

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Leading the emergence of organizational learning capabilities: integrating conditions and mechanisms

Nataša Rupčić

Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia

Issue 4 of Volume 33 brings together seven contributions that examine organizational learning from complementary theoretical, empirical and practical perspectives. Although the papers address different organizational contexts, levels of analysis and research questions, collectively they illustrate how organizational learning capabilities emerge through the integration of multiple organizational conditions and mechanisms. Rather than representing isolated organizational practices, learning organizations are portrayed as systems in which leadership, organizational culture, psychological safety, learning from failures, knowledge sharing, stakeholder engagement, integrative thinking and institutional context interact to enable continuous learning, adaptation and organizational transformation. Together, the contributions show that organizational learning capabilities do not develop through individual interventions but emerge gradually from the leadership of coherent organizational systems that effectively integrate these complementary elements.

Abanumay and Nalband conducted a bibliometric analysis to map the evolution and intellectual structure of learning organization research indexed in the Web of Science database between 1988 and 2023. Kalynychnenko investigated how employees perceive the role of the human resources (HR) department in facilitating learning from failures in hospitals as professional organizations, using a qualitative research approach. [Sahoo, Mishra, and Jena \(2026\)](#) investigated how a learning organization culture influences the successful transfer of knowledge acquired through faculty development programs in Indian higher education institutions. Specifically, the study examined whether faculty members' transfer interest and self-efficacy explain how a learning organization culture ultimately translates into the effective application of newly acquired knowledge and skills in teaching and research. [Brody, Rivera, and Furness \(2026\)](#) conducted a scoping review to clarify the meaning of Integrative Thinking, examine its conceptual development across disciplines and propose a unified, domain-independent definition. [Cho \(2026\)](#) conducted a systematic



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review of empirical research on the World Café to examine its applications, benefits, limitations and potential contribution to organizational learning and stakeholder engagement. Şahin and Bilir (2024) examined the influence of entrepreneurial and servant leadership on employees' knowledge-sharing behavior in knowledge-intensive organizations, emphasizing the mediating role of psychological safety.

Complementing these broader conceptual and theoretical contributions, Balasi and Iordanidis (2026) examined the application of learning organization principles in primary education by exploring the development of schools as professional learning communities. Through a qualitative study of teachers' and principals' perceptions, the authors investigate how the five dimensions of professional learning communities (supportive and shared leadership, shared beliefs, values and vision, collective learning and application, shared personal practice and supportive conditions) are enacted within the highly centralized Greek educational system. Their findings suggest that although schools exhibit many characteristics of professional learning communities, centralized governance and bureaucratic structures continue to constrain collaboration, shared leadership and the development of a mature learning culture. The study therefore illustrates how broader organizational and institutional contexts shape organizations' ability to develop into effective learning organizations and highlights the importance of autonomy, trust and a collaborative culture for sustaining organizational learning. The paper shows that becoming a learning organization depends not only on internal learning processes but also on institutional conditions that either enable or constrain the development of organizational learning capabilities.

Mapping learning organization research: a bibliometric analysis

The ability to survive and prosper in today's complex, uncertain and rapidly changing business environment increasingly depends on organizations' capacity to learn, adapt, transform and grow. Organizations are expected to develop capabilities that enable them not only to respond to changing market conditions but also to continuously anticipate future challenges and opportunities. In this context, organizational learning capability has become a critical strategic resource. It encompasses practices, mechanisms and structural arrangements that facilitate learning throughout the organization (Goh et al., 2012). Organizations with a strong learning capability are better equipped to respond to changing market trends, anticipate market shifts, proactively adapt to other environmental changes and ultimately sustain and improve different dimensions of organizational performance (Şahin & Bilir, 2024; Sok & O'Cass, 2011). In other words, organizations need to develop and transform into learning organizations.

Since its emergence as a management concept, the learning organization has been regarded as an organizational model capable of providing systems and mechanisms that foster the development of new knowledge, enable continuous adaptation and transformation and ensure long-term organizational sustainability in complex and dynamic environments (Milis & Friesen, 1992). In recent decades, considerable academic and practical attention has been devoted to understanding the concept, clarifying its theoretical foundations, identifying its antecedents and outcomes and explaining the mechanisms through which learning organizations create value and contribute to organizational legitimacy and viability. This growing body of literature, and the level of maturity it has reached, creates a need for a systematic review to identify its dominant themes and highlight emerging and potentially interesting research directions. In this regard, bibliometric analysis offers an effective approach for synthesizing extensive research streams and examining the evolution of a scientific field over time.

Addressing this need, in Issue 4, [Abanumay and Nalband \(2026\)](#) presented a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of learning organization research published between 1988 and 2023 using the Web of Science database. Their findings illustrate the remarkable development of the field over more than three decades. Interest in learning organizations has grown steadily since the early 1990s, most likely stimulated by the publication of Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* (1990). Although publication activity has experienced some fluctuations, the long-term trend demonstrates substantial and sustained growth, with the volume of research increasing exponentially across decades. The continued production of new studies, including 44 publications in 2023 alone, confirms that the learning organization remains a vibrant and evolving research domain. The analysis also highlights *The learning organization* as the leading journal in the field, publishing approximately 250 articles on the topic.

Beyond documenting publication trends, the study reveals the intellectual structure of the field by identifying two dominant research clusters. The first cluster focuses on the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the learning organization, including its definition, distinguishing characteristics, dimensions, measurement, implementation processes and relationship with organizational performance. This stream provides practitioners with a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes a learning organization and offers practical guidance for developing it and assessing its maturity.

The second cluster concentrates on organizational learning processes, including absorptive capacity, organizational ambidexterity in terms of simultaneous exploration and exploitation, knowledge creation, the importance of tacit knowledge, organizational unlearning and related concepts such as market orientation, as well as likely outcomes such as innovation and the development of communities of practice and adaptive learning systems. This body of research emphasizes that sustainable organizational learning extends beyond acquiring knowledge; it requires organizations to integrate, share, interpret and apply knowledge while simultaneously abandoning obsolete routines and practices. For practitioners, these findings reinforce the importance of developing organizational systems that support continuous learning, knowledge integration, innovation and strategic adaptation and transformation, rather than viewing learning as isolated training activities.

The study shows that learning organization research has evolved from establishing conceptual foundations to examining increasingly complex organizational capabilities, knowledge processes and the organizational outcomes of these activities. Future research could further strengthen the practical relevance of the learning organization model by examining how its learning capabilities and characteristics contribute to organizational flexibility, adaptability, resilience and long-term sustainability in increasingly complex business ecosystems, as well as how organizations can ride the wave of digital transformation and implement artificial intelligence to enhance and sustain their transformation.

Learning from failures in professional organizations: transforming HR into a learning partner

Many modern organizations operate in environments characterized by increased complexity, uncertainty, ambiguity and continuous change, making their ability to learn, adapt and transform a critical determinant of their long-term performance, sustainability and resilience. Among the many avenues leading to organizational learning, failures represent particularly valuable opportunities because they expose weaknesses in existing individual assumptions, approaches, knowledge and skills, as well as in organizational mental models, systems, processes and routines. These weaknesses can reveal possibilities for improvement based on

immediate practical insight (Dahlin, Chuang, & Roulet, 2018). However, learning from failures should be viewed as more than merely identifying and correcting errors. It should involve a systematic process of detecting and analyzing failures, understanding their causes and underlying assumptions, designing and implementing corrective actions and embedding new insights and knowledge into organizational routines to prevent similar occurrences in the future (Dahlin et al., 2018). In this way, learning can gradually progress from the individual to the group level and ideally to the organizational level, contributing to organizational learning and strengthening organizational capability to adapt, improve and remain viable in increasingly complex environments (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011).

Although the benefits of learning from failures are well recognized in practice and established in the literature, not all organizations are equally successful in this process. In other words, not all organizations are capable of creating conditions that enable employees to openly acknowledge, discuss and learn from mistakes in ways that contribute to group and organizational learning. This challenge is particularly pronounced in professional organizations, such as hospitals, where highly autonomous professionals with deeply rooted professional identities and complex organizational structures often hinder such transformative learning practices required to challenge existing assumptions and modify established behaviors (Argyris, 1992). In such organizational settings, admitting mistakes by highly respected professionals may threaten their professional credibility and evoke feelings of guilt, shame or fear of blame. Psychological safety therefore represents a fundamental prerequisite for meaningful, persistent and successful learning from failures (Edmondson, 1996, 1999).

Kalynychenko (2026) explored the challenge of learning from failures by surveying employee perceptions in hospitals as professional organizations and examining the role of the HR department as a facilitator in this process. Through a qualitative study involving HR and non-HR employees that enabled a nuanced investigative approach, the paper addresses an important gap in the literature by shifting attention from designed HR practices that formally support and foster employee learning to employees' interpretations of those practices and how these interpretations are reflected in their willingness to participate in detecting and reporting failures and, consequently, in group and organizational learning. While strategic HRM has been recognized as an enabler of organizational learning by stimulating the processes of knowledge acquisition, sharing, interpretation and the development of organizational memory (Tseng & McLean, 2008), less attention has been devoted to understanding whether employees perceive HR as a credible facilitator of these learning and knowledge acquisition processes.

The findings demonstrate that effective learning from failures is considerably more complex than the unidirectional provision of learning opportunities. The surveyed employees identified several key elements that stimulate learning and learning from failures: accessible and functional learning systems, including clearly established reporting procedures; sufficient time devoted to individual and group reflection on incidents; timely feedback from management; leadership support; and an organizational culture characterized by psychological safety and the absence of blame. While participants strongly valued learning from their own and others' mistakes, their willingness to report failures, openly discuss them and engage in collective learning declined substantially whenever the anticipated psychological costs, including blame, embarrassment or punishment, outweighed the perceived benefits of learning.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the study lies in revealing a fundamental paradox concerning the role of HR. Although many learning initiatives were formally coordinated by HR departments, employees largely perceived HR as an instrument of

organizational control, correction and punishment rather than support, trust and development. Consequently, in the surveyed organizations many learning activities were intentionally rebranded or organizationally separated from HR to encourage employee participation and avoid negative associations. The study therefore demonstrates that the effectiveness of HR as a facilitator of organizational learning, especially learning from failures, depends not only on the quality of HR practices, but also on how they are presented to employees, how they are perceived by employees and on the meanings employees attribute to them, to HR's intentions and to HR's organizational role in general.

For practitioners, these findings carry several important implications. Organizations seeking to strengthen learning from failures and enhance its effectiveness should recognize that formal learning programs are insufficient. Learning involves learning from both positive and negative examples or practices, with desired, undesired or unintentional consequences and requires organizational systems that provide employees with opportunities to report incidents, reflect collectively, exchange knowledge and receive timely support without fear of negative consequences. Psychological safety, trust and a constructive no-blame learning culture emerge as essential conditions for fostering individual, team and organizational learning. Furthermore, organizations should critically examine how HR departments are perceived throughout the organization. When HR is primarily associated with monitoring, compliance and disciplinary actions, as is usually the case, its ability to facilitate individual, group and organizational learning becomes significantly constrained. In this regard, transforming the HR department into a trusted learning partner and source of support rather than punitive action is crucial. This requires more than redesigning HR practices in terms of providing more effective learning programs; it requires reshaping its image and employees' perceptions of HR through consistent behaviors that demonstrate support, openness, collaboration and a genuine commitment to employee development. Future research could build on these findings by examining how HR departments can successfully transform their organizational identity and image from administrative controllers to strategic facilitators of individual and organizational learning and partners in continuous organizational transformation and development.

Learning organization culture as a signal for knowledge implementation

Organizations continuously invest considerable resources in employee education and development with the expectation that newly acquired knowledge and skills will be applied and, in turn, improve individual and organizational performance. However, the value of training depends not only on participation but also on employees' ability and willingness to apply newly acquired competencies in their daily work. Consequently, the challenge extends beyond designing effective training programs to creating organizational conditions that facilitate the transfer of learning into action and purposeful practice.

Sahoo et al. (2026) investigated how learning organization culture influences the successful transfer of knowledge acquired through faculty development programs in Indian higher education institutions into faculty members' work. Specifically, the study examined whether faculty members' transfer interest and self-efficacy play a role in explaining how learning organization culture ultimately translates into the effective application of newly acquired knowledge and skills in teaching and research. Drawing on signaling theory (Spence, 1973), the authors argue that organizational culture serves as an important signal through which organizations communicate the value they attach to learning, knowledge sharing, experimentation and the practical application of newly acquired competencies. Such signals shape employees' perceptions of organizational priorities and influence both their

motivation to engage in learning and their willingness to transfer new knowledge into practice.

The study demonstrates that learning organization culture provides a supportive environment for learning by encouraging continuous knowledge acquisition, collaboration and professional development. However, organizational support alone is insufficient to ensure that learning is transferred to practice. The findings reveal that employees' transfer interest and self-efficacy represent the psychological mechanisms through which learning organization culture influences training transfer. Faculty members who perceive stronger organizational support for learning develop greater interest in applying newly acquired knowledge and greater confidence in their ability to do so, making them significantly more likely to integrate new competencies into their teaching and research activities.

An important contribution of the study is the demonstration that transfer interest and self-efficacy fully mediate the relationship between learning organization culture and training transfer. In other words, a learning-oriented culture does not improve organizational performance directly. Rather, it creates conditions that signal organizational commitment to learning and thereby strengthens employees' motivation and confidence, encouraging the practical application of newly acquired knowledge. The study therefore illustrates that organizational learning is not simply a consequence of providing learning opportunities but of creating an organizational environment that consistently communicates the importance of learning and supports employees in transforming learning into action.

For practitioners, these findings indicate that investments in training alone do not guarantee knowledge implementation and, consequently, individual and organizational improvement. Organizations should complement formal training initiatives with learning environments that consistently signal the strategic importance of learning through supportive leadership, collaboration, knowledge sharing, experimentation and opportunities to apply newly acquired competencies. At the same time, managers should recognize that employees must perceive these organizational signals as authentic and experience sufficient confidence and motivation to implement what they have learned. Ultimately, organizations create value not by delivering training but by creating conditions in which newly acquired knowledge is implemented and transformed into improved individual practice and, potentially, collective capability, leading to sustained organizational development. Future research could further examine how different organizational signals, such as leadership behaviors, HR practices, reward systems and communication processes, shape employees' motivation to learn, apply knowledge and contribute to continuous organizational learning and transformation.

Integrative thinking: from individual cognition to recursive learning systems

Organizations increasingly operate in environments characterized by complexity, uncertainty, ambiguity and interdependence, where addressing multifaceted problems requires more than specialized expertise and linear reasoning. Contemporary organizational challenges demand the ability to understand organizations as systems or interconnected wholes, integrate diverse forms of knowledge, reconcile often conflicting perspectives and continuously reflect on underlying assumptions or mental models. In this context, integrative thinking has emerged as an increasingly important cognitive capability for both individuals and organizations. However, despite its growing popularity across disciplines, the concept has been used inconsistently and without consensus regarding its meaning, limiting both its theoretical development and practical application.

Brody et al. (2026) addressed this challenge by conducting a scoping review to clarify the meaning of integrative thinking, examine how the concept has been used across disciplines and propose a unified, domain-independent definition. By systematically reviewing the

existing literature, the authors identify the dominant ways in which Integrative Thinking has been conceptualized in two complementary contexts: shaping people, focusing on the development of individual thinking and cognitive capability and shaping practice, emphasizing its application to organizational practice, problem solving and decision-making.

The review identifies four fundamental dimensions that together define integrative thinking. First, it involves perceiving organizations and problems as holistic, interconnected systems rather than isolated components. Second, it requires synthesizing multiple disciplines, perspectives and forms of knowledge to generate a richer and more contextually grounded understanding. Third, it emphasizes reconciling seemingly opposing ideas instead of selecting between alternatives, thereby fostering creativity and innovation through constructive tension. Finally, Integrative Thinking requires reflection and metacognition, encouraging individuals to question assumptions, remain open to alternative viewpoints and continually reframe problems as new insights emerge. Rather than representing separate cognitive activities, these dimensions collectively describe an integrated way of thinking that enables individuals to navigate complexity while generating meaningful, actionable solutions.

An important contribution of the study lies in demonstrating that Integrative Thinking extends beyond an individual cognitive skill. While the development of integrative thinking capabilities begins with individuals, its greatest value emerges when these capabilities are translated into organizational practice. Integrative thinking therefore acts as a bridge between individual cognition and organizational action, enabling organizations to integrate diverse expertise, overcome disciplinary boundaries, address complex problems and create more coherent responses to dynamic environments. In this respect, integrative thinking complements systems thinking by moving beyond recognizing interconnectedness toward actively integrating those relationships into decision-making, organizational learning and innovation.

From a broader organizational perspective, integrative thinking represents more than another approach to problem solving. It constitutes a higher-order capability that enables organizations to perceive, construct and continuously refine their systems of knowledge and action toward increasing coherence. Organizations rarely operate as isolated systems; rather, they consist of nested, interconnected systems in which individuals, teams, departments, organizations, industries and broader ecosystems continuously interact. Effective organizational learning therefore requires not only integrating diverse perspectives within each level but also maintaining coherence across levels. In this sense, integrative thinking may be viewed as a recursive capability that enables knowledge, understanding and decision-making principles to be reproduced throughout nested organizational systems while preserving their structural consistency and coherence.

For practitioners, these findings suggest that learning organizations should intentionally cultivate environments that encourage holistic reasoning, interdisciplinary collaboration, constructive dialogue, reflection and the integration of diverse perspectives. Developing integrative thinking is therefore not merely a training objective but a strategic organizational capability that enhances purposeful learning, decision quality, innovation, adaptability and continuous viability. In addition, organizations should strive to develop integrated and coherent patterns of thinking across the organization, embedded throughout structures and processes, rather than leaving them as isolated rare individual competencies. Such recursive and structurally consistent patterns allow organizations to maintain coherence among individual actions, team practices, managerial decisions, strategic intent and

organizational values and thus enable all constituents to address increasingly complex challenges more effectively.

Future research could extend the current conceptualization of integrative thinking beyond individual cognition by examining its role in the emergence of recursively organized learning systems. Such systems may exhibit isomorphic patterns of learning, adaptation and knowledge integration across organizational levels, based on similar principles of perception, interpretation, integration and action that operate simultaneously within individuals, teams, organizations and broader ecosystems. Understanding how these recursive patterns emerge, evolve and contribute to organizational transformation may represent an important next step in the development of Integrative Thinking theory and its application within learning organizations.

The World Café: from information acquisition to organizational learning

As organizations increasingly operate in environments characterized by growing complexity, uncertainty, ambiguity and interdependence, it is becoming more difficult for individuals or small groups of executives to possess sufficient knowledge to adequately address organizational challenges. Organizations need to acquire and integrate information from different sources. For this reason, diverse stakeholders should be invited to provide input and multiple perspectives, stimulate dialogue and generate ideas that may contribute to more informed decision-making. The so-called “large-group interventions” have emerged in this regard as valuable organizational development approaches that create opportunities for broad stakeholder participation, collaborative discussion and collective exploration of complex problems and challenges.

Cho (2026) examined one such intervention – the World Café – through a systematic review of empirical studies to identify its applications, benefits, limitations and research gaps. Originally developed as a participatory dialogue method, the World Café brings together large groups of participants in an informal café-like environment where they discuss selected topics in small groups while periodically changing tables and exchanging ideas. This conversational process enables participants to share experiences, become acquainted with and explore diverse viewpoints and collectively generate a broad range of ideas and potential solutions.

The review demonstrates that the World Café has been applied primarily for four interconnected purposes: collaborative problem solving and consensus building, stakeholder engagement, trust and relationship development and learning through dialogue. Organizations have used the method to identify challenges, explore possible solutions, involve diverse stakeholder groups in organizational discussions, strengthen collaboration and psychological safety and encourage participants to reflect on common issues from multiple perspectives. Beyond organizational settings, the method has also gained considerable popularity as a qualitative research and data collection technique because it enables efficient engagement with large numbers of participants while generating rich qualitative data.

The reported benefits of implementing this method extend beyond participant satisfaction and engagement. The World Café enables organizations to rapidly collect varied information, capture diverse attitudes and experiences, identify emerging themes, generate large volumes of ideas and obtain broad stakeholder input within a relatively short period of time. Such collective dialogue can improve organizational understanding of complex issues, strengthen stakeholder involvement, enable identification of priorities and provide a valuable foundation for subsequent planning and decision-making. At the same time, the review identifies several important limitations. Because participation is voluntary, representativeness may be reduced

and sustained participant engagement after the event may be challenging. Most importantly, the method itself provides limited guidance on how the large volume of collected data, information and ideas should be analyzed, synthesized, prioritized and translated into concrete organizational actions.

From an organizational learning perspective, the World Café should therefore be viewed primarily as a mechanism for information acquisition, idea generation and stakeholder engagement rather than as a mechanism that automatically produces organizational learning or knowledge integration. While the method successfully creates opportunities for dialogue and exposes participants to multiple perspectives, meaningful organizational learning requires additional processes through which information is critically interpreted and synthesized and meaningful patterns are identified. Only after these patterns have been recognized can organizations integrate the newly acquired insights with existing organizational knowledge, translate them into coordinated and meaningful organizational actions, evaluate their outcomes and ultimately embed successful practices into organizational routines and memory.

For practitioners, these findings suggest that organizations should evaluate the success of a World Café not by the number of participants or ideas generated, but by their ability to transform dispersed information into coherent organizational understanding and actionable decisions. The value of the method therefore lies less in generating diversity – which organizations often already possess – and more in creating opportunities to surface otherwise fragmented knowledge and stakeholder perspectives. However, realizing this potential requires complementary mechanisms capable of analyzing, integrating, prioritizing and implementing the generated ideas. From this perspective, the World Café complements the benefits of integrative thinking. While the World Café expands the diversity of available information and perspectives, integrative thinking provides the cognitive capability needed to reconcile competing viewpoints, identify meaningful patterns and construct coherent responses to complex organizational challenges. Together, these complementary processes illustrate that organizational learning depends not simply on acquiring more information, but on progressively transforming information into patterns, patterns into knowledge, knowledge into coordinated action and coordinated action into enhanced organizational capabilities that support continuous learning and transformation.

Future research could therefore examine how participatory dialogue methods, integrative thinking and organizational learning jointly contribute to organizational pattern recognition, collective sense-making and the design of meaningful action within increasingly complex stakeholder ecosystems. Such an approach may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how organizations transform dispersed stakeholder information into coherent organizational knowledge, coordinated action and continuous organizational transformation.

Leadership as a driver of knowledge sharing and organizational learning capabilities

Knowledge sharing is one of the fundamental mechanisms through which individual knowledge becomes organizational knowledge and drives changes in organizational behavior. While knowledge is initially acquired, created, interpreted and applied by individuals, organizations learn only when that knowledge is exchanged, collectively interpreted and integrated with existing organizational knowledge, leading to changed practices and new routines. Consequently, knowledge sharing is more than mere information exchange; it is a central organizational process through which organizational learning capabilities emerge, enabling innovation, adaptation, development and transformation. However, this process must be strongly supported and facilitated. In knowledge-intensive

environments, leaders play a particularly important role in creating organizational conditions and a culture that encourage employees to willingly share their knowledge, experiences and ideas, engage in collective sensemaking and decide which insights should be embedded in organizational practices and behavior.

In this regard, Şahin and Bilir (2026) investigated how these two seemingly different yet complementary leadership approaches – entrepreneurial leadership and servant leadership – influence employees’ knowledge-sharing behavior within knowledge-intensive IT organizations. In addition, the study examined the role of psychological safety in explaining how these leadership styles shape employees’ willingness to exchange knowledge and contribute to collective organizational learning. Entrepreneurial leadership has been recognized as emphasizing vision-directed behavior, strategic initiative, opportunity recognition, creativity, experimentation, risk-taking and innovation (Pauceanu, Rabie, Moustafa, & Jiroveanu, 2021). Servant leadership, on the other hand, focuses on stewardship and ethical leadership that foster employee development and empowerment in a high-trust environment (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Although conceptually different, these leadership approaches are complementary: entrepreneurial leadership provides a clear sense of purpose and action, while servant leadership creates conditions of care and support, which synergistically stimulate proactive employee behaviors aimed at learning and action that can improve organizational effectiveness.

The findings show that both leadership styles influence knowledge sharing by shaping employees’ perceptions of the organizational environment. By creating a climate that supports innovation and initiative, entrepreneurial leaders encourage employees to pursue opportunities, experiment with new ideas and contribute proactively to organizational objectives. Servant leaders, in turn, create supportive conditions that encourage trust, empathy, openness and collaboration while emphasizing employee development and empowerment. The study also demonstrates that psychological safety plays a central role in this process. Employees who perceive their work environment as psychologically safe are more willing to exchange knowledge, express ideas, acknowledge mistakes, question existing assumptions and participate in learning processes without fear of negative consequences.

An important contribution of the study lies in showing that different leadership styles should not necessarily be viewed as alternatives but as complementary approaches that contribute in distinct ways to employee development and organizational learning. Entrepreneurial leadership primarily establishes a clear vision and strategic direction, followed by a focus on opportunity recognition and innovation, whereas servant leadership creates the trust, support and psychological safety necessary for employees to actively participate in knowledge-sharing activities. However, it should be noted that while entrepreneurial leadership may encourage initiative and experimentation, these initiatives do not automatically generate psychological safety. Employees may still hesitate to express concerns, experiment, admit mistakes and learn from failures unless leaders consistently communicate trust, support, openness and acceptance of responsible risk-taking. In this respect, servant leadership appears particularly well suited to creating the psychological conditions that encourage employees to engage in effective knowledge sharing and contribute to sustained organizational learning. However, whether both leadership styles can be embodied by one person remains open to debate.

From an organizational learning perspective, leadership should be viewed as the architect of the organizational conditions that make organizational learning possible, rather than as a direct driver of organizational learning. Organizational learning is a complex process strongly affected by both the learning content and the learning context. Through the values

and behaviors communicated consistently in their interactions with employees, leaders shape an organizational culture that establishes trust and psychological safety as key environmental conditions and thus influences employees' willingness to share and transform individually acquired knowledge into collective organizational memory, thereby strengthening organizational learning capability. Knowledge sharing can therefore be considered a bridge between individual, group and organizational learning, with effective leadership acting as a key facilitator in this process.

For practitioners, these findings indicate that if they want their organizations to strengthen organizational learning capability, they should focus not only on formal learning initiatives but, even more, on leadership behavior and organizational culture. Leadership influences not only what employees do and what they learn, but also which organizational values are communicated, how interpersonal relationships are built and what the consequences of sharing knowledge, questioning existing practices or proposing innovative ideas might be. Organizations should therefore cultivate leadership approaches that simultaneously provide clear vision and strategic direction while also empowering employees, encouraging collaboration and fostering psychological safety. Such environments enable employees not only to acquire and apply knowledge but also to willingly share it, thereby supporting continuous group and organizational learning, innovation, adaptability and long-term organizational viability.

Conclusion

Viewed collectively, the studies presented throughout this issue suggest that organizational learning emerges through a sequence of interconnected organizational processes. Organizations first acquire diverse information and perspectives, interpret and integrate them through dialogue and integrative thinking, transform meaningful patterns into knowledge, share that knowledge across organizational boundaries, translate knowledge into coordinated organizational action and ultimately embed successful practices into organizational capabilities and organizational memory. Leadership provides the organizational values, trust, psychological safety and learning culture that sustain each stage of this progression, enabling learning organizations to continuously adapt, transform and remain viable in increasingly complex environments. Future research could further explore how leadership contributes to maintaining structure, coherence and presence throughout this learning process and how different leadership approaches support the recursive development of learning capabilities across individuals, teams, organizations and broader stakeholder ecosystems.

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Further reading

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