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Exploring the Concept of Learning Agility

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Business Studies

in

Human Resource Management

at Massey University, Manawatu, New Zealand

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2018

Abstract

Continuous learning and employee adaptation have become increasingly important within modern organisational environments categorised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. In turn, this has resulted in a growing body of literature supporting a construct known as learning agility.

This study sought to determine the underlying psychological variables that support individual learning agility. In doing so, cognitive ability, personality, and emotional intelligence assessments distributed by OPRA Psychology Group were administered to a random sample of Scenic Hotel Group employees to obtain quantifiable data. Alongside this, a validated learning agility questionnaire was administered to participants and their managers to obtain a measure of each employee's learning agility. Participants' learning agility scores were then correlated with their personality, cognitive ability, and emotional intelligence assessment results.

Results of this study indicate that learning agility is significantly positively correlated with overall cognitive ability. Furthermore, learning agility shows a significantly positive relationship with personality factors associated with openness to experience, extraversion, and the neuroticism sub-trait, tense-driven. As an outcome, this has provided for a tentative model of learning agility compromising of:

1. Cognitive ability
2. Learning mindset and behaviour
3. Contribution to the social learning environment

This research adds to the current body of literature available into a construct known as a key determinant of employee performance and potential (Eichinger & Lombardo, 2000; McCauley, 2001). Furthermore, it provides the foundations for the development of a derived measure of learning agility that can be determined using existing psychometric assessments.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the support of Dr Phil Ramsey and Dr David Tweed in providing supervision over the course of writing this thesis document. Your time, advice, and recommendations were much appreciated.

In addition, I would like to thank Dr Sarah Burke and Dr Paul Englert from OPRA Psychology Group for supporting my studies and for the ongoing coaching and mentoring that you provide in the course of my employment.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my wife. Many evening and weekend hours were spent working on this thesis at the sacrifice of my family. Your love and support in helping me achieve my goal will never be forgotten.

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