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A study on learning organizations in Indian higher educational institutes

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to study the antecedents and consequences of learning organizations (LOs) in Indian higher educational institutes.

Design/methodology/approach – The methodology used is survey-based. Primary data were collected from 300 faculty members of Indian higher educational institutes.

Findings – It was found that all the variables, i.e. resonant leadership (RL), knowledge management, intrapreneurship and total quality managt1ent, have a significant moderate impact on LO. It has also been found that LO results in strong employer branding.

Research limitations/implications – Discussions are performed and conclusions are drawn in the context of existing literature. The study bears implications for researchers to take on similar research in other contexts.

Practical implications – The study bears significant implications for faculty members working in higher educational institutes. It is suggested that RL should be used to contribute toward LOs in institutions. Moreover, this would make the institute emerge as a strong employer brand.

Originality/value – This paper identifies significant antecedents and consequences of LOs. It is a pioneering effort to use all these variables together as predictors of LO in Indian context.

Keywords Total quality management, Employer branding, Learning organization, Intrapreneurship, Knowledge management, Resonant leadership

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

With increasing competition in the turbulent environment, there have been large transformations in structure and strategy of higher educational system to learn and attain a sustainable competitive advantage. There is a strong need for the institutes to adopt the techniques of other benchmarked institutes to learn, adapt and change. The adoption of the techniques does not relate to blindly imitating the strategies or practices that do not even account for the strategic fit for these institutes aiming to achieve a competitive edge in the market. But it relates to being creative and innovative in all aspects of teaching, research and learning practices. Creativity and innovation is a key to survival of a firm to foster learning. Institutes operate as open systems, and their survival depends on the interdependence of various resources in the firm.

If the institutes have to prosper in the twenty-first century, they must engage in sharing and learning practices and transform themselves into learning organizations (LOs). An LO facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself (Senge, 1990). The introduction of developing the institutes as LOs for achieving these

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new visions would require enormous changes in the system, structure and strategy of the institutes. As a result, the old ways of learning, teaching and research are now required to undergo drastic changes, and the new ways of carrying out the task must be looked upon. Several reasons report for why educational institutes are not considered as LOs. These reasons are lack of leadership, training and development facilities, motivation and accepting and embracing the change and becoming an LO. However, there is certain criterion that must be acquired by both the private and public educational institutes to achieve the status of an LO. Some of the characteristics include shared vision, open communication, trust, leadership, continuous learning, organizational culture, innovation and creativity and accessibility of resources. Public and private institutes in India are gradually recognizing the need for credibility and recognition to achieve the status of world-class institutes.

India has remarkably transformed its higher education landscape. The country is the largest provider of talent and is now in a development stage of becoming a hub of higher education. Indian higher education represents the third largest in the world, next to USA and China. Today, there are more than 35,000 affiliated colleges and more than 700 degree-granting institutes in the country, enrolling more than 20 million students every year (Choudaha, 2013). In the past few years, India has witnessed a significant increase in the number of higher educational institutes and student output, making it a complex and a large system. A large number of public and private institutes have been set up. Presently, private sector accounts for 59 per cent enrollment in higher education. Still, quality education has been a problem in our country, and developing a few more institutes to mushroom is not going to solve the education crisis in India (Jagadeesh, 2000). Instead, it will increase the supply-demand gap of hiring faculty for providing standard education which will have adverse effects on the faculty member's turnover ratio, poor quality teaching, outdated pedagogy and constraints on research and multidisciplinary working. Competition has risen to its peak all over the world. Retaining of quality faculty has become most important than attracting the new ones. There are not more than 30 per cent institutes in India that have systems and processes in place to deliver quality education (Palety, 2009). For India to have a globally sustained competitive advantage, requires a vibrant economy driven by continuous learning and improvement, although the past few years have embarked a shift in the expansion of literature toward LO. Recently, the education sector has started to use the concept of LO not only in theory but also practically.

Many leading scholars studied and garnered the concept of LO (Garvin, 1993; Senge, 1990). This study builds on the profound and insightful existing research available on LOs. Building an educational institute into an LO is an accomplishment. It provides its members the environment of intrapreneurship (INT), knowledge management (KM) practices and total quality management (TQM) that requires the support of resonant leader. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to find the impact of these antecedents on LOs in the education sector, thereby transforming the educational institutes as LOs and making it emerge as a strong employer brand.

Literature review

Indian higher education: present scenario and challenges ahead

Aristotle said, "The educated differs from the uneducated as much as the living differs from the dead".

This clearly indicates the value of education in the modern times. India, known as the hub of higher education, is the world leader owing to its highly skilled and educated workforce, still is not able to achieve its goal of attaining world-class status as those of Harvard and Oxford. A survey was done by "The times higher education world university rankings 2013-2014" powered by Thomson Reuters to judge the world-class universities on the dimensions of teaching, research, knowledge transfer, international outlook, citations and industry income. This survey indicated to a surprise that Punjab University, Chandigarh, ranked under 250, followed by IIT Delhi, IIT Kharagpur and IIT Roorkee between 351-400 ranking.

The reasons that account for such a performance range from lack of updated curriculum, centralized knowledge repository, learning hub, research orientation, quality faculty, funding to uneven spread of higher education are the major cause of highly suffered Indian educational institutes. This gives an impression that higher education in India is absolutely thrown down. However, not everything is off track; fortunately, government, private sector, industry experts and renowned academicians have risen up to this threat. On the other hand, since 2011, National Eligibility Test has been made compulsory for ensuring quality of faculty. Also, National Assessment and Accreditation Council assess the universities on the basis of their quality education. Government has also increased the grants for research and development activities in 2014. The intake of research scholars and the assistantship provided to them has also been increased. The private sector is also making every effort to sustain the momentum by opening private universities or non-aided colleges affiliated to a university. Furthermore, newer ways of imparting education that combines both theory and practice with action learning is also gaining momentum. Distance learning and online education are no less in the race. Fundamentally, the steps have been taken; the need of hour is just to make headway. Table I shows the higher education institutes (universities and colleges) in India, and Table II shows the enrollment of Indian students by fields of study.

Thus, for India to have a globally sustained competitive advantage, requires a vibrant economy driven by continuous learning and improvement. Continuous learning is not only required for driving an economy but also for quality building in the education system of India. To sustain the momentum, it is of paramount importance that India should overcome challenges it faces in its higher educational institutes. They are actually in the process of imbibing rich learning qualities to their members. Thus, we

Type of institution	No.
Central universities (public)	44
State universities (public)	306
State universities (private)	154
Deemed universities (public or private)	129
Institution of national importance (public)	67
Total degree-granting institutions	700
Affiliated colleges (public or private)	35,539

Source: Choudaha (2013)

Table I.
Higher education institutions (universities and colleges) in India

Field	No. ('000)	%
Arts	7,539	37
Science	3,790	19
Commerce and management	3,571	18
Engineering and technology	3,262	16
Education	733	4
Medicine	716	4
Law	373	2
Others	218	1
Agriculture	97	0
Veterinary science	28	0
Total	20,327	100

Source: Choudaha (2013)

Table II. Enrollment of Indian students by fields of study

can say that building an educational institute into an LO is an accomplishment that every institution desires intensely.

Resonant leadership

Leadership style depicts the way in which a leader plays a significant role in encouraging and motivating their employees. Literature has mostly discussed transformational and transactional style of leadership (Bass *et al.*, 2003). However, in today's times, organizations are looking forward for the effective leaders, who engage their employees in the formation of a shared vision. These leaders work with everyone to create a meaningful workplace. Such leaders are called as emotionally intelligent resonant leaders (Goleman *et al.*, 2004). Emotional intelligence accounts for 85-90 per cent of the differences between an outstanding and average leader. It also affects the culture and climate that accounts for 30 per cent of business performance (McKee, 2011). Higher emotional climate in an organization results in idea generation, creativity, readiness and adaptability to learn and change (Tran, 1998). Leaders with positive moods and emotions influence the followers through their perceived effectiveness, thereby spreading positive vibes in their followers as well. Such leaders can motivate their followers through hope, mindfulness and compassion (Boyatzis and McKee, 2005). Leaders' dreams and aspirations help the followers to form a desired image of the future (hope), his awareness and attentiveness toward others create the solutions of the problems that they intuit out of emotions and thoughts (mindfulness) and his empathy and understanding toward other's feelings result in long-term success (compassion). Resonant leaders handle pressure by controlling their emotions that sends positive messages to their followers. Such leaders follow different approaches to leadership that creates resonance and boosts performance (Goleman *et al.*, 2004). Higher emotional intelligence of leader can also lead to building harmony, risk-taking, information sharing, trust, healthier workforce and better productivity, thereby promoting job satisfaction and commitment. Such leaders quickly adapt to environmental changes. Therefore, emotional intelligence influences learning because leaders are able to take risks and develop collaborative relationships and trust with each other, thereby contributing to greater productivity, higher job satisfaction and commitment of employees. Thus, such leaders are able to process information, promote learning and

improve social interaction (DeRoberto, 2011; Talab and Monfared, 2012). Existing theoretical explanations about resonant leader is supported by the emotional contagion theory (Hatfield *et al.*, 1993). Emotional contagion refers to the ability of an individual to mimic and harmonize facial expressions, voice, postures and movements of others. In the context of LOs, resonant leaders also do the similar by spreading positive emotions that subordinates mimic to imbibe positive feelings within them, thereby resulting in better performance. Thus, resonant leaders think, feel and head toward their targets with the people around them. Therefore, we propose:

H1. Resonant leadership (RL) style is an antecedent of an LO.

Intrapreneurship

The concept of INT was given by Pinchot (1985) in 1985. He defines INT as "a business practice that motivates the employees with entrepreneurial skills to take initiative and innovate rapidly within the existing organization". INT refers to the willingness of an individual to embrace new opportunities. Such individuals accept risk-taking, experimentation, innovation and initiation to establish a new business. INT as a concept has been studied alone, and to our knowledge, very few studies have made a contribution to the concept in relation to LOs. INT in an LO means supporting new knowledge by encouraging members to challenge the long-held traditions through innovation and creativity. To live through the competition, organizations are struggling to be more creative and innovative to attain a competitive advantage (Molina and Callahan, 2007). Learning is an important factor for entrepreneurial activity. It allows an entrepreneur to create and share knowledge by searching new opportunities. The main components of entrepreneurial learning are intuiting and interpreting. Highly intuitive person offers new possibilities through innovation, whereas interpretation gives shared meanings and understanding to the actions (Franco and Haase, 2009). Thus, INT facilitates organizational learning because employees who take the initiative continuously engage in the process of risk-taking, experimentation and innovation. These individuals challenge and question the stable systems by discovering new and improved ways of working and learning collaboratively. Risk-taking, innovativeness and initiation are the three most important dimensions that foster learning in an organization (García-Morales *et al.*, 2006; Molina and Callahan, 2007, 2009; Sayeed and Gazdar, 2003). Risk-taking is boldness in pursuing new opportunities. Innovativeness refers to the newer ways of accomplishing the task. Initiation is being proactive in pursuing opportunities to enter into the new market. Theory of INT states that imagination, intuition, authority, will, sociability, energy and flexibility reinforce intrapreneurial behavior (Lessem, 1988). This makes it possible for intrapreneurs to establish their organization as a source of a competitive advantage by overcoming the hurdles of environmental dynamism. Therefore, we propose:

H2. INT is an antecedent of an LO.

Knowledge management

Knowledge is a key resource that gives organizations a competitive advantage over others (Drucker, 1993). Knowledge-based theory of the firm states that organizational knowledge is an inimitable resource of sustainable business (Grant, 1996). The notion of KM has been encompassing for decades, but mostly, organizations have accepted it only

as a theory and, therefore, have not put into practice. KM has been defined as "the organized and systematic process of generating information to create value that can be used to strengthen teaching-learning environment" (Adhikari, 2010). KM enhances the organizational learning ability. An LO facilitates new knowledge, uses and integrates external resources, combines knowledge in the form of documents, uses incentives to increase knowledge growth and transfers knowledge to other units. KM establishes a learning environment for employees to conduct learning practices, exchange and share knowledge with clients and colleagues (Hong and Kuo, 1999). Thus, KM exploits the ability to learn and embrace learning as a part of continual improvement process (Baines, 1997). However, focus of KM is not only restricted to corporate but also has relevance in education sector. This is because institutes are in a habit of discarding the old knowledge, especially the one produced for preparing the instructions. Faculty members are only concerned with their own learning process that is counted to be highly disadvantage in the modern era of learning advancement. Working collaboratively in teams can draw forth higher accomplishments in an easy manner. KM is enhanced only when an organization facilitates creation and acquisition, transformation and storage, provides feedback and disseminates the stored knowledge to develop new insights (Bhusry and Ranjan, 2012). First, knowledge is generated in the form of joint projects and benchmarking practices (creation and acquisition); then it is transformed into various forms such as databases and structured documents (transformation and storage); once the knowledge is stored, it is maintained through continuous evaluation (feedback and improvement); and finally, knowledge is deployed in the form of development of new projects (dissemination and usage). Open KM environment and easy access and availability of information lead to distribution of knowledge across levels, thereby increasing the ability to learn and forming high-performance adaptive systems (Firestone and McElroy, 2004). Thus, all the four levels are very vital to facilitate effective KM practices in the institute, and this process of procuring information contributes to learning. Therefore, we propose:

H3. KM is an antecedent of an LO.

Total quality management

Implementation of TQM in education sector has become all the more imperative. Delivering high quality and keeping stakeholders satisfied is considered to be critical for survival. Market-based theory of competitive advantage states that TQM continuously improves processes to provide high-quality innovative products at low cost (Conner, 1991). Resource-based view of the firm also states that TQM makes optimum utilization of resources through total involvement, continuous improvement and reflexive decision-making of team members (Barney, 1991). Delivering valuable and high-quality products keep stakeholders satisfied. Open systems theory elucidates the interaction of organization with its environment to remain innovative and resilient (Von Bertalanffy, 1956). It has become the duty of every institute to successfully implement TQM practices to attain quality standards. Focus on TQM results in continuous improvement of various processes at set standards to maintain quality. TQM is a management policy, which becomes a tool for utilization and exploitation of all human, finance and technology resources in educational institutes (Sabet *et al.*, 2012). TQM also serves as a vehicle for learning. The LO adapts to the ever-changing environment and continuously improves to create a competitive advantage (Sohal and Morrison, 1995). A study

conducted to create a school as an LO found that it requires employee involvement. By implementing the European Foundation for Quality Management model, the school tried to improve examination results, self-esteem and self-confidence of teachers and students to strengthen the future of the school (Thornett and Viggiani, 1996). Thus, quality initiatives, employee recognition, vision and openness results in enhanced organizational learning (Avdjieva and Wilson, 2002). According to learning wave theory, total quality movement is divided into three waves, and TQM philosophy has been founded on the concept of LO (Senge, 1992). The first wave describes the continuous improvement process. The second wave includes increasing the quality of thinking and interaction. The third wave institutionalizes the first two ways, thereby transforming into an LO. Therefore, learning is a key to education, and TQM has a great relevance in maintaining the learning environment of an organization.

Thus, TQM involves total involvement, continuous improvement and task reflexivity of team members. Total involvement means involving both internal and external stakeholders to improve educational processes, to promote quality awareness and to take quality goals initiatives in teaching, research, administration and consultancy. Continuous improvement involves continuously striving for improving the quality standards of educational practices, infrastructure, performance and professional and career development of faculty, student's academic development and process excellence (Rao *et al.*, 2010). Task reflexivity means reflecting on the decisions made by the employees through inquiry and questioning insights (Carter and West, 1998). Therefore, we propose:

H4. TQM is an antecedent of an LO.

Learning organization

The concept of LO has been given by Senge (1990) in 1990. He defines LO as an organization where people continuously learn for attaining the desired results through personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and systems thinking. Personal mastery is the commitment of employees for updating their existing skills and knowledge. Mental models help employees adapt to the dynamic environment by dispensing the prior assumptions. Team learning is collective learning of employees. Shared vision is concerted effort of members to develop a common vision. Systems thinking emphasizes that an organization cannot function in silos but acts as an integrated whole. LO has also been defined as an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself to achieve a competitive advantage (Pedler *et al.*, 1991).

For the purpose of this study, LO is considered as one characterized by continuous learning for continuous improvement and by the capacity to transform itself (Watkins and Marsick, 1993). They have given seven distinct and interrelated dimensions of LO, operating at three levels – individual, team and organizational levels. These dimensions are continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, empowerment, embedded system, system connection and strategic leadership. Continuous learning means creating learning opportunities for all members. Inquiry and dialogue means questioning the insights. Team learning refers to working collaboratively toward a common goal. Empowerment means involving everyone in the organization for developing a shared vision. Embedded system refers to the establishment of systems to capture and share learning. System connection represents the actions taken to connect

the organization with both internal and external environments. Strategic leadership refers to the extent to which leaders think strategically to change and move the organization in new markets through the process of learning.

Thus, LO is viewed as one that has the capacity to integrate people and structures to move toward continuous learning.

Employer branding

Employer branding (EB) is the image of the organization to be considered as a great place to work. It is the combination of functional, economical and psychological benefits provided by an organization (Ambler and Barrow, 1996). Functional benefits include career growth and training and development. Economic benefits include compensation and rewards, whereas psychological benefits include safe and cooperative learning environment. When an organization focuses entirely on the individuals' development, individuals become committed to the organization. When there are fairer procedures being followed, employees feel more connected to the organization and trust the organization. Employees feel satisfied and connected when they are able to align individual identity to the organizations identity. Once the employee is motivated, his interest and acceptance toward individual learning and development increases, thereby resulting in continuous learning process. This will not only be beneficial for the existing employees but also for the potential employees. Signaling theory states that potential individuals see the information put up by the organization, and organizational features of the organization signal them about the company. Positive signals attract the potential employees. Therefore, greater the positive signal, greater is the quality of applicants (Celani and Singh, 2011).

Thus, in this way, the organization will emerge as a strong employer brand in the sense that it helps in improving recruitment, employee engagement and their retention by providing a sense of belongingness and continuous learning practices to its employees (Barrow and Mosley, 2011). Social identity theory states that an employee feels emotionally attached to the organization that provides an opportunity for learning and professional growth (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Once the employee is motivated, his interest and acceptance toward individual learning and development increases thereby resulting in continuous learning process. This will not only be beneficial for the existing employees but also for potential employees. A study conducted across India found that strong EB has a positive influence on application intentions of students, as students want to be associated with the prestigious university to build up their self-image. Students are more interested for applying in institutes that offer friendly and informal culture, challenging assignments empowerment, autonomy and responsibility (Agrawal and Swaroop, 2009). They are more inclined toward visiting job fairs and seminars and calling sponsored speakers on campus. Institutes having these practices have positive effects on students' intention to apply in that particular institute (Yaqub and Khan, 2011). Therefore, an LO can be percolated as a stable employer brand through its sense of belongingness, identity and reputation. Therefore, we propose:

H5. EB is considered as a probable consequence of an LO.

All these variable have been integrated in a conceptual framework of LO (Figure 1).

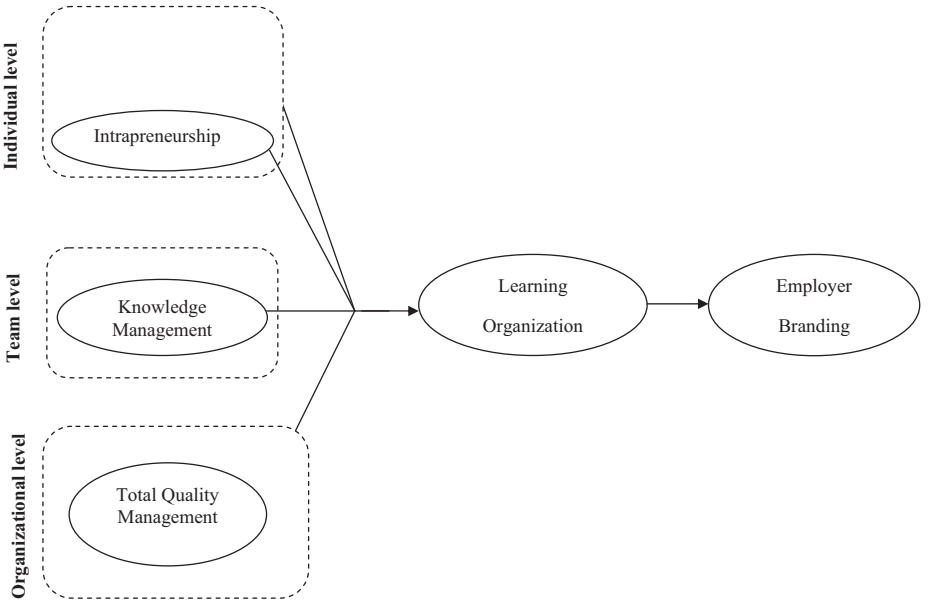

Figure 1.
Conceptual framework of LO integrating individual-, team- and organizational-level variables

Method

The sample

The sample for this study consisted of 300 faculty members from 50 Indian higher educational institutes. The institutional units were chosen across the country where the contact was easily accessible. The places covered were National Capital Region, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The criterion that was kept during the survey was that the institute must have minimum 10 years of establishment, has a minimum strength of six permanent faculty members and is following University Grants Commission or All India Council for Technical Education norms.

The measure

Survey for data collection was done using a self-designed instrument called as "learning organization survey for higher educational institutes". The survey questions specific to the objectives of this study were chosen to capture the responses on various parameters of LO. Data were collected over a period of two months from March to April 2014. The responses were taken by making personal visits to ensure the credibility of the data collected, and therefore, response rate is 100 per cent. The participants were given adequate time to respond and were assisted to understand the meanings of the questions, if required. All the responses were gathered on a 5-point scale (1-5). There was no right or wrong answer to the items. The questionnaire takes approximately 12-15 minutes to complete. To make the data collection process smooth and reduce the non-response rate, the survey is performed through following steps:

- prior apportionment was fixed with the institutional authorities and faculty members;

- in case that particular faculty member is snot available, some other faculty member is selected from the institute after taking consent from the institutional authorities;
- that faculty member is selected randomly who was easily accessible and available at that particular point of time when researcher visited that institute and was asked to fill the questionnaire;
- doubts related to the questionnaires were answered on the spot; and
- those who had not returned the questionnaire on the same day were contacted again to return the filled questionnaire by next working day.

Following this procedure, researcher got all the questionnaires with response rate of 100 per cent.

Reasons for selecting faculty members as respondents

For many years, educational institutes have remained as conventional, receptive and slothful. Such institutes lack motivation for continuous learning, have less R&D practices, less innovation and creativity and insufficient acquisition of knowledge (Sima, 2000). However, by developing them into LOs, every member can acquire new knowledge, develop creative and innovative mind and focus on achieving the desired goal. "If members don't change, there is no organizational change" (Senge, 1990). Thus, organizational members are the driving force toward embracing and accepting change. In an educational institute, the role of faculty members in the design of various core courses, research, teaching and learning activities of the institute is considered vital. They act as role models for their students. If faculty members are engaged in the continuous learning process, their students shall imitate the same. They are the ones who provide and build support for the institute. They have to effectively help students with academic problems, understand their potential, build good faculty–student relationship and share teaching experiences with colleagues. It has also been reported that there is a strong positive relationship between faculty's motivation, professional satisfaction and quality of services offered (Gather-Thuler, 1996; Louis *et al.*, 1995). Therefore, this study aims to take faculty members of the institute as the respondents aiming to develop Indian higher educational institutes as LOs.

Reliability of the instrument

RL style has seven items that have the reliability 0.70-0.86. Sample items are: "provides vision for teaching, learning and research excellence" and cares about our professional and personal development". INT has nine items; Cronbach's alpha of its overall items and factors ranged from 0.80 to 0.86. The sample items are: "our institute facilitates us to develop institute's R&D centers" and "our institute encourages us to adopt innovative methods in teaching and research". KM was assessed using 21 items; Cronbach's alpha of the overall items and factors ranged from 0.80 to 0.94. The sample items include: "our institute has a repository of research projects" and "our institute regularly updates teaching and research material". TQM was assessed using 23 items. Cronbach's alpha of this measure ranged from 0.74 to 0.89. Sample items are: "our institute ensures participation of stakeholders to improve educational processes" and "our institute improves quality of pedagogy, computing facilities, physical and digital library and teaching aids". LO was assessed using 24 items divided into seven factors drawn from

Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire developed by (Marsick and Watkins, 2003). The Cronbach's alpha of the overall items and factors ranged from 0.60 to 0.89. This established the reliability of the instrument. Few sample items are: "our institute gives feedback on current research practices", "our institute recognizes faculty collaboration in R&D projects" and "our institute encourages faculty to deliver guest lectures in other institutes". Finally, EB has 15 items that established the reliability of 0.73-0.90. The sample items are: "our institute provides learning of advanced technologies" and "our institute provides funds to initiate research projects".

Data analysis and results

SPSS 21.0 was used for the purpose of the data analysis. The data were first subject to normal distribution test, and it came out to be normal. The means and standard deviations were obtained to see the averages of scores and variability of data. Table III shows the average values of aggregated responses on each factor and variable.

To test the hypothesis, further correlation was performed. Table III also reports the results of the correlation analysis. All the variables RL, INT, KM and TQM were found to be significantly correlated ($p < 0.01$) with LO, and LO has been found to be significantly correlated ($p < 0.01$) with EB. The correlation analysis confirmed the relationship between RL and LO, INT and LO, KM and LO, TQM and LO and LO and EB. Therefore, our *H1*, *H2*, *H3*, *H4* and *H5*, are partially accepted here.

To further affirm the hypothesis, the predictive ability of independent variables/factors toward the dependent variable was tested using regression analysis. The level of significance was kept at 95 per cent (0.05). All regression analysis was performed for an overall sample. The model fit summary of all the models in the form of percentages of variance explained by independent variable in the dependent variable (i.e. R^2) is reported.

All the four independent variables, RL ($\beta = 0.246$, $t = 5.857$, $p < 0.05$), INT ($\beta = 0.158$, $t = 2.925$, $p < 0.05$), KM ($\beta = 0.348$, $t = 7.104$, $p < 0.05$) and TQM ($\beta = 0.449$, $t = 12.828$, $p < 0.05$), significantly predicted LO and explained 59.2 per cent variance with F value = 87.974, $p < 0.05$. Similarly, LO ($\beta = 0.306$, $t = 7.219$, $p < 0.05$) significantly predicted EB in overall sample with 14.6 per cent variance explained and F value = 52.119, $p < 0.05$, and this provided partial acceptance of *H1*, *H2*, *H3*, *H4* and *H5*. Therefore, it can be said that RL, INT, KM and TQM with LO and LO with EB have been found to be significant predictors in higher educational institutes (Figure 2).

Variables	*Mean*	*SD*	*RL*	*INT*	*KM*	*TQM*	*LO*	*EB*
RL	3.90	0.69	1					
INT	3.83	0.87	0.714**	1				
KM	3.72	0.70	0.566**	0.592**	1			
TQM	3.91	0.69	0.423*	0.597**	0.466*	1		
LO	3.92	0.82	0.433*	0.449*	0.436*	0.317*	1	
EB	3.51	0.64	0.616**	0.615**	0.514**	0.394*	0.496*	1

Table III.
Mean, SD and inter-correlations among variables under study

Notes: $p < 0.01$; RL = resonant leadership; INT = intrapreneurship; KM = knowledge management; TQM = total quality management; LO = learning organization; EB = employer branding; *denotes less significant values and **denotes highly significant values

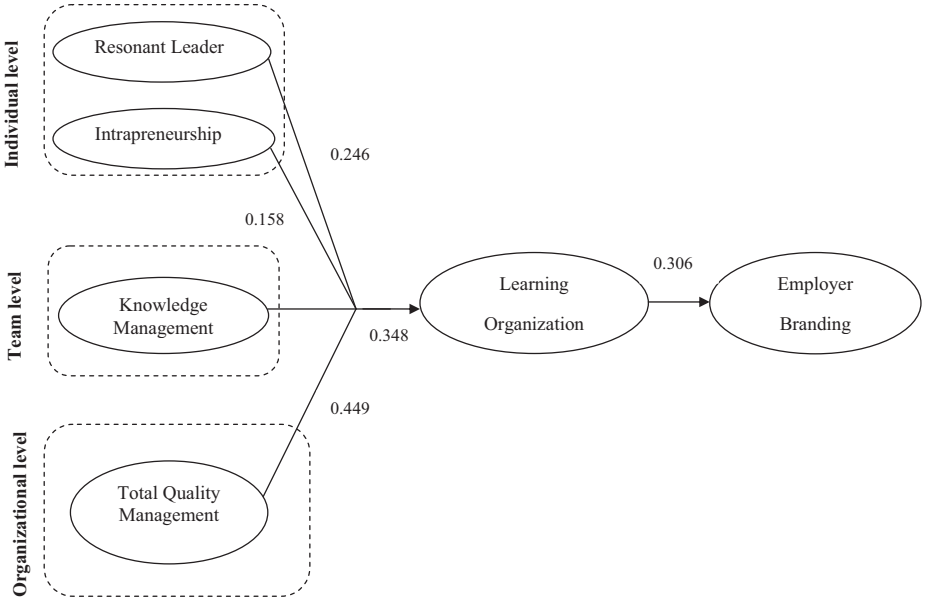

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of LO integrating individual-, team- and organizational-level variables, indicating the numerical relationships

Discussion

The prime aim of this study was to find out the antecedents and consequences of LOs. The results confirmed the aimed relationship, and the discussion is as follows:

RL and LO

Obtained relation of RL and LO attributes that the leadership style of the head of the institution provides significant enhancement in the development of an LO. The findings here are similar to those of (Watkins, 2005), who discussed the model of LO in higher educational settings and found that role of leader is very crucial in implementing the practices of LOs that involve recreating of goals, shared vision, managing the change proactively, training and development of members and teamwork. Further, our results are also in congruence with a study of 88 elementary and secondary Taiwanese schools, where 20 principles were interviewed to assess the application of the concept of LO model in a school development (Lam *et al.*, 2003). This study reported that leadership style is a necessary condition in implementing organizational learning in schools because leaders provide dynamism and support to the members to create a learning school. Although earlier studies have reported that transformational and transactional leadership style are needed for developing an institute into an LO (Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Antonoaie and Antonoaie, 2010), transactional leadership style is based on mutual exchange relationship, and transformational leaders are rule bound and more time-consuming. Therefore, we need emotionally intelligent leaders who offer essential competencies for RL. Their positive emotions bring out the best in their followers, and they become more optimistic, creative and helpful in their ability to attain the goal. A study conducted to assess the neural mechanisms involved during an interaction with resonant leaders found that employees revealed positive state of mind when they

worked closely with resonant leader. Such employees were found to be innovative and creative (Boyatzis, 2002). Literature has also supported the concept of emotionally intelligent leaders in LO. In a recent study, it has been found that emotional intelligent employees participate in decision-making process promoting organizational learning. Such people are confident, optimistic, innovative and flexible. Highly emotionally intelligent people have self-awareness, self-motivation and develop social and interpersonal relationships with fellow employees. They are more involved in the job, are satisfied and develop organizational commitment (Scott-Ladd and Chan, 2004). It has been found that with the increase in the level of emotional intelligence teacher's learning ability also increases, thereby leading to greater job satisfaction, job involvement, job performance, career and organizational commitment and decreasing turnover (Mustafa and Amjad, 2011). In our study, RL style significantly predicted LO. This is because educational institutes require such a leader who makes certain that there is provision of vision for teaching, learning and research excellence; encourages faculty to attend conferences, seminars/workshops; and ensures that their involvement in teaching and research is aligned with institute's vision. Such a leader cares about professional and personal development of faculty and encourages interdisciplinary research to strengthen learning. Thus, resonant leaders can visualize a brighter future and communicate the vision with resonance and pave the way.

INT and LO

Obtained relation of INT and LO attributes that INT in the institute provides significant enhancement in development of an LO. Our findings are consistent with those of (Molina and Callahan, 2009), who stated that INT facilitates organizational learning because employees who take the initiative continuously engage in the process of risk-taking, experimentation and innovation. These individuals challenge and question the stable systems by discovering new and improved ways of working and learning collaboratively. Organizations that learn and innovate give better organizational performance (García-Morales *et al.*, 2006). Another study conducted to find the interface between learning and entrepreneurship discussed that learning is an important factor for entrepreneurial activity that involves continuous learning process. It allows an entrepreneur to create and share knowledge and to search for new opportunities through risk-taking, initiation and innovation (Franco and Haase, 2009). In our study, INT significantly predicted LO. This is because an institute facilitates the development of R&D center and promotes faculty's involvement in incubation and INT cell, thereby encouraging them to take initiatives. The institute also encourages them to adopt innovative methods in teaching and research. They are encouraged to take risks while working in R&D projects, making them work collaboratively with each other and thereby engaging in continuous learning.

KM and LO

KM enhances the organizational learning ability. KM establishes a learning environment for employees to conduct learning practices, exchange and share knowledge with clients and colleagues (Hong and Kuo, 1999). Obtained relation of KM and LO attributes that effective KM in the institute provides significant enhancement in development of an LO. The findings here are similar to those of (Cope *et al.*, 2004), who discussed that administrators and faculty need to be motivated to share knowledge to

strengthen research ideas and to create a win–win situation. A recent study conducted to review the application of KM in Bangkok University found that Bangkok University is engaged in knowledge collaboration that facilitates communication through mobile, Internet, meetings and seminars among teachers and staff, thereby making them work more effectively. The university has started many international programs and a knowledge center having international professors that make knowledge sharing more challenging (Arntzen *et al.*, 2009). Indian studies have also reported the similar findings. Teachers are prepared for effective KM practices to meet the needs of the students and society. Teaching and research, collaboration of institutes, networking and sound teaching–learning environment are the perquisites for strengthening KM in educational institutes (Adhikari, 2010). Intellectual repositories are to be created to generate collection of knowledge, so as to ensure quick availability of information. It is also updated and maintained with the addition of new knowledge. Knowledge acquisition takes place in the form of teaching material, question banks, industrial interface, research projects and case studies, whereas input resources are faculty, professionals, researchers and experts. This knowledge gets transformed into documents, databases, rules, tables and graphs (Bhusry and Ranjan, 2012). Further, our results are also in congruence with the study of 200 teachers from Indian private engineering colleges to study the KM orientation and found that KM fosters an innovative culture by creation and sharing of knowledge, thereby developing the center of excellence (Sharma, 2012). In our study, KM significantly predicted LO. This is because institutes reassure a complete repository of research projects, educational process, video lecture, working research papers and technical projects and keep it regularly updated. Through this, it adopts best practices in teaching, pedagogy and research. It also encourages faculty for joint projects and facilitates networking with academicians and industry experts to share knowledge through interaction, thereby facilitating learning of all.

TQM and LO

The LO adapts to the ever-changing environment and continuously improves to create a competitive advantage. Obtained relation of TQM and LO attributes that TQM in the institute provides significant enhancement in the development of an LO. The findings of this are consistent with the study on 31 respondents in Taiwan who were surveyed to explore the correspondence between TQM and LO. A close relationship has been found to establish between TQM and LO. TQM encompasses teamwork, employee training and development, new improved skills and common vision. Thus, TQM creates an environment necessary for organization-wide learning (Chang and Sun, 2007). The study is also in congruence with the similar study on educational institutes that apply TQM dimensions to facilitate learning (Lam *et al.*, 2008). TQM influences organizational learning as continuous improvement helps to create an LO. Shared vision, long-term focus, teacher involvement, systems approach and participative decision-making are parameters of TQM, and improvement and learning take place when members work in a team toward a shared goal. Rule-oriented culture hampers the creation of TQM, and TQM flourishes in an organization with flexibility, experimentation and risk-taking tasks supported by innovative leaders. In our study, TQM significantly predicted LO. This is because an institute ensures participation of all stakeholders to take quality goals initiative in teaching, research, administration and consultancy. Involving everyone in a task engages them in learning. The institute tries to continuously improve

the physical and social needs of everyone. It also encourages everyone to participate in reflexive decision process to question the existing insights and improve the ways of working.

LO and EB

Obtained relation of LO and EB attributes that LO results in a strong EB. Our findings are consistent with those of (Lyons and Marler, 2011), who stated that organizations are trying to make their employees skillful and knowledgeable, so that employees feel valued in the organization. Through the continuous learning process of organizations, the employee's personal and professional growth is enhanced. These individuals develop a sense of belongingness toward the organization and feel connected. Many researchers agree that the need for belonging is one of the most important needs of all students to function well in all types of learning environments (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Deci and Ryan, 1991; Finn, 1989; Osterman, 2000). Students who consistently experience this are motivated, more engaged in school and classroom activities and more dedicated to school (Osterman, 2000). But this satisfaction is significantly related to the student's involvement in the school and classroom activities. Being an LO, the institute has the ability to provide continuous learning opportunities, team learning and supportive learning culture for students and faculty. In our study, LO significantly predicted EB. This is because an institute provides learning of advanced technologies, faculty development programs, job security and fair promotion. The institute also provides the faculty with sufficient funds to initiate research projects to enhance their learning. They are also provided flexibility in their work and are encouraged for timely student–teacher interactions.

Conclusion

This paper focused on four variables of LO, i.e. RL style, INT, KM and TQM. The purpose of this study was to examine the antecedents of LOs. From the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that all these antecedents and consequences mentioned above significantly impact the LO in Indian higher education sector. Particularly, "resonant leadership style" is a new and possibly significant independent variable of the study. It bears significant implications for educational institutes. Mainly, it suggests that in educational institutes, an emotionally intelligent and a visionary leadership style will have a significant contribution toward LO. This finding has, thus, provided a breakthrough to the generalized and implicit notion of researchers to advocate only RL for better LO. Hence, it is suggested here that to learn and perform better, it is important to reinvent the wheel of continuous learning to increase learning in institutes. Thus, resonant leaders are able to manage their emotions in the face of drastic change and have the ability to understand and respond to the fear. They are prepared for a change even before the crises. They create a climate of zeal and flexibility where people feel relaxed, innovative, creative and engage in knowledge sharing practices. The "knowledge management" is also the significant independent variable of the study. The results confirmed the possibility of its relationship with LO and affirmed it as a significant determinant of LO. Hence, it is suggested that KM should be paid due attention. It is implied that it should be promoted in an institute because sharing knowledge and information among the colleagues leads to creative and innovative solutions to produce better results. Subsequently, "intrapreneurship" also has a remarkable positive effect on

LOs. It attributes that INT will enhance learning to a great extent. Hence, head of the institutes should stimulate the faculty to be involved in taking initiatives, practicing innovative methods and taking risks in projects to enhance learning. Similarly, "Total quality management" has a significant impact on LOs in Indian higher educational institutes. It also bears significant contribution toward LOs. Mainly, it suggests that involving everyone from all the levels in the reflective decision-making task leads to continuous improvement and learning. Last, but not the least, when an organization transforms itself to an LO, it emerges as a strong employer brand.

Therefore, higher educational institutes can use this fact and practice the same to achieve high gain in the form of continuous learning at all the levels, i.e. individual, team and organization. Head of the institutes and faculty are, thus, advised to pay attention to RL, INT, KM and TQM to transform into an LO. The main contribution of this work is for the academicians, institutional leaders, researchers, practitioners, government and society. *Academicians* are incorporating examples from this research in classrooms to introduce the scenario to the students about how important it is for educational institutes to develop into an LO. The students are often taught the subjects of leadership, INT, KM, TQM, LO and EB, but how to implement it practically and make their own educational institute an LO is a challenging task. In responding to the new technological and globalization era, institute is a place where learning takes place in true sense. New knowledge is created through sharing of knowledge, which helps the academicians to improve their performance and learning ability. *Institutional leaders* can also relate to the awareness of the requirements of developing their institute into an LO. With a provided conceptual framework, they can test whether their institute already exists as an LO or what else is needed to make it an LO. Also, leadership behaviors significantly impact organizational learning in Indian higher educational institutes because it should match with the existing organizational culture and structure to reinforce learning habits at all levels of the institute. *Researchers* are further exploring the relevant subject matter in depth by finding solutions to the upcoming challenges faced by the mushrooming growth of educational institutes. *Practitioners* in the field are gaining insights for their learning and development programs to incorporate suggestions and recommendations for developing into an LO through RL, KM, INT and TQM. *Government* can frame policies and curriculum for education sector to meet set requirements of industry demands. Also, sufficient funding system can help the institutes to replace classroom lectures with action learning techniques. Last, but not the least, *social* benefits are for the customers who are well-informed and demanding. These customers can be potential faculty members or students. They want to join the institute that maintains quality standard in teaching and research. Also, LOs practices may help the institutes to integrate shared vision, mission and strategy that would help all the stakeholders to create innovative teaching and research practices and add value to the existing curriculum.

However, the implications are subject to few limitations. The scope of this work was only Indian higher education institutes. The samples are collected using survey method, and therefore, responses were not free from personal biases. However, as the responses were collected by making personal visits, the respondents received personal assistance while responding. Therefore, chances of biases and ignorance got reduced. Also, the study took only in account the faculty; students and other staff personnel were ignored in the study, creating a scope for further inquiry. Hence, in spite of limitations, the study

made significant contributions with respect to the phenomena of LO and its association with RL, INT, KM and TQM.

Further research can be carried out by use of more and significant sample size to generalize the findings of this study. Carrying out the similar research in different national cultures will yield different results about the relationship between independent and dependent variables used in this study. Also, a comparative study between private and public Indian higher educational institutes can also be made. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge and paves way for the future research.

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Further reading

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