

Organizational cultural factors leading to learned helplessness in service industry in Bangalore – An empirical study

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Abstract:

In today's business world, human resources are considered as an important resource for the success of any organisation. To make better use of human resources, organizations must empower their employees about their performance and reward for their performance. But this may not work in all organization because employees show learned helplessness behaviours. Employees show this because of some negative impact of learned helplessness attributions on their performance. So, it is important to know why and how people develop learned helplessness and how organization culture plays a role in developing learned helplessness among employees. An attempt has been made to find the relationship between the different dimensions of organization culture and learned helplessness attribution among the service sector employees in this paper. It was found that three factors responsible for creating learned helplessness among employees. These are internal attribution, external attribution, and global attribution.

1.0 Introduction:

In past number of decades, most researchers and practitioners who made a study on organisations suggests that the idea of culture is the climate and practices that organisations creates around their treatment towards employees, promoted values and articulation of convictions of an organization. Schein(2004) highlights that

“the only thing that leaders have to do is to create and manage culture in organization. The unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture; make other employees of the organization to understand and work with the existing culture and that it is the responsibility of every leader to destroy or change the existing culture when it is viewed as dysfunctional”.

“Culture shapes employees' attitudes, values, motivation, and performance (Lather 2010). Culture has been seen as the lens through which employees see organizational expectations and obligations”. Culture is the most important control mechanism used by organization in effective control over employees. According to Schein (1992) “culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learns to solve its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well to be considered valid. Therefore, it should be taught to new members of the organization as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems”.

Schein (2004) highlights that maybe the most intriguing part of culture is that it directs us toward marvels that are underneath the surface, that are effective in their effect yet undetectable and to an impressive degree unconscious. Schein says that culture is what personality or character or behavior individual should have in the organization. We can see the employee's behaviour that results, but often we cannot see the factors behind that cause certain kinds of behaviour of employees. Yet, just like our personality and character guide and restrict our behavior, culture in organization should guide and restrict the behaviour of members of a group through

the shared norms that are held in that group. Schein (1990) says that there are two level of culture, i.e. visible and invisible levels of corporate culture - the first levels of the culture incorporate observable signs, ceremonies, stories, slogan, behaviors, dress code and physical settings. The second levels of the culture include the way of life incorporate fundamental esteems, suspicions, convictions, dispositions and emotions

Deal and Kennedy (1982) stresses on more visible levels of culture like heroes, rites, rituals, legends and ceremonies, because it is these attributes that shapes the behaviour of employees. But he says that it is the invisible levels of culture that is more suitable to public sector organisations in terms of their influence in progressing or hindering organizational change.

Organizational culture has become an interesting topic for investigation for researchers. Various components of organizational culture such as recognition and reward, communication, taking risk, training and development of employees, creativity and innovation, team work orientation, result orientation, employee orientation etc. have been explored in relation to several different organizational outcomes. But, no much studies have been carried out by the researcher to find out the

reasons for factors of organizational culture leading to learned helplessness among employees especially in service industry.

Learned helplessness

Learned helplessness was first identified by psychologist Martin Seligman in 1968. During psychological experiments conducted to study the behavior of dogs Seligman noticed that dogs that were controlled while he administered a mild electric shock became unable to escape from the situation, even when the control were loosened. Seligman noted that the resulting compliance and inability to act appeared similar to the behavior of depressed individuals, who believe that they are unable to influence or change their situation.

The Discovery of Learned Helplessness

The idea of educated vulnerability was found by extraordinary analysts Martin Seligman and Steven F. Maier. They had at first watched vulnerable conduct in pooches that were traditionally moulded to expect an electrical stun in the wake of hearing a tone. Afterwards, the dogs were placed in a shuttle box that contained two chambers isolated by a low obstruction. The floor was electrified on one side, and was not electrified on the other side. The dogs previously subjected to the classical

conditioning made no endeavours to get away, despite avoiding the shock simply involved jumping over a low barrier.

In order to investigate this, the investigator did another experiment. In first group, the dogs were strapped into harnesses for certain period and then released from harness. The second group dogs were placed in the same harnesses, but they were given electrical shocks that could be avoided by pressing a panel with the help of their noses. The third group of dogs were given the same shocks as those in the second group, except that those in this group were not able to control the duration of the shock. For the dogs in the third group, the shocks was completely random and as not in their control. Later, these dogs were put in a shuttle box. Dogs from the first and second group quickly learned that jumping the barrier eliminated the shock. But those dogs from third group, made no attempts to escape from the shock given to them. Due to the previous experience the dogs had, developed a cognitive expectation that they cannot do anything to stop the shock given to them.

Learned Helpless in People

The result of learned helplessness proved with the experiment conducted on different animals, the effect of LH is also seen in the human beings in later stages. to prove this lot of experiment was made on human

beings. Investigators did an experiment on child, who was performing ineffectively on math exam and assignments will rapidly start to feel that nothing he will have any impact on his math performance. At the later point when child was confronted with a math-related matters, child was encountered a feeling of helplessness.

Learned helplessness has likewise been related with a few diverse mental issue. Despondency, nervousness, dread, timidity and dejection can be exacerbated by scholarly defencelessness. For instance, a lady who feels bashful in social circumstances may in the end start to feel that there is nothing she can do to conquer her indications. This feeling her side effects are out of her immediate control may lead her to quit attempting to draw in herself in social circumstances, hence making her bashfulness considerably more articulate

2.3 Evolution of Organisational Culture Concept:

The idea of association culture got significance in association in the late 1980s and mid 1990s amid which as administration researchers were investigating how and why the American organizations neglected to contend with their Japanese partners. The idea of a national culture was not an adequate clarification to this marvel. Rather, a model was required that took into consideration separation between

associations inside a culture (Schein, 1990). This at last come about to the idea of authoritative culture.

Besides, Schein(1992) suggests that organisational culture is even more important today than it was in the past. Increased competition, globalisation, alliances, mergers, acquisitions, takeovers, burnouts and various workforce development shave created a greater need for the following:

- 1.Coordination and integration across organisations is required in order to improve efficiency, quality and speed of designing, manufacturing and delivering products and services.
- 2.Product, Strategy and Process innovations and the ability to successfully introduce new technologies for work.
- 3.Effective management of dispersed work units and increasing workforce diversity.
- 4.Cross-cultural management of global enterprises and/or multi- national partnerships.
- 5.Construction of hybrid cultures that merge aspects of cultures from what were distinct organisations prior to an acquisition or mergers.
- 6.Management of workforce diversity
- 7.Facilitation and support of work team

Notwithstanding a more noteworthy need to adjust outer and interior changes, authoritative culture has turned out to be more vital today as the world is outfitted towards learning based economy. Augmenting the estimation of representatives as scholarly resources requires a culture that advances their scholarly support and encourages both individual and hierarchical adapting, new learning creation and application, and the readiness to impart information to others (Dasanayaka and Mahakalanda, 2008). (1994) builds a cultural value signifying Dimensions of organizational **culture**: Hofstede's (1980) classified organizational culture into four dimensions;

- Power distance
- Individualism
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Masculinity

Later Hofstede & Bond (1998), added fifth dimension as short term versus long term orientation which was based on the study among the student of 23 countries with the help of questionnaire. The practitioners who was practicing related to this field have a strong criticism on the Hofstede's study (Sondergaard, 1994). "Schwartz the relationship among cultural factors and

personality in the organization. He developed a model which is based on the Hofstede's (1980) studies and collected data from the respondents of 38 countries. He found out two different dimensions of culture; affective & intellectual and self enhancement vs. self-transcendence. He categorizes cultural standards of societies into contractual culture and relationship culture on the basis of life and work". According to another practitioner Trompanaars (1993), involved 30 companies in 50 different countries, identified seven dimensions of the culture - universalism versus particularize; diffuse versus specific; neutral versus emotional; individualism versus communication; ascription versus achievement; attitude to time and attitude to the environment because this theory did not explain the guilt, shame, and self-blame that often accompanied.

Organization culture and learned helplessness:

Following couple of years of presentation of the idea of learned helplessness, the "helplessness" theory was being questioned because it was believed that many people in helpless circumstances did not become depressed and also

depression. How might one feel helpless, i.e., feel at fault, disgraced and liable about what has occurred with no capacity to control what happens (Carson and Adams, 1981). As research with human helplessness advanced, various specialists had called attention to the deficiencies of the first LH model including Abramson, Seligman and behaviour. However even though phenomenon of learned helplessness is observed among working personnel, there is a lack of empirical studies in this direction. More over the relationship between organizational culture and learned helplessness has not been explored in Indian context. So there was a need to study the relationship between organizational culture and learned helplessness among service sector employees

Teasdale (1978) and Miller and Norman (1979). The principal set of deficiencies was identified with the subject of individual contrasts, and the truth of the matter is that there might be more than one sort of human helplessness. The second set of inadequacies related to the generality of helplessness across situations, and persistence over time, when and where helplessness would be generalized once people believe that they are helpless in one situation. In particular, when the theoretical concepts were extended to humans, it failed to account for individual differences with respect to culture. In order to understand the reason for helplessness in human, the

helplessness model had to be reformulated to include an attribution framework as the main link between the perceptions of non-contingent reinforcement situations and the expectation of future non-contingency. To determine this shortage, "Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale (1978) reformulated the model of learned helplessness in view of attribution theory." Attribution theory contended that individuals make causal clarification for observed events and behaviour which diversely influence their activities and results (Heider, 1958; Wong and Weiner, 1981). How do people pick why their colleagues carry on as they do? What attribution do they make? How might they make attributions? Do they use a comparable technique when they come to contemplating about their own specific exercises and results? These were a couple of request that the reformulated attribution model of educated vulnerability attempted to reply. These causal attributions powerfully affect emotions, attitudes, and prosperity of workers. The attribution show gives a system by which attribution made by people can be arranged with a specific end goal to comprehend the condition of learned helplessness. This model clarified the part of attributions to sadness and weakness circumstances that assumes an imperative part in bringing on educated powerlessness. In this model, different components including authoritative culture measurements and some individual elements were appeared as indicators of educated

vulnerability attributions and the outcomes of scholarly weakness were portrayed as far as motivational, subjective, and enthusiastic deficiencies in the hierarchical set up.

However, these previous circumstances and consequences were not tested empirically in the Indian context and this motivated to discover the learned helplessness attribution process, its causes, and outcomes in the organizational set up. This study made an attempt to identify the relation between factors of organizational culture and learned helplessness attributions and also tried to know the learned helplessness attributions and its consequences on employee behavior and performance. The pattern of underlying attributions for a particular case of uncontrollability would influence a man's desires for what's to come future. These desires would thusly influence the individual's behaviour and performance in organization. According to the attribution model, learned helplessness attributions were made prompting negative results like strain or burnout and also lessening in execution or responsibility level. There are three principle measurements of the attribution system which helps in clarifying the circumstance of helplessness-internal/external, stable/unstable, and global/specific. Therefore, we here specifically call for the "effect of organizational culture on creating learned helplessness attributions" seeing the development of organizational culture as a subject of study that is essentially

an expansion of the human relations and social system approaches (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939) which thus created as correctives to the notable logical administration strategies of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915), and his successor Frank B Gilbreth (1868–1924).

Objectives of the study:

1. To find out employees' perception towards organizational culture pertaining to the organizations they are employed with.
2. To explore the relationship between Organizational culture and learned helplessness.
3. To identify factors causing learned helplessness among the employees

Need of the study:

Though there are many researches in the area of learned helplessness, most of the studies have focused on the human behaviour. However even though phenomenon of learned helplessness is observed among working personnel, there is a lack of empirical studies in this direction. Moreover the relationship between organizational culture and learned helplessness has not been explored in Indian context. So there was a need to study the relationship between organizational culture and learned helplessness among service sector employees.

Research Methodology:

Questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the employees. Data were also collected from websites, journals, and articles. The sampling population consisted of 40 employees working in the service industry in Bangalore. Convenience sampling method was used for collecting data.

Result and discussions: Objective 1:

To find out employees' perception towards organizational culture pertaining to the organizations they are employed with.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
C7-Going deeper rather than doing surface level analysis of interpersonal problems	40	3.55	1.197
C13-Confiding in seniors without fear that they will misuse the trust	40	3.63	1.030
C29-Freedom to employees breeds Indiscipline	40	3.63	1.353
C14-When the chips are down you have to fend for yourself. People cannot rely on others in times of crisis	40	3.65	1.099
C34-Usually, emphasis on team work dilutes individual accountability	40	3.65	1.145
C8-Facing challenges inherent in the work situation	40	3.75	1.104
C2-Genuine sharing of information, feelings and thoughts in meetings	40	3.77	1.187
C26-Taking independent action relating to their jobs	40	3.77	1.121

C16-Congruity between feeling and expressed behaviour. Minimum gap between what people say and do	40	3.83	.903
C18-Owing up to mistakes.	40	3.83	1.035
C40-In today's competitive situations, consolidation and stability are more important than experimentation	40	3.83	1.217
C5-Effective managers put a lid on their feelings.	40	3.83	1.083
C10-Pass the back tactfully when there is a problem	40	3.83	1.010
C20-People generally are what they appear to be	40	3.85	1.272
C33-Performing immediate tasks rather than being concerned about large organizational goals	40	3.90	1.128
C27-Close supervision of and directing employees on action	40	3.90	1.008
C3-Free discussion and communication between seniors and subordinates	40	3.93	.944
C11-Offering moral support and help to employees and colleagues in a crisis	40	3.93	1.289
C17-Tactfulness, smartness, and even a little manipulation to get things done.	40	3.95	.932
C1-Free information among employees, each respecting others, feelings, competence and sense of Judgment	40	3.95	1.085
C38-Making genuine attempts to change behaviour on the basis of feedback	40	3.95	.986
C21-Preventive action on most matters	40	3.97	1.000
C39-Thinking out and doing new things tones up the organizations vitality	40	4.00	1.038
C6-Facing and not shying away from Problems	40	4.05	.959
C12-Interpersonal contact and support among people	40	4.07	.917
C22-Seniors encouraging their subordinates to think about their development and take action in that Direction	40	4.08	.797

C15-Trust begets trust.	40	4.15	.921
C19-Telling a polite lie is preferable to telling the unpleasant truth	40	4.15	.949
C25-A stitch in time saves nine	40	4.15	.864
C28-Obeying and checking with seniors rather than acting on your own	40	4.15	1.001
C30-A good way to motivate employees is to give them autonomy to plan their work	40	4.18	1.035
C31-Team work and team spirit	40	4.20	.723
C9-Surfacing problems is not enough: we should find the solution	40	4.23	.947
C23-Considering both positive and negative aspects before taking action	40	4.23	.891
C24-Prevention is better than cure	40	4.25	1.006
C36-Trying out innovative ways of solving problems	40	4.28	.960
C32-Accepting and appreciating help offered by others	40	4.30	.883
C4-Free and frank communication between various levels helps in solving problems.	40	4.40	.744
C37-Encouraging employees to take a fresh look at how things are done	40	4.45	.597
C35-Employees involvement in developing an organization mission and goals contributes to productivity	40	4.47	.784
Valid N (listwise)	40		

From the mean statistics on organizational culture it has been found that employees have least consensus on the following variables:

- 1) C7 – Going deeper rather than doing surface level analysis of interpersonal problems. (with a mean of 3.55)
- 2) C13- Confiding in seniors without fear that they will misuse the trust (with a mean of 3.63)
- 3) C29 - Freedom to employees

breeds indiscipline (with a mean of 3.63) The variables/factors were employees have high consensus are:

- a) C35 - Employees involvement in developing an organization mission and goals contributes to productivity (with a mean of 4.47)
- b) C37 – Encouraging employees to

take a fresh look at how things are done
(with a mean of 4.45)

between various levels helps in solving
problems. (with a mean of 4.40)

c) C4 - Free and frank communication

Objective 2: To explore the relationship between Organizational culture and learned helplessness.

In order to check the relationship among organizational culture and learned helplessness a correlation study was carried out.

Table 2: Correlations

		Mean of Learned Helplessness	Mean of organizational culture
Mean of LH	Pearson Correlation	1	.893*
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.002
	N	24	24
Mean of C	Pearson Correlation	.893	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.002	
	N	24	40

*@95% Confidence Interval

The correlation is found to be $r = 0.893$ which suggests that organizational culture and learned helplessness are highly correlated. The P value is determined to be which is less than 0.05. This

suggested that at 95% confident interval we can state that there is a correlation between organizational culture and learned helplessness which is proved by r value.

Objective 3: To identify factors causing learned helplessness among the employees

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.687
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	455.655
	Df	276
	Sig.	.000

To check the feasibility of the data for conducting a factorial analysis Kaiser-

Meyer - Olkin and Bartlett's test was carried out to check the sampling adequacy. The

KMO should be 0.5 or greater and the Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant ($p < .05$). This criterion is full

filed by the test conducted which suggests that the data can be subjected to Principle Component Analysis.

Table 4: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
LH1-No matter what I do, some people do not like me.	1.000	.578
LH2-If I have more/less friends it is mainly because I wanted to have more/less friends.	1.000	.538
LH3-There is a direct relation between how hard I work and what result I get.	1.000	.727
LH4-Honesty, hard work and truthfulness are not our way of life, and there is hardly anything one man can do to change this.	1.000	.640
LH5-There are many desirable elements in the culture of my organization but I feel helpless to correct them.	1.000	.031
LH6-I know many things are bad in my organization but I am unable to do anything to correct them.	1.000	.528
LH7-I don't struggle hard to overcome my faults because I know that I will not be able to correct them.	1.000	.799
LH8-I do not like my present job but I can't quit because I will not be able to get a better job.	1.000	.676
LH9-It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad luck anyway	1.000	.812

LH10-I don't like many aspects of my job, but what can I do about it.	1.000	.508
LH11-When I fail to do as well as I am expected to do in my organization, it is usually due to lack of effort on my part.	1.000	.620
LH12-If I succeed on a task, it is usually because I am lucky, or I am helped by other people.	1.000	.696
LH13-If I were to fail in a task it would probably be because I lacked skill in that area.	1.000	.278
LH14-If I am not successful in my organization it is because of lack of expertise to do well on my job.	1.000	.715
LH15-Even if it is urgent, there is no use trying to do something in this organization if it is against rules.	1.000	.542
LH16-If I was not successful in my organization it is because my boss didn't help me.	1.000	.595
LH17-If I really try hard, I can become an expert in computer science in no time	1.000	.257
LH18-It seems to me that getting along with people is a skill.	1.000	.520
LH19-There is no use in working very hard in this organization because whatever rewards I get are in no way related to my performance.	1.000	.525
LH20-If I were not successful in my organization it is because the culture of my organization doesn't facilitate me to succeed.	1.000	.740

LH21-My life is mainly shaped by my Efforts	1.000	.630
LH22-Many times I feel that I have little influence over things that are happening to me.	1.000	.551
LH23-Whether or not I get into, depends mostly on how careful I am while walking or driving on road.	1.000	.528
LH24-When I can't understand something, it is usually because it is too hard to understand for me as well as for others.	1.000	.834

Based on extraction method of Principle Component analysis we are having a loading of 0.5 and above were retained and

the rest were omitted as given in table 4. Three variables were deleted due to low factor loading.

Table 5: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	1	5.953	24.805	24.805	5.953	24.805	24.805	2.794	11.641
2	2.597	10.822	35.628	2.597	10.822	35.628	2.786	11.608	23.249
3	2.177	9.072	44.700	2.177	9.072	44.700	2.310	9.626	32.875
4	1.857	7.739	52.438	1.857	7.739	52.438	2.087	8.697	41.572
5	1.666	6.943	59.382	1.666	6.943	59.382	1.997	8.321	49.892
6	1.303	5.429	64.811	1.303	5.429	64.811	1.978	8.241	58.133
7	1.222	5.092	69.903	1.222	5.092	69.903	1.884	7.851	65.985
8	1.100	4.585	74.488	1.100	4.585	74.488	1.546	6.441	72.426
9	1.020	4.249	78.737	1.020	4.249	78.737	1.515	6.311	78.737
10	.891	3.712	82.449						
11	.698	2.908	85.357						
12	.633	2.638	87.995						
13	.475	1.978	89.973						
14	.428	1.781	91.755						
15	.363	1.514	93.268						

16	.357	1.486	94.754					
17	.305	1.270	96.024					
18	.258	1.075	97.098					
19	.180	.752	97.850					
20	.134	.560	98.411					
21	.118	.493	98.903					
22	.109	.452	99.355					
23	.089	.372	99.727					
24	.065	.273	100.000					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

PCA technique was used because it is more robots and it analysis total variance an like common factor model that analysis only common variance. This method extracts factors from the correlation matrix with unity's as diagonal elements. In our study the factor with eigen value or

characteristics value equal to or one >1 were extracted. The details of Eigen value of the factor extracted nd cumulative variance of the extracted sum of squared loadings and rotted sum of sum of squared loading is presented in the table 5.

Table 6: Internal Attribution.

Rotated component matrix			
	Component		
	1	2	3
LH 1	.617	-.426	.171
LH 2	.587	.466	.414
LH 3	.706	.488	.383
LH 7	.558	.138	-.262
LH 8	.731	-.175	.334
LH 11	.662	.052	-.635
LH 14	.500	.072	.399
LH 18	.774	.527	-.258
LH 21	.892	.185	.068

Table 7: External attribution

Rotated component matrix			
	Component		
	1	2	3
LH 6	.639	.641	.013
LH 10	.452	.514	.321
LH 15	.662	.701	-.114
LH 16	.730	.806	-.249
LH 19	.560	.896	.155
LH 20	.609	.637	-.226

Table 8: Global attribution

Rotated component matrix			
	Component		
	1	2	3
LH 4	.478	.327	.763
LH 9	.478	.327	.663
LH 12	.766	-.119	.808
LH 22	-.003	.742	.522
LH 23	.071	.704	.664
LH 24	.560	.218	.870

A total of 9 items grouped together to form the first factor. The items fell into the broad category of *internal attribution*. attribution is any attribution that gives the reason for an occasion as something to do the individual rather than something to the outside world. 6 things clubbed together for second element. These factors broadly categorized into the *external attribution*. External attribution is something that gives

the cause of an event to the external world 6 factors clubbed together to form the third factors named *global attribution*. A global attribution is a belief that the factors affecting the outcomes applies to the large no. of situations not just one of them. So by conducting the factor analysis we identified three factors namely internal attribution, external attribution and global attribution as the likely cause of learned helplessness among employees.

Suggestion and Conclusion:

Look into has demonstrated that people are extremely fit for displaying conduct coming about because of helplessness in its more genuine shape it shows in clinically discouraged patients. There is developing proof that authoritative methodology and encounters can initiate learned vulnerability among representatives which can make disaster for the association. In the study, the researchers have found that three factors are responsible for creating learned helplessness among employees. These are internal attribution were the employees link

the negative outcome to one of the attributions like: “its me”, “I can’t do it”, “I am responsible”, “it will never change” etc; external attribution were the employees links the negative outcome to attributions like “organizational procedure”, “structure”, “culture” or “people”; global attribution was the negative outcome is linked to factors across the no. of situations. In order to contain this, managers can identify which of these three factors are more prevalent at work place and take corrective action such as open interaction, group therapy, valuing others decisions etc.

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