picture’ Pedler, et al, (1991:27).


Probably the most comprehensive and often cited assessment instrument is the Dimensions of the Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ) developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993). Their goal was to measure the learning culture of an organisation and how it correlates with performance outcomes. Culture is an abstract, and it is consequently extremely difficult to measure but a learning culture can be accurately inferred through observable behaviours and activities Yang (2003). Watkins and Marsick (1993) originally defined the learning organisation as an organisation characterized by continuous learning for continuous improvement and by the capacity to transform itself.

In coming up with the tool, Watkins and Marsick, (1993) integrated three approaches, namely systems thinking by Senge, (1990), learning perspective Pedler et al., (1991), and comprehensive aspects of learning (Garvin, 1993; Goh, 1998). The DLOQ survey questionnaire originally consisted of 42 questions. It is organised in four sections addressing individual, team, organisational and global issues (Marsick and Watkins, 1999:23). The dimensions of the questionnaire according to Watkins and Marsick’s Model are shown in the table 2.5 below:
### Table 2.5  Seven dimensions of the learning organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create continuous learning opportunities</td>
<td>Learning is designed into work so that people can learn on the job opportunities are provided for ongoing education and growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote inquiry and dialogue</td>
<td>People gain productive reasoning skills to express their views and the capacity to listen and inquire into the views of others. The culture is changed to support questioning, feedback, and experimentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage collaboration and team learning</td>
<td>Work is designed to use groups to access different modes of thinking. Groups are expected to learn together and work together. Collaboration is valued by the culture and rewarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create systems to capture and share learning</td>
<td>Both high and low technology systems to share learning are created and integrated with work. Access is provided. Systems are maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower people towards a collective vision</td>
<td>People are involved in setting, owning, and implementing a joint vision. Responsibility is distributed close to decision making so that people are motivated to learn toward what they are held accountable to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect the organisation to its environment</td>
<td>People are helped to see the effect of their work on the entire enterprise. People scan the environment and use information to adjust work practices. The organisation is linked to its communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders model and support learning</td>
<td>Leaders model, champion, and support learning. Leadership uses learning strategically for business results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Watkins and Marsick (2003:139)

### Advantages of the DLOQ

The instrument has been widely employed to determine the characteristics of a learning organisation (Watkins and Marsick, 2003). Redding (1997) and Ortenblad (2002) noted that Dimensions of the learning organisation (DLOQ) or the framework developed by Watkins & Marsick (1993) is one of the few tools that measures learning at the individual level, team and organisation. Watkins and Marsick are the only team of researchers who have blended all aspects of the research and bridged the concepts between Learning Organisations and
Organisational Learning (Watkins & Marsick, 1993, 2004; Ortenblad, 2002). DLOQ addresses individual, team, organisational and global dimensions and the instrument has depth and integrates important attributes of learning organisations (Yang et al., 2004). Yang, Watkins, and Marsick (2004) refined their previous questionnaire to create a shorter version which constitutes of seven constructs and 21 questions. Ellinger et al, 2002, examined the two measurement models (forty-three and twenty-one) to assess the applicability of the DLOQ. Results from this study suggest the twenty-one item model yielded a reasonable measurement fit (Ellinger et al., p.15, 2002).

This tool has a scientific and empirically tested background, unlike the other instruments analysed above and the comprehensive set of dimensions has been cross validated to be reliable in many countries including developing countries (Marsick and Watkins, 2003, Di Bella et al 1996, Marquardt 2002). The framework has been subjected to extensive reliability and validity testing compared to other LO models (Yang 2003). The framework has been widely used by various researchers in a variety of research settings and the framework offers a reliable survey instrument that many prominent models failed to produce (Tannebaum, 1997).

**Summary of measurement approaches**

The above diagnostic tools have their own strengths and weaknesses but can augment each other.

### 2.4.14 BARRIERS/OBSTACLES TO LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

Two prominent authors on organisational learning Peter Senge and David Garvin, wrote on obstacles that prevent organisations from learning and refer to them as “learning disabilities”. Where Senge and Garvin differ is on what constitutes these disabilities. While Senge lists seven learning disabilities that are related to or cause limited understanding of the events taking place within an organisation. Garvin structures his analysis around three stages of organisational learning.
Froggal (2011) in his research of an Australian non-profit organisation identified barriers as either individual or organisational. He discovered that individuals are either too busy to learn or they find it difficult to unlearn what they have found to be working in the past or do not even realize the existence of the barriers. The organisation’s size, structure and culture can act as a barrier to learning.

Learning disabilities according to Senge

Senge believes that the high mortality of companies is a direct consequence of their inability to learn or learning disabilities. Senge (1990) describes these disabilities as blaming others for own failures (“The enemy is out there); re-active instead of proactive action (“The parable of the boiled frog”); pretending to be in control of the situation through taking aggressive action (“The illusion of taking charge); a concern with the detail of problematic events instead of taking cognizance of the gradual and evolutionary change faced by all organisations (“The fixation on events”); personalizing operational issues (“I am my position); the delusion of learning from experience and management ten myths. The learning disabilities, is a product of the way companies are designed and managed, how jobs are described, as well as of the way people are conditioned to think and interact. Any organisation, according to Senge (1994), can avoid these deadly pitfalls and become successful by mastering the five learning disciplines necessary for entering the “deep learning cycle” (Senge, 1994:18) where new capacities are developed and the “… fundamental shifts of the individual and collective minds are achieved…”

Learning disabilities by Garvin

Garvin sees organisational learning in three stages; acquiring interpreting, and applying. His categories of learning disabilities follow these learning categories as well. Garvin’s learning disabilities can arise during any of the three stages of learning. The three primary disabilities that impede the acquisition of new information are blind spots, filtering, and lack of information sharing. David Garvin mentions many possible interpretative mistakes and three disabilities
related to the “applying” stage of learning are passivity, risk aversion, and lack of self-awareness.

**Capability learning traps by Harrison and Boyle**

“Learning traps are caused by lack of balance between exploratory and exploitative learning. When exploitative learning prevails, a firm is likely to fall into one of the three capability learning traps involving distinctive competencies, power, and success Levinthal and Marsch (1993). The need for balance between the two types of experiential learning (the exploratory and exploitative) was discussed by Levinthal and Marsch. Their work was built upon by Harrison and Boyle, who identified one of the reasons for imbalance in the managerial mental model.

2.5.1 SUMMARY

In this chapter a comprehensive literature review of earlier researchers, which is related to the current research area, was undertaken in order to develop a theoretical framework for the evaluation of Zimbabwean companies as a learning organisation. This chapter has highlighted concepts pertinent to learning organisations, the concepts of learning, organisational learning, levels of organisational learning, definition of learning organisation, characteristics of LOs, common themes of LO, benefits of a learning organisation, the five learning disciplines, challenges and opportunities and strengths of learning organisations as well as diagnostic tools of measuring the learning organisation. This literature review identified gaps that there is little empirical evidence that examines the concept of LO in the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe and nothing is known about putting the concept into practice. The following chapter presented the research methodology which was used in the research process.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the availability of the concept of a learning organisation in Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations. In the previous chapter an attempt was made to distil from the literature the key features of the learning organisation and the measuring tools of the learning organisation. The objective of this chapter is to outline the research methodology that was used to collect, present and analyse data. The chapter commenced by identifying the research design/plan of this study followed by the research population, sampling procedures and respondent characteristics.

Next, an extensive discussion of the research instruments used was done followed by a by a discussion of reliability and validity of the chosen methods. The research techniques were closely scrutinised so as to reveal their strengths and weaknesses and the researcher proceeded to explain how the weaknesses were dealt with in order not to adversely impact the research study results. The data collection procedures detailing step by step how each technique was used to collect data followed. The chapter concluded with an overview of the methods used for data presentation and analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN/PLAN

A research design is “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings” (Burns and Burns, 2008:84). Zikmund (2003:65) describes a research design as “a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information”. It describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed. Cooper and Schindler (2008:140) define research design as “the researcher’s overall framework for the collection and analysis of data for answering the research question or testing the research hypothesis”. It is a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place from the formulation of the research problem, how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be employed and the intended means for
analysing data collected to the writing of the final narrative. The chief purpose of the research design is to allow the investigation to anticipate what appropriate research decisions should be made so as to increase the validity and reliability of the results (Burns and Burns 2008:84).

Both an exploratory qualitative and quantitative approach based on an extensive literature review and further complemented by an empirical investigation was adopted for the present study. In this particular research study, data was collected with the assistance of a survey (questionnaire and interview) technique and desktop/exploratory research because it best suited the aims of the research. The research was based on triangulation so that the different methods would assist in correcting weaknesses of the other methods.

Previously, chapter one has stated the purpose of this study and also presented the statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, research objectives, research hypothesis, significance of the study, research assumptions, scope and delimitations of the study and defined essential terms. In chapter two, learning organization literature by earlier researchers was reviewed. The chapter highlighted the concepts of learning, organizational learning, levels of organizational learning, the learning organisation, characteristics of learning organisations, benefits of a learning organizations, the five learning disciplines, challenges opportunities and strengths of learning organizations as well diagnostic tools of measuring the learning organization. In this chapter, is outlined the theoretical framework and methodology that was used to answer the main research question: “Do Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations display the characteristics of the learning organization at the individual, team and organizational levels?” It covered the research design, research methodology including population, sampling, instrumentation, validation procedure, instrumentation modification, instrument distribution and data collection goals. The research context is described in detail to provide the reader with background information about the research context.

The data was collected with the assistance of desk top, questionnaire, interview techniques. It was presented and subjected to a thorough analysis with the aim to establishing the causes for the problem. Conclusions were drawn after the analysis of the data. In the conclusive chapter research conclusions were drawn. Those conclusions made it possible for the researcher to
suggest recommendations through which the research problem might be eliminated or drastically reduced in its negative impact on the operations of Zimbabwean companies.

Traditionally, research methodologies are broadly classified into qualitative and quantitative (Cooper and Schindler, 2008:146).

3.2.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative scientific research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount and is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity. The purpose is to determine the quantity or extend of some phenomenon in the form of numbers and to establish general laws or principles through rigorously controlled experimentation Zikmund (2003). The scientific method has four important and specific characteristics; control, operational definitions, replication and hypothesis testing Burns and Burns (2008:15).

Burns and Burns (2008:15) are of the view that this methodology is less valid and not normally suitable for human behavioural sciences “due to the ability of humans to reflect on their own behaviour and to seek meaning and purpose in their own and others’ behaviour”. Zikmund (2003) however argues that descriptive statistics form the basis of every quantitative analysis of data. In this study, descriptive statistics were used to present quantitative descriptions of data using pie charts, bar graphs and tables. According to Burns and Burns (2008:19), descriptive research “is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens”. Data was quantified in order to permit statistical manipulations and analysis.

3.2.2 Qualitative research

“Qualitative approach to research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind such as a subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior” (Cooper and Schindler 2008:146). It is “a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and in the world in which they live”.
This type of research is especially important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover aims or the underlying motives and desires of human behavior, using in depth interviews for the purpose (Cavana et al, 2001). Investigating the strengths of a learning organisation requires qualitative research (Nyame-Asiamah and Patel (2009). For the purpose of this research study, a qualitative research was appropriate hence descriptive research was used to obtain the opinion of respondents on their organisation’s learning.

3.2.3 Combining qualitative with quantitative methods

Mixing qualitative with quantitative methods provides opportunity to corroborate results from diverse methods of studying a given phenomenon in a more rigorous manner (Nyame-Asiamah and Patel 2009). Many key thinkers in the field believe that it is entirely proper and indeed beneficial to combine approaches for triangulation. Triangulation, according to Zikmund (2003:146) “refers to the use of different data collection techniques within one study to help ensure that the data are telling you what you think they are telling you”.

“Any bias inherent in particular data sources, investigators and methods would be neutralised when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators and methods” (Tsang 1997). In order to provide overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon, both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches were used in this study.

3.3 RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The research population, sample, sampling size, sampling process and procedure were discussed.

3.3.1 Research population

Research population is defined as “the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inferences” (Cooper and Schindler 2008:374). In this study the target population was 3
000 individuals employed in the 100 companies in different sectors based in Harare. Burns and Burns (2008:180) describe population as all observations of interest for inclusion in a study.

3.3.2 Sample

A sample is “a representative portion of a population which is selected for study” Burns and Burns (2008:181). A carefully selected sample can provide data representative of the population from which it is drawn. In the present study, the criteria for selecting the sample were:

(a) The target population needed to be executive directors and/or human resources practitioners of target companies. Human resources professionals were asked to participate in the study due to their knowledge and involvement in their organisations (Cascio, 2005). Due to human resources professionals’ knowledge of the organisations in which they work, they are better able to accurately answer questions regarding their organisations learning abilities, atmosphere, communication, leadership, and culture.

(b) Only individuals who had been with the organisation for a period of more than six months were included in the study. The six-month requirement was put in place to guarantee that the individual had enough time to understand the learning dynamics of the organisation.

3.3.3 Sampling size

Burns and Burns (2003:194) define an optimum sample size in a survey as one, “which fulfils the requirements of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility of the generalization”. Cooper and Schindler (2008:374) assert that the sample size does not influence the importance or quality of the study and note that there are no guidelines in determining sample size in qualitative research. The number of people in the research is not normally known beforehand hence the sample may change in size and type during research. Sampling goes on until saturation has been achieved. In order for samples to be useful for the study, they should be homogeneous possessing all the characteristics that are present in the universe. The selection of the sample should be unbiased and free from prejudice Burns and Burns (2003:197)
In this study, the total number of companies listed was 30. The researcher chose participants based on their experience in the company. There were 60 potential participants, of whom 53 participated in the study. Some of the executive directors were difficult to get hold of while others did not want or refused to participate in the study.

3.3.4 Sampling process

Zikmund (2003:369) define sampling as “the process of using a small number of items or parts of a larger population to make conclusions about the whole population”. Sampling process refers to the process of selecting a group of people, with which to conduct the study (Burns and Burns, 2003:194).

In this study sampling was non-probabilistic and purposive. Purposive sampling or non-probability or deliberate sampling is “a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who is to be included in the study based on their ability to provide necessary data” (Saunders et al, 2009:237). According to Cooper and Schindler (2008:395) in non probability sampling researchers use their judgment to select the subjects to be included in the study based on their knowledge of the phenomenon and appropriate characteristics of the sample members. The rationale for choosing this approach was that the researcher sought knowledge about the opinion of executive directors and human resources managers of manufacturing companies registered with the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) and should have served in the company for at least 6 months. They were purposively chosen to participate in the study because by virtue of their positions in the company, they are aware of all the learning capabilities of their companies.

3.3.5 Sampling procedure

Sampling of the participants was done as follows:

a) A list of potential companies from various sectors of the economy was drawn;
b) The researcher approached and issued letters of introduction to either executive directors or human resources managers of the targeted companies;

c) The research project was explained to the prospective participants and they were asked personally if they were willing to take part in the research;

d) In the event of a problem with potential participants who met the criteria for selection for the study, such eligible participant was asked to refer another manager with similar experience.

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

This section of the research report presents the techniques that were used when collecting pertinent data. Data collection does not only give a description of what data is to be collected and how it would be collected, but constitute the basic information from which conclusions would be made (Zikmund, 2003:175). Since data is a vital step in research, sound data collection procedures can be employed and data gathering instruments can be combined at times to use their different strengths (p175). Data was collected in three ways and each technique will be exhaustively analysed so that the research may proceed fully understanding the merits and demerits of the technique.

Firstly, the survey method was used in this research. A survey is a method of data collection based on communication with a representative sample of individuals by use of a questionnaire or interview Zikmund (2003:175). Semi-structured personal face to face interviews were used to obtain the qualitative data. The Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) developed by Watkins and Marsick in 1993 was used. Lastly, desk top research via samples of organizational literature and documentation seeking to understand the organisation’s own views of their learning practices was also used. The following subsections discuss each instrument in detail.
3.4.1 Research questionnaire technique

Definition of the Questionnaire Technique

A questionnaire includes all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order. Saunders et al (2009:360) describes the questionnaire as an instrument that must be carefully formulated, constructed and sequenced so as to obtain the most useful data in the most effective manner. A questionnaire is simply a ‘tool’ made up of a list of questions for collecting and recording information about a particular issue of interest. Cooper and Schindler (2008:710) define a questionnaire as “an instrument delivered to the participant via personal (intercept, phone) or non-personal (computer-delivered, mail-delivered) means that is completed by the participant”. It should include clear instructions and space for answers or administrative details. Questionnaires can be used in a variety of ways such as postal, electronic, face-to-face and telephone surveys. Postal and electronic questionnaires are known as self administered questionnaires while face-to-face and telephone questionnaires are used by interviewers to ask standard set of questions and record the responses that they get and are called interview schedules.

The Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ) developed by Watkins and Marsick (1996), (see Appendix 1) was the instrument used to collect data for the quantitative methodology ex post factor research design to determine whether the researched companies were learning organisations. The DLOQ measures respondents’ perceptions on seven learning organisation dimensions. The dimensions described actions or practices by individuals, teams, leaders, and the organisation as a whole to create a learning organisation. The DLOQ contains 21 items. Each statement was measured on a scale of 1 – 5, ranging from “1” for “strongly disagree” and “5” for “strongly agree”. The questionnaire was administered to 53 respondents comprising of 19 (36%) executive directors and 34 (64%) human resources managers. Several studies have shown strong reliability and validity levels for the DLOQ (Watkins & Marsick, 1997; Yang, et al., 2004). The researcher used questionnaire technique because it was necessary to obtain comparable data from all the respondents, hence the need to ask the same questions.
Advantages of the questionnaire technique

The questionnaire technique has several advantages among them, that it is less expensive to administer than face to face interviews particularly when the research questionnaire is self-administered and there are a large number of participants even if they are spread across a wide geographical area. Questionnaires are one of the most efficient and accurate ways to collect data and it can collect lots of data.

Questions are identical and phrased exactly the same and the response format will be consistent increasing standardization and reliability. Respondents can answer anonymously in their own time and at their own pace and the problem of the respondents being unavailable when the researcher is available is overcome. The questionnaire technique guarantees anonymity, privacy and confidentiality where respondents answer questions without fear of victimization. There is therefore a greater chance of more truthful responses that with personal interviews. Questionnaires can be standard based on common research or they can be customized to meet the specific data gathering need. Many sample questionnaires already exist and in this research study the shorter version of the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ) developed by Watkins and Marsick in 1996 was used.

The DLOQ has been chosen for four main reasons as observed by Yang et al., 2004. First, it had a clear and inclusive definition of the building blocks that a learning organisation is made up. Second, it is among the few LO diagnostic tools that scan learning at all four levels namely individual, team, organisation and global. Third, not only does this framework identify the main dimensions of the learning organisation, but it also joins them in a theoretical framework by specifying their relationship. Last, it has focused on the perspective of action imperatives and therefore has practical implications.

The use of ranked statements and the boxed responses enable the participants to complete the questionnaire with ease. The fact that data can be analysed quickly made the questionnaire the preferred, appropriate and most palatable research instrument. It made possible an objective comparison of results as biased responses were minimized and the study objectives were accomplished. Advantages of using questionnaires as an instrument and tool for data collection make the tool not only the major but preferred and main data collection tool.
Disadvantages of the questionnaire technique

Questionnaires are time consuming for respondents hence there is increased chance of lower responses than in interview method. The researcher used follow up phone calls and in some cases e-mails to remind the respondents to complete the questionnaire. There is a possibility of misinterpretation of questions by the respondents caused by the wording and/or differential meaning of terms and the researcher countered it by careful formulation of a series of clear questions in simple and plain English during the questionnaire design. Responses are limited to the questions asked in the instrument and there is no opportunity to probe for additional data or ask for points of clarification. To obtain additional information the researcher used the interview technique.

Measurement tools and statistical techniques

Data was assembled through a questionnaire which was consisting of two parts. Demographic questions were asked in the first part which included age, gender, educational qualifications, position in company, work experience, size of the company and industry or sector. Second part of the questionnaire included 21 questions based on 7 dimensions of learning organisations (Creating a Supportive Culture, Gathering Internal Experience, Accessing External Learning, Communication Systems, Mechanisms for drawing conclusions, Developing an organizational memory, Integrating Learning into strategy and policy, and Applying the Learning). The questionnaire was designed on the basis of five-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), somewhat agree (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5) were used for the responses to all rating questions.

3.4.2 Interview Technique

Definition of the Interview Technique

An interview technique is used to gather primary data for almost all kinds of qualitative research and they are typically classified into structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews
(Saunders et al 2009:320). Cooper et al (2008:705) define an interview as a method of asking quantitative or qualitative questions orally from key participants. Interviews may be highly structured, resembling questionnaires, or highly unstructured, starting with general questions that allow the respondent to lead the way (Zikmund (2003:175). He defines a personal interview as “the gathering of information through face-to-face contact with an individual” (p199).

The interviews were conducted with 11 strategic leaders and responses were recorded as notes. This approach created a positive rapport between the interviewer and the participants. The length of each interview was approximately half an hour.

**Advantages of the Interview technique**

The face-to-face interaction between interviewer and respondent has several characteristics that help the researcher to obtain complete and precise information. The interview technique, mostly the unstructured type allows for feedback. They permit the interviewer to ask the respondent direct questions and allow further probing and clarification as the interview proceeds. Consequently, interviews were appropriate for studying learning organizations because raw and reliable data can be obtained directly from the subjects. In-depth interview takes place in the manner of a relaxed conversation about previously determined topics and is open enough that the respondent can express his opinions and views. The in-depth interview method has been chosen in this research so that in addition to taking down notes, the researcher could use observation.

**Disadvantages of the Interview technique**

Despite the advantages, an interview technique does present a number of problems. Interviews can consume a great deal of time if interviewers take full advantage of the opportunity to hear respondents out and change their questions accordingly. The researcher made sure each interview did not exceed thirty minutes. There can be difficulty in getting access to interviewees in an organisation and the research interviewed the human resources managers where the executive directors could not be reached. The interviewees may be reluctant to provide
confidential or sensitive information because of lack of trust and this researcher assured the interviews about confidentiality issues before the interviews.

3.4.3 Desktop research technique

Definition of the desktop research technique

Desk research is the research technique which is mainly acquired by sitting at a desk and done by examining the documentary sources to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources. It is a form of secondary research through an overview of existing/secondary data which gives details and is usually exact. Zikmund (2003:54) calls it exploratory research and defines it as “initial research conducted to clarify and define the nature of the problem”.

Advantages of the desktop research technique

Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost involved is the researcher’s time. Data can be reviewed repeatedly. Desk research is very effective and can be conducted in starting phase of the research as it is quite quick and less expensive and most of the basic information could be easily fetched which can be sued as benchmark in the research process. Initial desk research can be carried out in order to gain background knowledge to a subject as well as providing useful leads that will help to get the maximum from a research budget. It avoids ‘re-inventing the wheel’ and can result in unforeseen or unexpected discoveries. The researcher utilised this technique and obtained a lot of information on previous research of learning organisations, the suitable methodologies and research design.

Disadvantages of the desktop research technique

There may be difficulty in retrieving documents for data sources within the organisations calling for the researcher to obtain permission prior to gaining access. To avoid these problems, the
researcher approached the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) and the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE) and obtained generally publicly available documents about the researched organisations. The other disadvantage is that there may be biased selection of material by the researcher or report bias. The researcher used the Internet sources using the Bindura University library access codes to access some sites for literature on the learning organisation.

3.5 VALIDITY ASSESSMENT OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Validity is the meaningfulness and credibility of the research project as a whole. It is the extent of dependability, conformability, verification and transferability of the project as a whole Leedy, (2005:87). A research instrument is only valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure and data are only valid if they give a true picture of what is being studied (Cooper and Schindler, 2008:292).

3.5.1 External validity

Leedy, (2005:87) defines external validity as the extent to which a research study’s results apply to situations beyond the study itself. It is the extent to which the conclusions drawn can be generalized to other contexts. In this research study the questionnaire and interview schedule were both pilot tested with a convenient sample under simulated conditions away from the study area. The targeted population was similar to that of the final study. The researcher personally distributed and collected the questionnaire copies to and from an appropriate sample drawn from the public and private sector. Interviews were also conducted with a sample gathered from the same organisations. The organisations did not include those to be covered by the actual study.

3.5.2 Internal validity

Leedy, (2005:88) describes internal validity as extent to which the design and data yielded from a research study allow the researcher to draw accurate conclusions about the cause and effect and other relationships within the data. In this research study, the pre-test assisted the researcher to establish the problems to be anticipated, to check out if the questions were answerable and
yielded the information being sought. The aim was to find out whether respondents experienced any difficulties in understanding and responding to the questions and checking that all instructions were clear, that all questions were meaningful and to measure the time taken to complete the questionnaire. The pilot study also helped the researcher to omit those questions respondents found difficult to answer and those questions that were misleading and left blank. The pilot study was also conducted so as to yield data concerning instrument deficiencies as well as suggestions for improvement. Modifications and improvements were made following the pre-test.

3.5.3 Reliability Analysis of the Learning Organisation Questionnaire

Leedy, (2005:89) describes reliability as the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain result when the entity being measured hasn’t changed. (Cooper and Schindler 2008:289) explain that reliability is a matter of what a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same results each time it is administered. It means that, using the same method, the same information will be collected each time in the repeated observation of the same event. In this research study the pre-testing of the questionnaire practically ensured its reliability as evidenced by consistence in the manner respondents answered the questions asked which in turn ensured their consistence in gathering data that was envisaged from the respondents. Reliability is a necessary contributor to validity but it is not a sufficient condition of validity.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The shorter version of the Dimensions of a Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ) was administered to the identified respondents to collect primary data at the premises of the target organizations after permission to undertake the study had been sought for. Preliminary visits were made to each of the 30 organizations from which respondents were to be drawn and an introductory letter left. The questionnaire copies were distributed and then collected later. This enabled respondent’s adequate time to answer questions without any pressure exerted to them.
The items in the instrument have been tested to be reliable and valid in several researches in the past in several countries including developing countries (Jyothibabu et al., 2010). The questionnaire included 21 questions based on 7 dimensions of learning organisations (Creating a Supportive Culture, Gathering Internal Experience, Accessing External Learning, Communication Systems, Mechanisms for drawing conclusions. Developing an organizational memory, Integrating Learning into strategy and policy, and Applying the Learning). Other relevant demographic questions were also included in the questionnaire. Likert scale scores ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), somewhat agree (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5) were used for the responses to all rating questions.

A pilot test for the questionnaire was done before use with a convenient sample under simulated conditions away from the study area. The aim was to check people’s understanding and ability to answer the questions as well as to estimate the average time each questionnaire would take to complete. On average the questionnaire took up to thirty minutes to complete. Amendments were made to the questionnaire before issuing the final version particularly on the demographic questions where respondents were reluctant to divulge the revenue of their organisations. A deadline of five days after the distribution of the questionnaires was specified as the return date. A reminder Email was sent to the respondent after the deadline and in some cases the researcher made follow up phone calls. Emphasis was placed on the voluntary completion of the questionnaires. The return rate of all questionnaires was 92 percent. Initially 60 questionnaire copies were distributed, 55 were returned and two were unusable therefore 53 were usable making a success rate of 88 percent.

Two test interviews were conducted in order to evaluate interview questions. Interview questions seemed to be clear and understandable to respondents and the test interviews proved satisfying. A few modifications were made to the final interview guide. Consent forms were signed by the interviewees prior to the interview. The researcher conducted interviews using an interview schedule or guide with structured questions at the interviewees’ chosen location and time. All questions in the interview guide were asked or covered in the interviews, but in a
different order. Each interview session took up to thirty minutes and the researcher took down brief notes during the interview. The researcher summarized the interview proceedings by restating in her own words the opinions of the participants to ensure understanding. The researcher asked the participant if they had any questions or comments to assist in the closure of interview. The consent form and the interview schedule that were used in the field are shown in the appendices.

The researcher selected relevant textbooks and read intensively and extensively picking that literature which was relevant to the research area. Literature review was conducted by the researcher to familiarise herself with the content of the phenomenon under investigation and collect data. The internet was also used to view journals, published and unpublished papers and past dissertations. The literature was obtained using a search strategy of searching the Internet accessing electronic databases including Emerald, Sage, JStor and ProQuest. A variety of key search terms were used, such as learning organization, organizational learning, learning company, learning culture and organizational performance. Newspapers and magazines were also reviewed.

### 3.7 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

According to Zikmund (2003:473), data analysis is not a linear process but occurs simultaneously with data collection in qualitative research such as in interviewing techniques. In this study data was analysed as it was collected and also after collection. In this study the raw quantitative data were collected and sorted out manually, categorized, summarized, and organised into tables using Ms Excel 2007 for ease of interpretation. Demographic information about the participants in this study was reported. It included the frequency distribution of all demographic variables in this study such as gender, age, length of service, education and position. Descriptive statistics were calculated to get information about the proportions, percentages, and means for each of the variables of interest and presented in text, paragraphs, tables and graphs. All forms of analysis attempted to portray consistent patterns in the data so the results could be studied and interpreted in a meaningful way.
3.8 SUMMARY

The methodology chapter acted as a compass for the whole study. This chapter has outlined the theoretical framework that underpinned this research. It focused on research design used in this study, research methodology, population and methods applied in the selection of respondents. The data gathering procedures and data analysis have been described. The next chapter dealt with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected.
CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The principal objective of the study was to examine whether manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe were learning organisations. The previous chapter outlined the methodology that was used to collect and analyse data in this research study. This chapter presents the data that was collected during the research process. The data was subjected to a thorough analysis with an aim to revealing the LO characteristic in Zimbabwean manufacturing companies and to establish the potential solutions for the research problem. The chapter consists of two sections: typing of data and analyzing the same and discussing the dimensions of the LO in Zimbabwean companies.

Data Sample Information

Mixed methods of collecting data were used in this research study including qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data were collected using face to face interviews and the quantitative data were collected using a survey the Dimensions of a Learning Organization (DLOQ). There were a total of 64 respondents who participated in the study (11 interview participants and 53 questionnaire respondents). As for the quantitative data, there were initially 60 questionnaire copies that were distributed and 55 were collected. However, two (3%) questionnaire copies were eliminated from the study one due to the participants not meeting the inclusion criteria and the other due to incomplete information therefore the number of usable questionnaire responses was 53 and the success rate in that case was 88%. Fifteen individuals were targeted for face to face interviews and out of that number, 11 were actually interviewed resulting in a 73% success rate. In the opinion of the researcher, the success rates were satisfactory and fairly representative of the target population. With such a success rate, the presentation and analysis of gathered data was then commenced on.
4.2 DATA PRESENTATION PROCESS

This section of the research report presents data that was collected during the research process and proceeds to analyse it accordingly. In the chapter, data is presented using mixed methods of research as Greene et al (1989:256) stress that researchers can use any research methods they want, because the quantitative and qualitative methods are not “inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm”.

4.2.1 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Saunders et al (2009:157) explains that demographic data are needed to obtain basic information about the respondent. It provides identification material about the respondent such as age and gender. Demographic data, in addition, helps through the analysis of subgroups to provide a method for identifying differences in key results in responses by subgroups such as on age and gender. According to the study by Doroudi (2012) demographic characteristics have an effect on individual level learning.

The demographic information of the respondents is detailed below:

**Table 4.1: Age of respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 – 30 Years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 40 Years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 50 Years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 50 Years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents’ age above is statistically portrayed in a bar graph in figure 4.1 below.
The results indicate that 13% of the respondents were aged between 21 and 30 years, 24% were between 31 and 40 years, 32% aged between 41 and 50 years and 31% were older than 50 years. In the study by Moilanen (2005) the most typical age varied between 41 to 50 years and over half of the respondents (55%) were between 31 and 40 years old.

The sample had a good spread of age. The uniformity of respondents’ characteristics meant that they could be compared reliably, minimising concern that age difference could affect the findings. The higher frequency in the age group 41 – 50 and over 50 indicates that the organisations studied are led by mature individuals. In the research done by Jamali and Sidani (2008), the results indicated that the old managers find it difficult to unlearn old habits and learn new behaviours.
The research had a sample size of 53 and the results indicated a clear majority of women among respondents 34 or 64% and 19 or 36% of the respondents were males. The results are in contrast to the results obtained by Kayinamura (2012) where there were more men than women in the research sample but similar to Moilanen (2005) in which there were more women than men. That might have been attributable to empowerment of women to senior positions or their availability as most top managers could not be accessed due to commitments.

**Table 4.2 Qualifications of the respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The academic level of the respondents varied and included some with a high school diploma. Fourteen (26%) held a national diploma, 29 (55%) were holders of a Bachelor’s degree, 8 (15%) held a master’s degree and only 2 (4%) held a doctorate degree. The sample had a good spread of educational backgrounds and the assumption was that they are capable of learning. Previous empirical studies appear to be in agreement with this result.

Table 4.3   Position of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR Practitioner</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixty four percent of the respondents were human resources managers and 36% were executive directors in the companies they were employed. This is attributable to the nature of job of the executive director who could not be available. The HR mostly works in the office and could afford the time to participate in the survey.

Table 4.4   Length of service of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of service</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 months – 2 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5 Years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 Years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 20 Years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Years and Above</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 2% of the respondents had served for less than 2 years, 13% between 2 and 5 years, 43% between 5 and 10 years, 17% between 10 and 20 years and 25% had been with their organisations for more than 20 years. More than 85% had worked for their organisations from 6 years to 25 years indicating long lasting employment as typical in all the studied organisations.
The respondents’ length of service indicates loyalty of the respondents to their respective organisations. They may, however find it difficult to unlearn old practices after such a long time.

**Data Analysis**

According to Leedy, (2005), “in analysing data” the researcher will: 1) look for a logical pattern of occurrence of facts in chronological order in order, 2) categorise the data into meaningful groups to get a sense of what the data means, 3) use identifications of patterns or responses to questionnaires and classify them, 4) construct a general synthesis and draw conclusions that may have implications beyond the specific case”. The data collected through a questionnaire was analysed using the arithmetic mean, range and percentages.

**4.2.2 Perception of the Learning Organisation Characteristics**

This section includes the findings that were obtained from the Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ). Issues related to the characteristics or dimensions of learning organisations were evaluated from the respondents’ points of view. The questionnaire consisted of 21 items which reflected the perception of the organization on promoting continuous learning culture (6 questions), at a team/group level (3 questions) and at an organizational level (12 questions). The study participations were asked to rate their responses on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree), to 5 (strongly agree). A score of 3 was interpreted as neutral. Any statement that scored above 3 suggested that the respondent perceived their organisation as a learning organisation. Likewise, any statement score below 3 suggested that the organisation was not perceived as a learning organisation. This is in agreement with Moilanen (2005).

The data gathered was evaluated factor by factor, to recognize areas of strength as well as areas of weakness. The evaluation could be used to direct further research or actions that stand to benefit the operations or competitiveness of the manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. The summary of the questionnaire is shown in table 4.5 below.
Table 4.5  3 Factors of the Dimension of Learning Organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Question Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Level</td>
<td>Continuous Learning</td>
<td>1 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inquiry and Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team or Group Level</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>7 - 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And Team Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Level</td>
<td>Embedded Systems</td>
<td>10 - 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systems Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide Leadership for Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The means for each question were calculated and the full results are presented in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6  Individual Question Response Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. In my organisation, people help each other learn</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In my organization, people are given time to support learning (i.e. time to attend training both on and off the job)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In my organisation, people are rewarded for learning.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In my organization, people are given open and honest feedback to each other.</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In my organisation, whenever people state their view, they also ask what others think.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In my organisation, people spend time building trust with each other.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team or Group Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In my organisation, teams/groups have the freedom to adapt their goals as needed.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In my organisation, teams/groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussions or information collected (i.e. organizational policies and procedures)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. In my organization, teams/groups are confident that the organisation will act on their recommendations.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. My organisation creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance.  
11. My organisation makes its lessons learned available to all employees  
12. My organisation measures the results of the time and resources spent on training.  
13. My organization recognizes people for taking initiative  
14. My organisation gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish their work.  
15. My organisation supports employees who take calculated risks (i.e. use initiative)  
16. My organisation encourages people to think from a global perspective.  
17. My organisation works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs.  
18. My organization encourages people to get answers from across the organization when solving problems.  
19. My organisation, leaders mentor and coach those they lead.  
20. In my organisation, leaders continually look for opportunities to learn.  
21. In my organisation, leaders ensure that the organisation’s actions are consistent with its values.

Note N = 53.

From this table, it can be noted that of the 21 items on the questionnaire, 7 (33.3%), mean scores were lower than 3.0 and 14 (66%) mean scores were above the mid-point (3.0) of the scale suggesting that the respondents are of the perception that their organisations somewhat practiced the learning organisation concepts. On the overall, the participants’ perceptions about the seven action imperatives ranked between 1.8 and 4.3. The large range may indicate the varying views of the sample.

The highest ranked dimension was “Continuously Seek for Opportunities to Learn” at 4.3 and the lowest ranked dimension was ”Given Open and Honest Feedback to Each Other” at 1.8. The results and data revealed that the respondents perceived their organisations as learning organisations. Specific summary of the participant’s responses are shown in Table 4.7 below.
Table 4.7 Descriptive Statistics by Category Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Group Mean</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>1 – 6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team/Group</td>
<td>7 – 9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational</td>
<td>10 – 21</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LO Characteristics at the Individual Level

Six questions were asked for individual level. The group mean was 3.2 and the maximum 3.9 while the minimum was 1.8 under the category.

Table 4.8 Individual Level Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In my organisation, people help each other learn</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In my organisation, people are given time to support learning (i.e. time to attend training both on and off the job)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In my organisation, people are rewarded for learning.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In my organisation, people are given open and honest feedback to each other.</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In my organisation, whenever people state their view, they also ask what others think.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In my organisation, people spend time building trust with each other.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Mean</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In my organisation, people help each other learn scored a mean of 3.2 slightly above the midpoint indicating that there was an element of learning at the individual level. Question 2 (in my organisation, people are given time to support learning later expanded with i.e. to attend training both on and off the job) scored the highest mean of 3.9. The respondents agree that the organisation supports requests for learning opportunities and training. It would appear most organisations believed that learning is about training but they did not realise that training without a good learning culture will not result in learning. The fact that most organisations spend time and money on the human resources development is a good start for those that wish to develop into learning organisations. They will need to embrace the other aspects of a learning culture.
A surprising result was received for the question “in my organisation, people are rewarded for learning”. A low score of 2.7 indicates that there is nothing to motivate employees to want to learn if there is no recognition financial or otherwise. The researcher was surprised by the result because question 6 “In my organisation people spend time building trust with each other” goes hand in hand with this question but had a low score again of 2.7. Trust is a vital requirement in building a learning organisation and is the basis for information sharing and team building. Firms should reinforce the need for dialogue to improve communication and to strengthen a culture of openness and trust in organisations.

**LO Characteristics at the Team/Group Level**

**Table 4.9 Team Level Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team or Group Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. In my organisation, teams/groups have the freedom to adapt their goals as needed.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In my organization, teams/groups revise their thinking as result of group discussions or information collected (i.e. organizational policies and procedures)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. In my organisation, teams/groups are confident that the organisation will act on their recommendations.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The group mean of the team level was 3.2 while the minimum mean was 3.0 and the highest 3.4. There was consistency in the perceptions of the respondents about their organizational cultures at group level. Team learning according to Jamali et al., 2006 is the link to individual and organizational linking hence there can be no learning organisation in the absence of it.

The results therefore could be translated to mean that the studied organisations could not become learning organisation if teams could not learn as suggested in the study by Jamali et al., 2006 which concluded: “Organisations are able to learn only if teams in organisations learn collectively through the experience and knowledge sharing among individuals”.
The conclusion from this finding is there is a need to improve team learning capabilities. These include learning within teams as well as cross-functional team learning to encourage learning at the organizational level. The results of this study might challenge Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations to explore ways to improve learning within and across teams.

**LO Characteristics at the Organisational Level**

**Table 4.10 Organisational Level Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational Level</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. My organisation creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My organization makes its lessons learned available to all employees</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My organisation measures the results of the time and resources spent on training.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My organisation recognizes people for taking initiative</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My organisation gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My organization supports employees who take calculated risks (i.e. use initiative)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. My organisation encourages people to think from a global perspective.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. My organisation works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. My organisation encourages people to get answers from across the organization</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when solving problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. In my organisation, leaders mentor and coach those they lead.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. In my organisation, leaders continually look for opportunities to learn</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. In my organisation, leaders ensure that the organisation’s actions are consistent</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with its values.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group mean** 3.4
From this table, it can be noted that:

- A mean of 2.2 for the question “my organisation creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance” indicate there is no measuring of performance and this may mean the organisations do not have a benchmark on which their performance is evaluated. It is difficult to create a learning culture under such circumstances. All other effort may become fruitless.

- “My organisation makes its lessons learned available to all employees” obtained a high mean of 3.8 which is a good indicator of progress towards becoming a learning organisation. There is also an indication that the management and teams share information regarding industry trends and competitors. This is normally shared through the company’s newsletter and staff meetings.

- “My organisation measures the results of the time and resources spent on training” scored 3.1 a clear contradiction with question 10 where performance was not measured. It indicates that management are worried about their financial resources that is why they want to keep a record of learning expenses when they do not measure the learning. There is no way the manufacturing organisations can become learning organisations no matter how much they spend on learning if performance cannot come about unless measurement takes place to investigate and give meaning to existing theory, and to diagnose and guide their organisation.

- “My organisation gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish their work” score a mean of 3.1 showings some element of empowerment. According to Jamali et al., 2006, empowerment is a key feature of post-bureaucratic organisation and works best when employees are brought together in teams.

- “My organisation supports employees who take calculated risks” (i.e. use initiative) scored a mean of 3.7. This suggests leaders who tolerate mistakes and embrace them and considers it as a learning opportunity. This will encourage the development of trust and assist employees to become more experimental. This is consistent with the results in the study by Maria et al., (2003).

- “My organisation encourages people to think from a global perspective” had a high score mean of 4.0. This result indicates that the organizations under study have open system
and connect their organizations to the environment including competitors, customers. In addition to learning from their own experiences and past history, organizations learn from best practices of others dubbed ‘enthusiastic borrowing’. This is a strength in the development of a learning organisation culture.

- “My organisation works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs” 2.8 when solving problems. There seems to be a general common understanding of the globally competitive environment in which the organisation operates. It may also mean that there is a strong customer focus in all the decisions.

- “My organisation encourages people to get answers from across the organisation when solving problems.” This question had a good score of 3.7 and confirms attributes of a learning environment where teams are encouraged to exchange and share information. It fosters an effective learning culture.

- “In my organisation, leaders mentor and coach those they lead” 3.5 Overall there is a good perception regarding the role of management in coaching and mentoring those they lead and management plays a crucial role in continually looking for opportunities to learn and ensuring that the organisation’s actions are consistent with its values. However, empowerment of employees to contribute to the company vision is still ranked low. Management indicated that they had a clear understanding of their responsibility to act as facilitators and supporters of learning.

- “In my organisation, leaders continually look for opportunities to learn” score a mean of 3.4. There is a perception that leaders generally support requests for learning opportunities and training. While the organisation seeks for learning opportunity, a learning culture may not be brought about in the absence of individuals who are ready and willing to learn.

- “In my organisation, leaders ensure that the organisation’s actions are consistent with its values” score the highest mean value of 4.3. Management indicated that they had a clear understanding of their responsibility to act as facilitators and supporters of learning. This is a typical attribute of transformational leaders who can transform their organisations into learning organisations.
Summary of Findings

12 mean scores were above the mid-point (3.0) of the scale and 2 fell below. The least value of mean was 2.2 “My organisation creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance” and was 4.3 “In my organisation, leaders ensure that the organisation’s actions are consistent with its values”.

These results show some inconsistencies in the respondents’ perceptions. On one hand they seem very sure they have what it takes to promote a learning culture yet on the other hand they are not sure. There was lack of interpersonal trust in the team or group level. The results suggested that the strength of the organisations lay in their leadership style, while their weakness rest in empowering people toward a common vision. The slightly higher mean at the organisation level could imply strong visionary leaders in agreement with Jimali et al (2009). It can therefore be concluded that the organisations studied in this research study are not yet learning organisations but have leaders who have the capability to transform their organisation. Effort is needed in the individual and team level in order for Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations to become real learning organisations.

Qualitative data analysis

Interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes each were conducted with 11 respondents. The interviewees were open and willing to trust the researcher with their information. This is attributable to their appreciation of the importance of the subject under study. The results of the face to face interviews made the following observations:

- 80% of the interviews had knowledge about the concept of learning organisation.
- Their organisations had deliberate training programmes for learning on the job.
- Interpersonal trust was lacking in their culture.
- Their knowledge was a result of their own initiative not what their organisations did for them. What it implies is that they too may not have a willingness to let their subordinates learn.
• Ninety five percent (50) of the respondents agreed that a learning organisation improves performance. This means that because they appreciate the benefits of learning they can foster learning culture in their organisations.

• Asked why they wanted their organisations to be learning organisations they agree that they wanted to be more profitable.

Asked on what they perceived were the major barriers to learning in their organisations, the most prominent responses are tabulated in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.11 Barriers to Learning Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to Change</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Resources</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N= 53

The table shows that most of the interview respondents believed that failure to learn in their organisations was attributable to resistance to change (90%) and culture (70%). These findings agree with those in Dourodi (2012).

Summary of findings

The studied organisations are still working towards implementing learning organisation paradigm because they show signs and symptoms of organisation in transition. Some inconsistencies were noted in the results and a broader study of Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations is clearly needed.
4.3 SUMMARY

The objective of this research study was to investigate the existence of learning organisation concepts and their application in manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. This chapter presented data that was collected through the quantitative survey questionnaire and the qualitative interviews. The data was analysed in answer to the research questions. The next chapter formulated the research summary, conclusions and recommendations suggested on learning organisations.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of data. The objective of this conclusive chapter was to present the conclusions from the study. The chapter presented a detailed summary of the entire research process and also presented conclusions that were arrived at after analyzing data that had been collected. On the basis of the conclusions drawn, the research proceeded to propose areas for future research and for practice. In this chapter, the research questions were answered and all related issues were discussed.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to conduct a survey to determine the extent to which the seven dimensions of the learning organisation existed or are practiced in Zimbabwean manufacturing companies. The study reviewed literature related to learning organisations which was obtained from sources such as textbooks, newspapers and magazines, Government publications, the Internet and organizational documents such as annual reports. The target population was executive directors and human resources managers from Harare based CZI registered manufacturing firms. A sample of 53 individuals was selected from various companies using the purposive sampling method.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used with mixed research methodologies in data analysis in order to improve the quality of the arguments. A 21 item structured self-administered questionnaire covering the 7 learning disciplines and designed by Watkins and Marsick (1993) was used as the instrument of collecting quantitative data.
Quantitative data was collected by way of face to face interviews with 11 respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to present the collected data and analysis was done using the pencil and paper method. Finally, research study conclusions and recommendations for practice and further study were made.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

After the pertinent research data had been thoroughly analysed, the following conclusions were drawn:

5.3.1 The study contributed theoretically to the existing body of knowledge and served as a starting point for future studies on learning organisations. It enabled future researchers to gain an understanding of learning organisations and provided a suitable theoretical background that could be applied to the study of the Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations. It enabled practitioners to identify whether the culture in their organisation is conducive to learning and help leaders to promote a learning environment and skills to promote learning organisations.

5.3.2 A learning organisation is a group of people who have woven a continuous, enhanced capacity to learn into the corporate culture. It is an organisation in which learning processes are analysed, monitored, developed, and aligned with competitive goals. It generates knowledge and learning faster than competitors and turns that learning into a strategic advantage to out-market, out-manage, and out-sell competition. Observable characteristics of a learning organisation are that it;

(a) Observes learning as ongoing, strategic and grows out of the work itself,
(b) Promotes asking of questions and tolerates mistakes as an opportunity to learn,
(c) Encourages team learning as a link between individual and organizational learning,
(d) Creates systems both technology based and low tech to capture and share learning,
(e) Empowers people to collaborate and obtain a collective vision,
(f) Is an open system that connects to its environment; and
(g) Provides strategic leadership.
5.3.3 Through the discussion in the literature, the findings presented in the previous chapter and the conclusion derived from the analysis of the results of this study, the researcher could make some conclusions about the learning culture of Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations. The study results indicated that the level of LO characteristics of the studied organisations were weak at individual, team and organisation levels therefore Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations had not yet succeeded in becoming fully fledged learning organisations. The outcome of this study was a model of the learning organization Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations could adopt and improve so as to ensure that structures and systems were designed in such a way to enable the characteristics of the learning organisation to exist within. It was imperative that the Zimbabwean manufacturing organisations transform into learning organisations in order to address the challenges of their ‘non learning’.

5.3.4 The literature on the LO perceives learning as worth striving for. Therefore it was worthwhile for Zimbabwean manufacturing firms to invest in building up a learning culture due to its potentially strong relationship with organizational performance (both financial and non-financial). A payoff was expected in the long run from a firm’s investment in building a learning organisation.

5.3.5 This study suggests that learning was the core process for the creation and transfer of knowledge. The establishment of an organisation’s learning culture needed strong support from the leadership. Based on the literature; a learning organisation was the most popular intervention in HRD practice because it could assist employees of the studied organisations in building their capability through knowledge.

5.4 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Earlier in the research report the researcher had made a research hypothesis that all stakeholders in the organisation had a role to play in the development of a learning organisation. The research process has shown that the hypothesis suggested earlier had been proven true and that learning should take place at all the levels of the organisation.
An organisation can transform itself into a learning organisation by first understanding the definition of a learning organisation and the remarkable competitive advantage that can be gained by the transformation. Next an organisation should implement an evaluation programme to measure effectiveness. Improvement cannot come about unless measurement takes place to investigate and give meaning to existing theory, and to diagnose and guide their organisation.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study contributed to investigating the potential of using the learning organisation disciplines in the transformation of Zimbabwean manufacturing companies, for improved performance. In an attempt to assist those who are responsible for the task of addressing the transforming organisation to learning organisations, this research study makes recommendations that if implemented, will facilitate the Zimbabwean manufacturing companies as learning organisations.

5.5.1 Leaders should create flatter organizational structures that brings forth personal development by employees’ distributed authority and encourages individuals to engage in other interpersonal skills. They ought to foster for total commitment from every level of the company by setting level learning goals and allocating resources accordingly.

5.5.2 Human resources practitioners should plan for long-term employee development programmes. They must identify as many ways as possible to reward individuals, as well as the teams in either financial or non-financial forms. Learning should be integrated with day-to-day work where possible, thus blurring the lines between learning and work. In order to benefit from individual learning, organisations should create an environment that promotes and supports learning by affording workers adequate time to explore various learning opportunities within the organisation.
5.5.3 Management should promote team learning by developing trust, openness, knowledge sharing to create synergy and collective knowledge amongst the group. This can be achieved by team building exercises.

5.5.4 Employees with ability to learn new techniques and obtain new skills should be encouraged to participate in company training courses. Leaders should create a continuous learning environment, creating an enabling culture of continuous improvements, making learning a habit, being open about problems and errors by not hiding them, increasing information accessibility.

5.5.5 Management can introduce a corporate lending library that holds trade journals, magazines, seminar DVDs and competitive information where information can be shared.

5.6 AREAS OF FUTURE STUDY

The results from this research study have generated more questions than may have answered. Would the results be confirmed if the research was done in another geographical setting of a different industry or subsector? Is there a conflict between perceptions at different levels in an organisation or would the results be the same with a larger sample? Can the demographic characteristics of the participants affect the respondent’s perception? Based on the survey results, the literature review, and the conclusions, integrating these domains, the following recommendations have been made:

5.6.1 Given the absence of a similar local study on learning organisations in the country of Zimbabwe, the researcher hoped that this study could be used as a pilot study for future studies. The organisations that were studied did not necessarily represent all organisations in Zimbabwe due to cultural, economic, and geographic conditions. In order to control for external validity, a larger sample from a wider variety and greater number of manufacturing organisations
throughout Zimbabwe need to be included in the study. The study could focus on a particular sub sector such as clothing and footwear to test if the findings can be replicated.

5.6.2 The results from the survey could be invalid due to the fact that only one human resource practitioner and one executive director from each organisation surveyed. The researcher suggested doing the study on employees from different organizational levels (shop floor to management) from organisations to control the threats to internal validity and in order to determine whether the conclusions reached about LO in this study are applicable in those contexts. Another limitation regarding the sample was 53 individuals from organisations in the manufacturing sector participated in the study and it would have been preferable with a greater number of participating organizations from different industries and with different organizational characteristics, in order to get a wide range of attitudes.

5.6.3 The researcher is of the opinion that future research could fruitfully focus on a correlational study to determine the extent of relationships existing between variables, and measuring the extent to which two characteristics vary together and how well one can be predicted from knowledge of the other. The study can for example investigate relationships among organizational learning culture, and the respondents’ age, gender, educational qualification or working experience.
REFERENCES


Msindo, C. (2005) “An analysis of dynamics at play in Delta organizational culture, climate and development and an exploration of how Delta can transform itself into a learning organisation”.


Appendix A

61 Harare Drive
Greendale
Harare

Dear Respondent

**RE: REQUEST THAT YOU COMPLETE THE ATTACHED QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am Lucia Madamombe a student at Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) and my student number is B1024739. I am studying towards the degree Master of Business Leadership (MBL) and research is a compulsory component of the degree qualification. I am conducting my Master’s degree dissertation, and I would like to invite you to participate in a research study.

You have been selected as a possible participant to assist me by way of completing the attached questionnaire, which will assist me in achieving the objectives of this study. The purpose of this dissertation is to identify the impact of the cultural aspects of the learning organisation on the performance improvement in your organisation.

All the information you will disclose will be used for no other purpose than for the purpose of my academic research. Please be assured that your information will be treated confidentially and your identity will not be revealed. I hope you will, unconditionally, provide me with the assistance I seek.

Thank you very much in advance for your kind cooperation. Before, during and after the participation if you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on my mobile 0712872591 or email me at lulumada@gmail.com.

Thank you for your assistance.

Lucia Madamombe
**Researcher**
Appendix B

61 Harare Drive
Greendale
Harare

Dear Respondent

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO ALL INTERVIEWEES

I am Lucia Madamombe a student at Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) and my student number is B1024739.

I am studying towards the degree Master of Business Leadership (MBL) and research is a compulsory component of the degree qualification. I have very carefully selected you to assist me by attending a face to face interview with me on a date to be agreed.

All the information you will disclose will be used for no other purpose other than for the purpose of my academic research. Please be assured that the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. I hope you will unconditionally, provide me with the assistance I seek.

Thank you very much in advance for your kind cooperation. If you have any questions or require further explanation on my request, please feel free to contact me on my mobile 0712872591 or my email address lulumada@gmail.com.

Yours faithfully

Lucia Madamombe
Appendix C

Follow-up letter to non-respondents of initial questionnaire

61 Harare Drive
Greendale
Harare

Dear Respondent

A week ago, I wrote to you seeking your participation in a learning organisation survey. If you have already returned the questionnaire I would like to thank you. However, I have not yet received your completed questionnaire I would appreciate it if you would respond to this letter.

I am writing to you again because of the significance of each questionnaire to the usefulness of the study. Your company is part of a carefully selected sample and it is important that everyone responds in order for the results to be truly representative. I would like to assure you again that your answers are completely confidential. In the event that you have misplaced your questionnaire please do not hesitate to contact me on 0712872591 or email lulumada@gmail.com.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Lucia Madamombe
Researcher
Appendix D

Questionnaire

A Research Study

On

Measuring Learning in Organisations in Zimbabwean Organisations

Dear Respondent

Developing a learning organisation is a goal of many organisations. An important step in evolving to a learning organisation is the identification of learning patterns. This survey is designed to identify everyday patterns of learning in any organisation.

Please review this section before continuing with the survey

The word, “organisation” is used throughout this survey. The work organisation is used to define your company or institution, as you answer the questions think in terms of your company.

The words, group and we are used in the survey to refer to the people in a department or division.

Completion of the questionnaire will take about 20 to 30 minutes. Answer the questions by ticking one response. Responses range from 1 strong disagree to 5 strongly agree. Your involvement is voluntary and you may choose not to answer any question.

In this questionnaire, you are asked to think about how your organisation supports and uses learning at an individual, team, and organizational level. All information you provide is strictly confidential and anonymous. Your personal responses will not be identified in any way in the final reporting.

Your response within five working days of receiving the questionnaire is appreciated.

Thank you for your participation

When you have completed the survey:

Put the completed questionnaire in the provided self-addressed envelope and leave with the PA or at the reception.
PART A (General Demographic Questionnaires)

Please answer the following questions which will help in analyzing the survey results.

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate box

1. How old are you?
   - 20 – 30 Years
   - 30 – 40 Years
   - 40 – 50 Years
   - Above 50 Years

2. Please indicate your gender
   - Male
   - Female

3. What is your highest educational qualification?
   - Diploma
   - Bachelor’s degree
   - Master’s degree
   - Doctoral degree

4. What is your position in your organisation?
   - HR Practitioner
   - Executive Director

5. How long have you served in your organisation?
   - 6 months – 2 Years
   - 2 – 5 Years
   - 5 – 10 Years
   - 10 – 20 Years
   - 20 Years and Above
# PART B (Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaire – DLOQ)

DLOQ is an instrument to measure levels of the learning organisation, behaviours of individuals and leaders in your organisation. Read through each of the following statements and please tick the most appropriate response which best describes your organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My organisation makes its lessons learned available to all employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My organisation creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. My organisation measures the results of the time and resources spent on training</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. In my organisation, people spend time building trust with each other.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. In my organisation, people give open and honest feedback to each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. In my organisation, whenever people state their view, they also ask what others think.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. My organisation works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs.</td>
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<td>8. My organisation encourages people to get answers from across the organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. My organisation encourages people to think from a global perspective.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In my organisation, people help each other to learn.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. In my organisation, people are rewarded for learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. In my organisation, people are given time to support learning i.e., time to attend training both on and off the job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. In my organisation, teams/groups have the freedom to adapt their goals as needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. In my organisation, teams/groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussion or information collected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. In my organisation, teams/groups are confident that the organisation will act on their recommendations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. My organisation supports employees who take calculated risks (e.g., use initiative).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. In my organisation, leader mentors and coaches those he or she leads.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. In my organisation, leader continually look for opportunities to learn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. In my organisation, leader ensures that the organisation’s actions are consistent with its values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Leaders serve as learning role models “walk the talk” when it comes to organisational learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART C**

Learning organisation results in improved organisational performance

Agree   Disagree

My organisation is a Learning Organisation

Agree   Disagree

What are the barriers to learning in your organisation? What stops you from learning?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Why do you want your organisation be more of a learning organisation?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………..
Appendix E

Interview Guide

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Please describe your organisation
  Size
  Subsector

What role does Organisational Learning play in your daily business operations as a way to achieve your business goals?

Does the system provide support for forming groups of employees specialized on a certain topic?

Best Practices and Lessons learned, are they documented and shared at the end of a team work effort through a shared document system in place?

Can you share an example of a particular situation in which your organisation learned something important that helped it function better in some way?

Probes
  Context of the situation
  How has the organisation learned? (Process)
  Why do you consider this an important situation?
  What is being learned (Content)
  What does learning yield? (Efficiency and effectiveness)
  What is different or what has changed?

Do you have any knowledge about the concept of learning organisation?

Probes
  What is your understanding of Learning Organisation (LO)?

Does your organisation have any deliberate training programmes for training employees on the job?

How has your organisation contributed to your career development? Your leadership skills?

Do you think learning organisation improves performance?

Why do you want your organisations to become a learning organisation?

What do you consider to be the major barriers to learning in your organisation?