

Exploring and Enhancing Organizational Learning Capability in Company X

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to use action research to improve learning capabilities in teams. This research was conducted in a privately run waste management company with 15 supervisors, who led teams with sizes ranging from 4 - 37 workers from two departments in the company's operations section. The data was collected through in-depth interviews and reports submitted by the supervisors. The data were analyzed to ascertain the exhibition and enhancement of learning capabilities in the organization.

Using action research, improvements were made to the organizations' learning capability and further recommendations to the organization's management. This thesis showed that the learning capabilities work together; it showed how the supervisors interpret these capabilities in their daily work and the circumstances that influence these capabilities. These findings also show that understanding the team's existing learning capabilities provides a better opportunity to enhance and improve learning in the organization. The benefits and the impact of learning capability are hinged on understanding how teams exhibit these capabilities and using this insight to improve these capabilities in the organization. The implementation of the results of this research in Company X shows how OLC creates conditions for positive outcomes.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The purpose of this action research is to explore the phenomenon of Organizational Learning Capability among operation teams in Company X. Organizational Learning Capability (OLC) is defined as measures and structures in the organization that strengthen its members' ability and the organization to learn. This qualitative study provides insight into how teams in Company X exhibit and improve the measures of Organizational Learning Capability (OLC) in Company X.

1.1 Context

Although there is extensive research in organizational learning on the impact of OLC on different variables, little attention is given to providing an in-depth explanation of how OLC is recognized in teams. Research in organizational learning indicates what OLC is, the importance of OLC, and the measures used to identify OLC (Goh and Richards, 1997, Nevis et al., 1995). According to Goh (2003, p. 102), "future research may want to investigate further some of the practical implications for managers, such as how to implement and sustain a learning capability effectively." This research seeks to understand OLC within the teams to apply it to Company X to improve teams, innovation, and the organization's processes.

What identifies OLC is known, but how this is expressed in teams is less clear.

Understanding the expression of OLC in teams will give managers and researchers a broader view of the reasons for differences in learning in teams in the same department and organization. It will help managers and researchers understand how teams learn and trigger the teams to impact their decisions and actions, thereby enhancing their problem-solving abilities and improving their competitiveness.

The application of the measures of OLC to Company X will provide a better understanding of OLC in the organizational environment, the organizational leadership, and its impact on response to learning.

Applying OLC to Company X will also provide insight into the organizational circumstances that encourage learning between teams. According to Prieto and Revilla (2006, p. 519), "future research should also identify antecedents or enablers of learning capability and elaborate a comprehensive framework of both enablers and outcomes." Other factors can influence the learning capabilities of teams. This research tries to identify factors that enhance or stifle learning capabilities in teams and the organization to improve the organization's processes positively. This research is also seeking to enable Company X's management to make informed decisions that will enhance the learning in the teams. Additionally, this research aims to result in a better impact on the organization through enhanced OLC.

According to Antonacopoulou and Chiva (2007, p. 291), "A greater understanding of the factors which support or hinder OL as it self-organizes would be particularly important in understanding how learning capability can be developed." This qualitative study seeks to fill this gap by showing an in-depth perspective on the factors that support or hinder the implementation and sustenance of OLC in teams. This study also provides an understanding of OLC by applying OLC to Company X. For example, this research highlights how the team leader and the nature of work affect the team's direction. They stand as a go-between for the management and the other employees.

Organizational learning capabilities (OLC) exist in diverse ways; they vary in measures and create conditions that are easier for positive outcomes to thrive in the organization. These positive factors include job innovation, creativity, and the opportunity for teams and other employees to communicate with leadership (Alegre and Chiva, 2008, DiBella et al., 1996). According to Aragon-Correa et al. (2007, p. 30), "scholars are paying growing attention to the possibility that the collective capability of organizational learning plays a key role in determining innovation."

Studies have established the link between OLC and performance: an increased or enhanced learning capability affects organizational performance positively (Bhatnagar, 2006, Prieto and Revilla, 2006, Chiva and Alegre, 2009).

1.2 Company Background

Company X is involved in the environmental cleanup of streets and receptacles. The operatives section of the company has two sections; the Operative section and the Sweeper section.

The Operatives clear refuse from receptacles and remove refuse from the streets 24 hours a day. They work in two shifts (morning and night). They use compactors and work closely with drivers. The operatives work in small teams of less than ten workers.

The sweeper section sweeps the areas designated by the "Client" and clears sand and debris from the sides of the road in the mornings. The sweepers ensure the roads are kept free of refuse and dust. They work only in the mornings between 6 am to 9 am, unless otherwise required by the "Client" or when other units are lagging. A zoning system from the "Client" assigns areas of responsibility to contractors.

We have our zones from the state government. For increased efficiency, the company divides these into sections of the Operations Department. They are divided into nine units: A to K for operatives and A to E for sweepers. A supervisor heads each unit, and the number of employees in each group varies from 4 to 35.

Three other supervisors report to the Operations Manager. They are not assigned to any team but act as "planters" who sometimes take over supervisory work when a supervisor is not available and check areas worked on by the different teams. They also sometimes liaise with the task force agents from the "Client."

At the formation of teams in Company X's operation department, each team's requirements were the same: the organization's practices, policies, and structures applied to these teams in the same way. Mechanisms such as meetings and feedback systems were vehicles to ensure information was passed to teams consistently.

Improved learning capability is significant for Company X as the organization expands its business to the manufacturing sector. Improved OLC is also vital for the company. It tries to cope with the frequent changes in the business environment and remain competitive.

Internally it keeps the organization's targets in focus as it battles with challenges. Externally it keeps the organization competitive despite these challenges.

Company X has two business areas: plastic manufacturing and waste management. The waste management company is fast-paced and challenging. The teams must finish their work at a stipulated time. Failure to complete their daily assignments attracts penalties from the "Client." These penalties come in the form of warning letters to the company, suspension, or fines.

The Operations Department consists of 16 teams divided into the Sweeper and the Operatives' sections. The sweepers have five teams, and the operatives have 11 teams. The Operations Department also has three planters who report to the Operations Manager on the status of the zones assigned to the organization. The Sweeper section works during the day from 5 am to 10 am, while the Operatives section works morning and night. Each Operative team is assigned a compactor truck and a driver.

I work in Company X as the General Manager. Improving OLC in the organization has many advantages for Company X. The organization is expanding to other sectors, so it is vital to transition as smoothly as possible. Lessons learned in the team or teams need to be communicated to the entire organization to inform future decisions. Teams also have direct contact with stakeholders in our business. The teams reflect the organization; their actions reflect the culture of the company to our various stakeholders.

1.3 Rationale

An understanding of OLC will give clarity to the areas that require enhancement of OLC across the entire organization. According to Antonacopoulou and Chiva (2007, p. 291), "A greater understanding of the factors which support or hinder OL as it self-organizes would be particularly important in understanding how learning capability can be developed." This qualitative study seeks to fill this gap by showing an in-depth perspective on the factors that support or hinder the implementation and sustenance of OLC in teams.

An understanding of these factors creates a way for the organization to enhance its learning capability. It increases the impact of mechanisms and structures that are designed to promote OLC.

The team is a smaller version of the organization. Understanding OLC in teams and seeking ways to improve OLC in teams will make it easier to implement lessons learned across the organization. Improvement is a significant part of organizational development.

Organizations that improve will strengthen their systems in readiness for the changing times; events have occurred within and outside Company X that changed the organization's operations. These events included the elections, which brought a change of government and loss of contracts to companies. The financial recession and the Naira's devaluation caused an increase in imported parts and equipment to skyrocket. The restriction of transfer for foreign exchange made buying parts abroad almost impossible at that time. The company started a new operation that needed staff with a different skillset, meaning the company had to recruit and release staff within a year.

The changing times in Company X came from issues that included government policies, political climate, competition, and branching into a new business. Changes influence the organization and may require a modification in operations. Still, an organization with a robust internal system will be better prepared to adapt to changing times (Bhatnagar, 2006).

The use of OLC is contingent on challenges that occur and the ability of teams to deal with those challenges. As the saying goes, "*the challenges of life have no timetable.*" These challenges include absenteeism, problems between the team leader and the rest of the team, shortage of equipment, and so many unforeseeable problems that happen at any time.

Understanding how Company X exhibits OLC provides more clarity on how Company X can improve learning capability. Understanding the diverse ways teams can show learning capabilities will help in knowing how to improve Company X.

Understanding OLC in the organization will provide insight into issues that affect learning capabilities positively or negatively. Insight into OLC is necessary to enhance learning in the organization and improve the organization's impact, thereby providing an innovative working environment.

1.4 Research Objectives

This section describes the major issues that this thesis seeks to address through research objectives.

Teams reflect the organization's mechanisms to enhance learning; it is essential to understand how teams exhibit learning capabilities to improve their learning capabilities. Understanding this will bring insight into how to improve OLC to make the teams more impactful.

This thesis also gives a better understanding of how best the organization can continue to enhance or improve learning or aspects of its learning capability, have an impact, make better decisions, be more competitive and innovative.

This thesis aims to explore OLC within teams in Company X and use this insight to encourage improved learning capability in the organization. This thesis seeks to provide insight into how Company X can improve and enhance its ability to learn. This will be achieved by addressing the following four objectives.

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Research Objective 1

The first research objective is to explore alignment to goals in the organization. This action research seeks to understand how the teams currently align with the organization's goals, identify the existing gaps to alignment in the organization, and recommend and implement measures to improve alignment. This action research aims to understand goal alignment in the teams and enhance the team's ability to work cohesively and achieve their goals.

This research seeks to discover how teams align with the organization's goals by seeking to provide an in-depth view of how teams in Company X exhibit alignment to goals. This objective will address the issues that will clarify how teams can achieve the organization's goals and how alignment with the organization's goals can be enhanced.

Improving the team's alignment to goals will also bring improvements to the teams and the ability of the members of the teams. Addressing this issue will provide the avenue to understand how the teams can get valuable outputs from their resources.

R1. How is the alignment to goals in OLC exhibited in teams?

Research Objective 2

This thesis's second research objective seeks to address the organization's ability to respond and take note of information from the teams and vice versa. With effective communication flow, the company can identify opportunities to improve, effectively introduce changes, and effectively disseminate information to the teams.

This research seeks to enhance communication flow in Company X by understanding how the company identifies opportunities for improvement, how the company can improve the awareness of what is happening in the teams, and how the organization can create an enabling and conducive environment for learning to occur.

R2. How is communication flow exhibited in teams?

Research Objective 3

The third research objective this thesis seeks to address is to understand and enhance management support to teams in the organization. It seeks to provide insight into how the organization can create an enabling environment for learning and how management can improve and strengthen its workforce.

To understand what stifles or enhances the impact of decisions, procedures, new initiatives in the organization will bring insight into how management can support its teams to learn.

R3. How is management support exhibited in teams?

Research Objective 4

This study aims to provide insight into OLC within the teams and to bring an in-depth understanding of how the teams implement organizational structures, practices, and measures in their work despite the challenges faced by the teams, such as the work environments, misunderstanding between team members, and nature of work. The study also aims to

understand how teams approach risk and show how risk influences the teams; this research seeks to provide understanding into how teams solve problems.

R4. How is openness to risk displayed in teams?

1.5 Delimitations

The participants of this qualitative action research are the team leaders in the operations department of Company X. The methodological approach is qualitative research. The participants were chosen to give an in-depth perspective of OLC in teams.

This approach is grounded in an interpretivist perspective; it involves a small number of participants. The findings are limited to the organization and cannot be generalized to other contexts.

Due to circumstances in the organization at the time of data collection and analysis, the teams' members were relieved of their duties. Their perspectives would have added more insight into the understanding of OLC in the organization.

Another possible methodological approach is quantitative research, based on a large sample of participants across different contexts. Although qualitative research provides needed insight and clarity into the phenomena under study, quantitative research would have allowed the research findings to be generalized across a wider group of participants.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis contains seven chapters: the introduction, literature review, methodology, data collection and analysis, findings, discussion of findings, and the reflection and conclusion chapter. Relevant research is contextualized in the literature review chapter. The methodology chapter describes the process of conducting the research and the philosophical

assumptions that guide this thesis. The findings present evidence from the data collected and analyzed, which gives answers to the research questions presented in the introduction chapter. The discussion chapter discusses the findings in the context of the research questions. The reflection and conclusion chapter presents the researcher's development as a scholar-practitioner in the course of this thesis. It summarizes the thesis, presents the challenges faced in the course of this thesis, the actions the organization embarked on as a result of the research, and the recommendations for further study.

1.7 Summary

This chapter introduced the study by presenting the research background, including the contextual and organizational rationale and justification for this research. It also stated the research objectives, delimitations, and the structure of the thesis. The next chapter is the literature review; it looks at research relevant to the thesis and uses literature to give context to the study.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The nature of the literature review is to identify, organize, and summarize the existing knowledge in a field of study (Rowley and Slack, 2004). Conducting a literature review uncovers the leading researchers and groups in the area of study (Randolph, 2009, Rowley and Slack, 2004). This literature review aims to define and explore existing knowledge about the research problem. This literature review also seeks to give more insight into the research problem. The literature review creates a foundation for the phenomena under study.

The purpose of this literature review is to describe organizational learning and how it relates to OLC. It reviews the perspectives of organizational learning and how these perspectives have influenced writers' approach to the subject. Furthermore, it discusses the influence of these approaches on individual and team learning and how these perspectives can be integrated to understand OLC. This chapter also defines OLC, describes its relevance, benefits, and discusses issues that influence OLC.

This thesis is titled 'Enhancing and Exploring OLC in Company X'; it seeks to explore OLC in the teams and use the understanding from this action research thesis to enhance OLC in the organization. This review looks through the existing research in the field of organizational learning and the impact on OLC. It seeks to provide an in-depth explanation of the use of OLC in the teams and their role in improving the organization.

The reasons for conducting a literature review are to gain an overview of the existing research about OLC; to gain insight into the area of study; to identify gaps in the research area, and provide a framework for the findings presented in chapters five and six.

This chapter contains six sections, which present literature on OL perspectives and levels in the organization. Followed by a discussion of OLC and the measures used to assess OLC, the chapter also presents literature about communities-of-practice, the research objectives, and the conceptual framework.

2.1.1 Sources of Literature

The literature search provides a robust overview of the literature available for the focus of this thesis, so a search from resources available from the UOL online library was done on Discover, SCOPUS, and the reference lists of Peer-reviewed Journals on the topic.

The resources cited were selected from The University of Liverpool online library resources, using Discover search. The keywords searched are the following: Organizational Learning Capability, OLC, Organizational Learning. The search was limited to peer-reviewed journals, conference materials, and books. The search included works published from 1900 to date. The following were set as limits for the resources selected: organizational learning, learning organization; knowledge management; dynamic capabilities; organizational performance; innovation, and organizational effectiveness.

A search was also carried out using SCOPUS, a citation database. The keywords used for the search were Organizational Learning Capability and Organizational Learning. The subject area selected was Business, Management, and Accounting. The search was limited to the following: Journal of Knowledge Management; Learning Organization; Organizational Science; Management Learning; Journal of Workplace Learning and Organizational Dynamics.

The reference lists from Journals were also used to select resources for the literature review. When the title was identified, the resource was obtained from the University of Liverpool Online Library. Sometimes, the books or eBooks were purchased on Amazon.

Google Scholar, available at <https://scholar.google.com/>, was also a rich source of information linked to the University's library. Many journal articles found were accessed with Shibboleth authentication using the UOL online library username and password. With Google Scholar, there was a link to save the citations on Endnote reference software.

From the literature on OLC, most researchers describe different measures of OLC. The measures that enhance learning in the organization differ even among the same perspectives of OLC. Although these measures differ, they overlap and can be grouped into broad categories, Goh et al., (2012). In this thesis, the researcher adapted these categories to form four broad categories that show how organizations can enhance their ability to learn (Camps

et al., 2011, Chiva et al., 2007, Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Goh and Richards, 1997). These categories are described in the section titled Assessing OLC.

2.2 Organizational Learning Perspectives

Exploring OLC in the organization requires clarity on organizational learning. It is pertinent to understand the meaning of organizational learning to shed more light on how organizations can enhance learning and provide insight into why organizations need to increase their learning capability.

Organizational learning describes what takes place in the organization at various levels and its change process (DiBella and Nevis, 1998). Organizational learning is an important construct that contributes to reframing topics in the organizational, social, and administrative sciences (Morgan et al., 1998). Building on existing capabilities or developing new capabilities enhances organizational learning (Bhatnagar, 2006). Organizational learning is the process that uses experiences from the organization to improve its performance (DiBella et al., 1996).

Past studies view organizational learning from different perspectives, namely the cognitive or the individual perspective and the social perspective. These perspectives inform the literature on organizational learning (Stan and Vermeulen, 2013, Argote, 2011, Chiva and Alegre, 2005, Shrivastava, 1983).

The cognitive or individual perspective is based on psychological studies of human behavior and forms the basis of organizational learning (Chiva and Alegre, 2005, Shrivastava, 1983). This perspective views the human learning process as the basis of organizational learning. Another approach links organizational learning to individuals whose learning brings organizational change (Chiva and Alegre, 2005). In another approach, knowledge is viewed as a change in states of knowledge as opposed by the view of knowledge as probabilities of response (Shrivastava, 1983).

The social perspective has four complementary approaches and is based on sociological studies (Chiva and Alegre, 2005, Shrivastava, 1983). From the social perspective, organizational learning is perceived to be the result of social interactions in the workplace. The communication that occurs in the organization bridges the gap between the individual, team, and organization levels, which exist in an organization (Chiva and Alegre, 2005, Crossan et al., 1999).

This thesis adopts the sociological perspective of organizational learning as a conceptual framework because this perspective acknowledges the individual's position in organizational learning and positions the role of the individual in the context of the contribution of individuals to organizational learning. This perspective acknowledges the differences between the individual level's goals and the organizational level. It shows how the individual level of learning creates the necessary inputs needed for the organization to learn.

Crossan et al. (1999) posit that organizational learning occurs across three levels, namely the individual, group, and the organizational levels (Shrivastava, 1983), names five levels of organizational level as individual, plant, company, industry and societal levels.

According to Crossan et al. (1999), At the individual level, knowledge generates from the individual in the form of ideas, insight, intuition, and innovation. At this level, individuals interpret their insights and ideas. At the group level, these ideas are shared and acted on, and shared meaning is developed.

At the group level, there is interpreting and integrating. Intuition is an individual process. Groups and organizations cannot intuit but can interpret and integrate ideas and shared meanings. At the organizational level, these ideas and shared meanings become institutionalized as organizational artifacts (Crossan et al., 1999).

Organizations are socially constructed. The organization's routines and rules are not dependent on one individual; on the other hand, the organization cannot intuit. Organizational learning from the sociological perspective gives a clear picture of the role each level plays in organizational learning; it shows the individual as learning agents through whom organizational learning occurs because individuals maintain the organization's theories-in-use through detecting and correcting changes that occur in the organization's environment and through sharing their insights, assumptions, and opinions (Shrivastava, 1983).

According to (Crossan et al., 1999), competition for resources creates tension among the levels in the organization. This tension is called feed-forward or exploration and feedback or exploitation. Feed-forward or exploration is the transfer of learning from the individual to groups, which then becomes embedded in the organizations' systems, structures, processes, and procedures. Feedback or exploitation is the effect of institutional learning on individuals. Communication generates learning and produces meaning and understanding among these levels.

In OLC studies, organizational learning is a function of experience, context, and knowledge (Argote, 2011). The origins of OLC provides the foundation and theoretical support for this thesis, which connects to OLC studies from the organizational learning perspective. It provides the connection needed to tie this research with ongoing studies of OLC. It also shows the relevance of OLC to other fields such as psychology, sociology, and organizational theory. This is discussed further in the next section, which described the different perspectives of researchers in the field of organizational learning.

The field of organizational learning also has different areas of expertise (Chiva and Alegre, 2009, Antonacopoulou and Chiva, 2007). One area of expertise is knowledge transfer in international joint ventures IJVs; this is where organizations from different countries agree to form a business partnership. Other areas of expertise are the link between organizational learning and dynamic capabilities and the socio-political dynamics involved in developing learning capabilities and implementing learning organizations (Antonacopoulou and Chiva, 2007, Easterby-Smith et al., 2000).

2.3 Levels of Organizational Learning

It is pertinent to include a section about the levels of learning present in the organization. The levels are the individual, group, and organizational levels. This section describes how learning from these levels is transferred to the organization.

Organizations are learning systems; hence individual and group learning contribute to organizational learning, and organizations learn from their environments (Sinkula, 1994). Organizational learning is akin to the different threads that make up fabric: one thread will not make a difference but woven together. They can form a pattern and create beauty. Organizational learning happens where individual and group learning align to support the organization's visions and goals, with the support of management (Goh and Richards, 1997). The following subsections highlight the roles of the individual and the team in organizational learning.

2.3.1 Individual Level

The environment, the daily experiences, and individuals' activities all contribute to shaping individual learning. Organizational factors and intrigues are present in any business environment. Team leaders, supervisors, and managers must support the enhancement of the OLC to be effective. The learning of these individuals will affect the extent of their input in their teams or the organization. However, the advantages of individual learning are limited, and personalized learning is not the yardstick to assess organizational learning (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005). Personalized learning is a contributor to organizational learning. Crossan et al. (1999) describe the feedback and feed-forward process as the process that learning gets transmitted between the individual, team, and the organization. This two-way flow of learning from the individual to the team and the team to the organization ensures the transfer and embedding of learning from the individual level to the collective level.

2.3.2 Team Level

The previous section tried to show the role of the individual employee in organizational learning. This section describes fusion created by teams that result in learning for the organization. Team learning involves exchanging individual interpretations to develop a collective understanding (Bontis et al., 2002). Organizational learning is the application of individual and team learning with management support to accomplish the organization's vision and goals (Ussahawanitchakit, 2008). Team learning provides results the organization desires. Learning from teams can be an example for the entire organization. The insights and the skills developed in units can be deployed to improve individuals and the organization's performance, innovation, and problem-solving abilities (Senge, 2006). A good team is built when individuals within the team help each other to achieve results. The team is one of the building blocks that make up an organization's learning capability (Goh, 2003).

Teams carry out the organization's vision (Morgan et al., 1998); the social interactions and the nature of the teams provide the platform for individuals to construct their understanding

(Easterby-Smith et al., 2000, Crossan et al., 1999). Teams interpret the organization's vision; teamwork favors the integration of tacit knowledge into the organization. OLC creates an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration that encourages team cohesion (Jerez Gomez et al., 2004).

Additionally, teams within the organization perceive the work environment differently, which influences the response of staff (Chiva et al., 2007, Bates and Khasawneh, 2005, Goh, 2003). Teamwork favors the integration of tacit knowledge into the organization; it fosters an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration that encourages a reaffirmation of team cohesion (Lucas, 2010, Jerez Gomez et al., 2004).

2.3.3 Organizational Level

The results and the effect of learning are evident by actions carried out by or influenced by individuals or groups in the organization. These actions are represented in sensemaking by individuals in the organization, human behaviors, social interactions, and the organizational culture (Costello and McNaughton, 2016). These actions also influence learning in the team and the organization (Crossan et al., 1999). Individual learning is the basis of research on organizational learning. In other words, learning is based on or traceable to studies on individual learning (Shrivastava, 1983). Contributions from individual learning in psychology and sociology have influenced the field of OLC and the understanding of the learning of groups or teams in the organization (Easterby-Smith et al., 2000, Shrivastava, 1983).

However, learning from one member of the organization does not necessarily give an accurate reflection of organizational learning (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005). Individual employees do not own organizational learning. The unspoken and unwritten knowledge that resides in individuals, also called tacit knowledge, is also in every employee in the organization. The tacit knowledge from one employee or the nature of the business carried out by the organization makes a difference in its learning capability but does not stop the organization from learning (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Goh, 2003, Easterby-Smith et al., 2000).

Employees within an organization apply procedures and exhibit learning in diverse ways. Individuals make up the teams, and actions and decisions within the organization occur through people. However, organizational learning is a cumulative result of individual learning (Easterby-Smith et al., 2000).

Organizational learning creates tension in the individual, group, and organizational levels due to competition for resources (Crossan et al., 1999), while team challenges and dynamics create avenues to work together to succeed (Arora, 2012). This process is described as feed-forward and feedback processes of learning across the levels in the organization (Crossan et al., 1999). Cohesion in the work environment improves the impact and the learning in the team. The measures of OLC improve cohesion in the team. The conceptual framework also tries to describe the synergy that exists when the measures of OLC interact.

2.4 OLC

This section introduces OLC; it seeks to provide insight into improving OLC and the challenges that exist in the organization that affects OLC. This section discusses OLC as a set of processes introduced into an organization, such as activities that describe the essence of the organization. As a goal, all levels of the organization should strive to meet. A better understanding of OLC will provide insight into the improvement of OLC in the organization; it will also give more insight into challenges that exist in the organization for the individual and the team.

The aim of OLC is to strengthen the organization's members' and teams' ability by putting structures in place with the capacity to increase the learning experience for a positive impact. According to Antonacopoulou and Chiva (2007, p. 389), "Adopting a more integrative view enables us to combine the various levels and units of analysis and acknowledge that it is the inter-relationships between levels and units of analysis that ought to be our focus."

The benefits of improving OLC in the organization are necessary to improve competitiveness, team performance, efficiency, innovation, relationship with clients, and teamwork in Company X. A definite increase in these areas mentioned over time will indicate that Company X is enhancing OLC in its teams.

The presence of OLC in the organization is a topic that has different views. Goh (2003) argues that OLC is the result of a change process, which encompasses the change process of unfreezing, introducing the change, and refreezing to introduce the learning organization. DiBella et al. (1996) opine that OLC can be present in the organization based on the orientation but in various stages or different manifestations, which is also evident in its learning orientations.

OLC is a subject with different perspectives, which emanates from the myriad of areas and applicability of the said subject in research and practice of the learning organization (Goh and Richards, 1997). From the different definitions of OLC, we see that as a topic for organizational improvement; it stems from the research and practice on the learning organization as a panacea for repositioning the organization, a means for innovation and an outcome that will strengthen the organization internally, (Ulrich et al., 1993). OLC reflects organizations' need to improve to survive in our increasingly competitive environment (Jerez

Gomez et al., 2004). Organizations employ several measures to remain competitive and propose measures that improve the organization (Easterby-Smith et al., 2000).

2.4.1 Definition of OLC

According to Goh, (2003, p. 217), OLC is "the ability of the organization to implement the appropriate management practices, structures, and procedures that facilitate and encourage learning." OLC is the structure, practices, and routines that enhance organizational learning (Bhatnagar, 2006, Goh, 2003, DiBella et al., 1996, Garvin, 1993).

OLC are conditions, enablers, and measures geared towards enhancing learning in the organization (DiBella et al., 1996). OLC consists of managerial practices, mechanisms, and management structures implemented to increase and improve learning in the organization (Goh et al., 2012, Goh, 2003, Goh and Richards, 1997). Organizational practices for organizational learning are like the measures that the organizations put in place for OLC. OLC creates the backdrop for other management practices to stand in the organization, such as human resources, business efficiency, and competitiveness.

OLC, which stems from organizational learning (Bhatnagar, 2006), is a continuous process that supports learning in the organization (Chiva and Alegre, 2009, DiBella et al., 1996, Garvin, 1993). The organization needs to support the improvement of OLC by introducing procedures to encourage learning; the staff and the nature of the organization's business alone will not improve the learning capability in an organization (Goh, 2003). Organizational learning is a function of experience, context, and knowledge (Argote, 2011), and it focuses on process outcomes and not the actual learning process (Alegre et al., 2012, Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005).

OLC represents the learning and knowledge the organization requires to support its resources (Morgan et al., 1998). This learning allows the organization to see opportunities and notice changes in the competition, customer demands, and new market requirements (Ulrich et al., 1993). The outcomes of OLC are attitudinal and psychological, it sets the stage to act on learning, and it strengthens the organization in the process. (Morgan et al., 1998).

OLC is the ability to introduce and maintain systems, such as management practices, mechanisms, procedures, and initiatives, that impact all levels of the organization (Goh et al., 2012, Goh, 2003, Yeung et al., 1999). Learning occurs when the organization implements and improves on the initiatives that encourage and facilitate learning. Organizations assess OLC from the successful implementation of those initiatives that support learning across all levels of the organization, including the teams and departments.

OLC acts like the lubricant that oils the complex machinery that is the organization. Understanding OLC will reveal how it affects areas in the organization and what enhances or stifles the impact of learning within the organization.

Learning processes enable organizations to transform their knowledge bases in line with environmental conditions (Prieto and Revilla, 2006). This research seeks to help the organization enhance and improve its team performance and understand how it can increase its learning capability (Spicer and Sadler-Smith, 2006).

OLCs are the measures organizations take to encourage improvement from within the organization; they are measures intended to increase learning in the workgroups and invariably in the organization. OLC is the set of initiatives the organization introduces to improve its outcomes and strengthen its workforce ability. It is characterized by the strength of the workforce to imbibe these initiatives by showing the impact of these processes. OLC is the enabler of learning in the organization (Goh et al., 2012).

Drawing from the above definitions, this researcher defines OLC as measures and structures in the organization that strengthens the ability of its members and the organization to learn. These measures refer to the measures of OLC, and the structures refer to the initiatives the management of the organization uses to maintain and enhance learning in the organization. This definition refers to how the measures of OLC work together to enhance OLC in the organization.

2.4.2 Relevance of OLC

The increased rate of change in the business environment makes it imperative for organizations that want to survive to look for avenues to improve. The search for improvement of circumstances and results necessitates the organization to seek ways to cushion the effect of factors that affect the business environment, such as change of government, fluctuations in exchange rates, loss of key customers, economic focus shift in the country, and a myriad of other factors. OLC corresponds to management's organizational vision and reality (Limpibuntern and Johri, 2009). OLC provides the connection to the organization's vision and provides a better appreciation of the vision, affects the organizational culture, and further contributes to the organization's development.

OLC is the organizational pillar, allowing organizations to implement many management programs (Akgün et al., 2014, Prieto and Revilla, 2006). Organizational learning is an institutionalized experience because it affects the organization in different ways, and at the same time, alters the nature of work for the employees (Shrivastava, 1983). OLC creates a platform for organizational learning to take shape; it is a critical factor in the organization's effectiveness and innovative ability (Chiva and Alegre, 2008).

OLC transforms the organization's ability to achieve outputs beneficial to the organization (Moustaghfir and Schiuma, 2013). "Organizational learning capability has become a major strategy which firms use as an important tool to encourage organizational commitment, improve business effectiveness, achieve a competitive advantage, and gain visibility in competitive markets," Ussahawanitchakit (2008, p. 2). OLC is interesting because it affects the organization in diverse ways.

OLC is a fascinating subject that is relevant to researchers and practitioners. For researchers, its relevance calls for a better understanding of what it is and how it works. It is pertinent for practitioners to understand how OLC affects the organization and how it can improve the organization.

OLC enables the organization to compete favorably, promote organizational commitment, and identify barriers to the organizational learning process (Camps et al., 2011, Ussahawanitchakit, 2008, Prieto and Revilla, 2006). OLC is potential competence, which an

organization gains by improving or enhancing the capability for organizational learning (Morgan et al., 1998).

The relevance of OLC is evident in the organization's ability to disseminate knowledge throughout the organization (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005). This ability to disseminate knowledge plays a vital role in an organization's effect and growth (Chiva and Alegre, 2009). OLC stimulates organizational knowledge to adapt and respond to the changes in the organizational environment (Limpibuntern and Johri, 2009, Ulrich et al., 1993).

2.4.3 The Impact of OLC

OLC uses and improves the resources of the organization to get valuable outputs. An example from literature is the use of exploited knowledge as an input to achieve an outcome that enhances the organization's response to change (Moustaghfir and Schiuma, 2013, Limpibuntern and Johri, 2009). Two other examples are, firstly, the use of organizational experience as an input to enhance the outcome of present and future performance (Argote, 2011, DiBella et al., 1996). Secondly, strategy renewal across the different levels of the organization (Bontis et al., 2002).

The advantages of improving or enhancing organizational learning include efficiency, financial and non-financial performance, and improved dissemination of knowledge. It also includes understanding the organization's vision, stronger team culture, encouraging risk-taking, and strategic renewal (Akgün et al., 2014, Rowland and Hall, 2014, Goh et al., 2012, Chiva and Alegre, 2009).

Improving or enhancing OLC positively impacts the organization's success rate and increases its ability to compete favorably with other companies (Moustaghfir and Schiuma, 2013, Stan and Vermeulen, 2013, Ulrich et al., 1993). The organization's ability to innovate and learn influences its long-term viability (Moustaghfir and Schiuma, 2013). To survive and remain relevant in the changing business environments, organizations need to adapt. To satisfy customers and compete successfully with other organizations, organizations need to create an enabling environment for learning to occur and focus on building or developing existing capabilities (Stan and Vermeulen, 2013, Bhatnagar, 2006, DiBella et al., 1996).

The benefits and the outcomes of enhancing OLC in organizations include success in exportation, innovation (Alegre et al., 2012). It also includes long-term planning, experimentation, creativity, employee reorientation, job satisfaction, performance improvement, employee and organizational innovation (Goh et al., 2012, Limpibuntern and Johri, 2009, Bhatnagar, 2006).

Understanding how organizations show their learning capabilities will give insight into how organizations learn and how those channels can be improved. This knowledge will pave the way to bring solutions that will enhance Company X's innovation, marketing, customer relationship, competition, and problem-solving. The next section describes characteristics that define OLC from different perspectives.

2.4.4 Differences in Display of OLC

OLC contains influences from the organization's culture, environment, and experiences (Antonacopoulou and Chiva, 2007, Bhatnagar, 2006, Easterby-Smith et al., 2000, DiBella et al., 1996). According to Bhatnagar (2006, p. 450), "An organization has a certain mix of organizational learning capabilities and may evolve to certain generic capabilities, unique to its own culture and national cultural context. Thus, a measurement criterion in western culture may not apply to the Indian context." For instance, the traditional Italian culture views the role of the manager as a 'capo.' Thus, the distance created between the manager and subordinates in the chain of command is affected. According to (DiBella et al., 1996, p. 365), "in describing Italy's tradition of paternalistic, religious and militaristic organization forms, particular reference is made to the heavy reliance on authority that stems from rigid hierarchical structures and acceptance of formal authority."

The organizational environment also influences OLC. For instance, in the investment industry, benchmarks are public knowledge. The external companies need external information from investment companies to make decisions. On the other hand, the automobile industries collect data from the external environment to understand the changes in consumer behavior (DiBella et al., 1996).

Studies in organizational learning climate indicate that within an organization, different climates exist within different sections of the organization that make up the organization's culture (Egan, 2008). According to Bates and Khasawneh (2005, p. 99), "climate emerges from aspects of the organizational context that individual employees perceive to be important and influential in their work." Teams vary in their nature and approach to work. There are indications of different climates in the teams represented in Company X. Understanding these differences can pave the way to finding lasting initiatives that can enhance OLC in the teams and the organization's departments.

2.4.5 Benefits of Improving OLC to Company X

The benefits of increased OLC to Company X are numerous; it includes setting the stage for the organization to improve its competitiveness, culture, and job satisfaction.

Enhancing OLC in organizations provides success in international markets and innovation (Alegre et al., 2012). Improving OLC gives the organization other benefits: long-term planning, success, experimentation, creativity, employee reorientation, job satisfaction, performance improvement, employee and organizational innovation (Goh et al., 2012, Limpibunterng and Johri, 2009, Bhatnagar, 2006).

OLC portends management's ability to synthesize its vision throughout the organization with evidence in work processes (Ulrich et al., 1993). OLC entails the impact of management's actions and decisions and how team leaders and the rest of the organization implement these decisions. OLC is the ability of the employees to portray a correct representation of the organization to customers and other stakeholders; it is the ability to improve mechanisms, practices, and processes (Adrian and Irvine, 2006).

OLC improves the synergy between the organization and its environment in different ways. OLC fosters a good relationship with the organization and its stakeholders; prepares the organization for future eventualities; increases the organization's flexibility to deal with

future events; reduces transaction costs through the flow of information (Morgan et al., 1998).

OLC shows how the organization learns from its environment to meet its current realities. OLC allows organizations to assess their current position, communicate efficiently, and take risks (Bhatnagar, 2006). This ability to learn from the environment and adapt to suit changes in the industry is advantageous for OLC. However, teams cannot absorb the same thing at the same pace and at the same time. Understanding how groups adopt OLC and exploring challenges that hinder teams' effectiveness will provide more insight into how organizations can enhance OLC.

OLC creates avenues to impact several areas of the organization because it affects the teams, communication, leadership, and relationship with customers. It creates an atmosphere for innovation to thrive (Goh et al., 2012, Alegre and Chiva, 2008, Morgan et al., 1998). OLC encompasses perceived improvement in organizational learning, general management, strategic management, innovation, and its perceived advantages to the organization and its members. Also, for practitioners, OLC holds possibilities that point towards improving business performance through existing systems, innovation, and growth (Jerez Gomez et al., 2004).

OLC reflects the pressing need for firms to improve their practices, products, structures continually, and processes to create and maintain competitive advantage (Goh et al., 2012, Jerez Gomez et al., 2004). For example, FIAT changed its internal processes due to a benchmark study to understand consumer changing needs. The outcome of this study started a reaction in the organization to bring products to market that meet customer's expectations (DiBella et al., 1996).

The process of enhancing and introducing capabilities to learn in the organization brings changes in the teams' ability to adapt and increase their learning (Collins and Parker, 2010). Enhancing OLC on the teams will bring better learning and performance improvements (Schippers et al., 2013, Senge, 2006, Goh, 2003).

OLC supports the attempts of an organization to align with its goals. OLC is the practice the organization introduces in its parts to improve its processes and remain competitive (Ussahawanitchakit, 2008). (Ulrich et al., 1993) Describes OLC as an impact on workforce competence that increases capacity for change and competitive advantage. OLC represents

practices that enhance improvement and learning in the organization. OLC are practices aimed at improving the performance of all areas in the organization, including its departments and teams. The benefit of this research to the organization is the improvement and enhancement of OLC in teams, which will hopefully result in innovation, competitiveness, the greater impact from teams, and a fresh approach to problem-solving.

2.5 Assessing OLC

Organizations learn in diverse ways. Different researchers have designed measures to evaluate the extent of OLC in the organization and to evaluate the type of OLC present in organizations (Alegre and Chiva, 2008, Bhatnagar, 2006, Prieto and Revilla, 2006). There are several measures and methods available in research to assess the extent of an organization's learning capability (Inan and Bititci, 2015). Various researchers have given several ways of measuring OLC with results (Goh et al., 2012, Easterby-Smith et al., 2004, Easterby-Smith et al., 2000).

Chiva et al. (2007) propose a measurement instrument for OLC that consists of experimentation, risk-taking, interaction with the external environment, participative decision making, and dialogue. This measurement was used to appraise the impact of OLC in several instances, such as in product innovation performance, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction (Alegre et al., 2012, Chiva and Alegre, 2009, Alegre and Chiva, 2008). Additionally, it was used to ascertain the role of a leader in facilitating OLC (Mallen et al., 2015) and the part of OLC in entrepreneurial orientation (Fernandez-Mesa and Alegre, 2015, Alegre and Chiva, 2013).

(Goh, 2003) Propose the identification of a benchmark for the learning capability by identifying and measuring characteristics of organizations that promote learning. These characteristics are Leadership commitment and empowerment; Teamwork; Clarity of mission and vision; Experimentation and rewards; Group problem solving, and effective knowledge

transfer. In a similar vein, (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005) propose identical characteristics for assessing OLC in the organization.

Drawing from these authors, the researcher used similar descriptors to identify OLC as a framework for this study. These categories are used further in the thesis to form the basis for data collection, analysis, and discussions. These are grouped into four categories: management commitment, alignment to goals, communication flow, and openness to risks.

2.5.1 Alignment to Goals

Alignment to goals are capabilities that steer the teams towards achieving the goals of the organization. Alignment to goals is possible when the organization chooses to clearly outline the mission and vision (Goh, 2003, Goh and Richards, 1997). It describes the effort of the teams to reach the organization's goals. Alignment to goals is obvious with teamwork, collaboration (Limpibuntern and Johri, 2009), having a systems perspective (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Senge, 1999, Nevis et al., 1995) and strategic awareness (Morgan et al., 1998).

Alignment to the organization's vision and goals is essential and can be achieved by teamwork. Alignment through cooperation infers that all units in the organization work cohesively. It implies understanding the organization's objective and contributing to its achievement.

The organization develops shared mental models; different but coordinated parts make up the organization's vital relationship. These parts are brought together by shared services and information (Limpibuntern and Johri, 2009, Senge, 2006, Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Morgan et al., 1998, Goh and Richards, 1997).

2.5.1.1 Teamwork

The success of teams is mostly determined by communication effectiveness between team members and other individuals or teams outside their team. Communication facilitates a

greater transfer of knowledge and improves the exchange of information among members of the team (Lucas, 2010). Communication enhances close cooperation and interaction between team members, improves the performance of the team. Close cooperation within the teams causes the team members to work towards a common goal, hold each other accountable for the outcome of their efforts, and commit to the success of the team through achieving their goals (Enberg et al., 2006).

Working in teams encourages the team members to share knowledge, exchange information and skills (Lucas, 2010, Goh, 2003), through the time they spend working together and collaborating to solve the organization or team problems, to align the outcome of their work to the team's or the organization's goals (Hooi, 2019, Goh et al., 2013). Working in teams enhances the transfer of learning from the organization to the team, and not just to specific individuals. Working in teams improves knowledge flow, thereby enhancing organizational learning (Montes et al., 2005).

The opportunity for organizations to increase productivity is achieved by promoting teamwork. The multiple perspectives of the team members complement each other when they exchange ideas, solve problems, and work together to align with the team and the organization (Goh et al., 2013, Lucas, 2010, Montes et al., 2005).

Organizations support teamwork through organizational structures that are designed to strengthen the team cohesiveness and unity among teams. Teamwork is a capability that improves the organization's ability to align to goals, and teamwork also promotes organizational learning (Montes et al., 2005, Goh, 2003).

2.5.1.2 Systems Perspective

A systems perspective creates a cohesive atmosphere by creating a shared identity and a language that encourages the employees to work together as a team to achieve a common goal (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, DiBella and Nevis, 1998), through the activities of the employees (Akgun et al., 2007)

In addition to this, the importance of the organization to have an articulated purpose, the existence and clarity of the vision and the mission, creates the opportunity for members to work as a team and improve accountability towards alignment to organization's goals, when

resources and time-wasting efforts are eliminated, (Limpibunternrg and Johri, 2009, Goh and Richards, 1997). The structures and systems existing in the organization support a systems perspective.

Systems perspective uses the exchange of information and shared mental models to promote collaboration and develop cohesion among the members of the organization. Having a systems perspective increases how employees contribute to their objectives (Akgun et al., 2007, DiBella and Nevis, 1998).

A systems perspective reduces reliance on upper management on solving problems, as it encourages the team to work together and solve problems (Goh and Richards, 1997). These structures that support the systems perspective centers around the purpose of the organization. It is necessary for the organization to be understood by the team. The team should have clarity on the contribution of their work to its attainment (ibid. , 2003). When the employees and groups understand the organization's purpose (mission and vision), it is easier to align their daily activities with the organization's goals.

2.5.2 Communication Flow

Communication flow includes knowledge transfer and integration, interaction with the external environment, and participative decision making. Communication flow comprises dialogue, continuous education, and multiple advocates (Limpibunternrg and Johri, 2009, Chiva et al., 2007, Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Goh and Richards, 1997, Nevis et al., 1995).

2.5.2.1 Knowledge Transfer and Integration

The flow of communication within the organization can increase or reduce what knowledge is available throughout the organization. Knowledge transfer and integration processes are linked and coincide in an atmosphere of dialogue and debate; they can only be successful through communication such as staff meetings that promotes team learning, without internal barriers that hinder best practices in the organization (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Jerez Gomez et al., 2004, Morgan et al., 1998). Also, DiBella and Nevis (1998) opine that communication

can be disseminated formally in writing or informally through word of mouth. These are subject to the structures in place by the management.

Through knowledge transfer, the organization can learn from past mistakes, inefficiencies, and even employees and teams. Communication makes it possible for the transfer of information and knowledge throughout the organization. (Appelbaum and Gallagher, 2000). Knowledge transfer and integration can be described as the spread and incorporation of knowledge through clear and focused conversation and interaction among the organization's members (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Goh and Richards, 1997).

2.5.2.2 Dialogue

Members of the team or the organization can learn from each other (Tsai, 2001) where the management has put structures in place to facilitate the transfer of knowledge such as teams and personnel meetings (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Appelbaum and Gallagher, 2000, DiBella et al., 1996)

The content of the communication is also essential. Communication should contain information that aligns the teams with the goals. For communication to be aligned, it needs to allow groups to have information on the opportunities and challenges of the department or the organization (Goh and Richards, 1997).

For OLC to perform better, communication flow should prompt the teams to improve and disseminate the results of those efforts across the teams. These results can stem from organizational challenges, competition, and past failures to align with the organization's goals (Morgan et al., 1998). Also, Chiva et al. (2007) point out that the opportunity to learn comes from sharing and developing knowledge among team members.

2.5.3 Management Commitment

The purpose of management in the organization is a recurring factor in enhancing or improving OLC. Management commitment occurs when top management recognizes that learning is relevant. When management actively develops a system that promotes learning acquisition, creation, and transfer (Limpibunterng and Johri, 2009, Chiva et al., 2007, Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Morgan et al., 1998, Goh and Richards, 1997). The role managers take in improving or/and enhancing these structures, practices, and routines in the organization is a part of OLC (Bhatnagar, 2006, Ulrich et al., 1993). The role of managers in enhancing OLC is vital; without the cooperation and the effectiveness of managers, OLC will diminish (Bhatnagar, 2006).

The organization's existing processes determine if its learning capability will encourage learning or discourage learning. There must be procedures and processes that promote double-looped learning in the organization. Initiatives that encourage learning make a difference in an organization's OLC; the change in OLC does not occur due to the employees or the nature of work (Goh, 2003).

2.5.4 Openness to Risks

Openness to risk is the organization's approach to risks. Risks and challenges present the organization with the opportunity to learn. Even small failures trigger learning in the team (Ulrich et al., 1993). This measure describes capabilities such as openness and experimentation, risk-taking, and group problem-solving. It also includes operational flexibility, personal mastery, and mental models (Senge, 2006, Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Morgan et al., 1998, Goh and Richards, 1997, Nevis et al., 1995).

2.5.4.1 Experimentation

Organizations must face challenges, crises and problems are a part of organizational life. However, the extent and the manner the organization treats challenges determines if the organization will improve. Challenges provide an avenue to utilize new ideas and suggestions from individuals and teams (Alegre and Chiva, 2008, Goh and Richards, 1997). Challenges intensify the organization's efforts to learn. It provides the opportunity to learn from challenges and improve response to other teams' challenges in the future. (Chiva and Alegre, 2009, Kim, 1998, Nevis et al., 1995). Experimentation is possible in a climate of openness, where members of the organization can freely share views, express their opinions, disagree, debate, and propose ideas for improvement (Onağ et al., 2014, Nevis et al., 1995).

Experimentation refers to the extent the organization can reach in trying out new ideas, methods, and work processes in the search for innovative ways to improve performance (Chiva et al., 2007). Experimentation also refers to the extent the organization reaches to implement, encourage and support new suggestions from employees (Onağ et al., 2014, Chiva and Alegre, 2009, Alegre and Chiva, 2008) and the extent the employees are willing to suggest and attempt ideas for improvement (Goh and Richards, 1997). Experimentation encourages employees to improve their capacity to solve problems; it involves interaction between employees and requires time and effort from all levels in the organization. However, a crisis can turn to opportunities in organizations with effective learning through experimentation (Kim, 1998, Nevis et al., 1995).

2.5.4.2 Climate of Openness

Openness to risk requires a climate where members of the organization can speak out and present their ideas. Experimentation happens in organizations willing to take controlled risks (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005). Organizational Learning can be adaptive or generative. Adaptive or single-loop learning is to utilize knowledge gained to improve the quality and efficiency of operations. Generative or double-loop learning expands the organization's capability by forming new practices, perspectives, and frameworks (Limpibuntern and Johri, 2009, Chiva et al., 2007, Senge, 2006, Morgan et al., 1998, Goh and Richards, 1997).

The problem that a team solves equips the team to improve and reduces the interference of management. To solve problems, the team needs to have the right atmosphere; according to

Sugarman (2001, p. 70), "Increased trust and respect in a workgroup ... enable better problem solving to occur. This organizational learning (learning on behalf of one's organization) is the key to improvement, innovation, and greater competitiveness."

2.6 Community of Practice

A Community of Practice is also referred to as CoP. A CoP is an approach to knowing and learning, shared by people who create knowledge in an area of practice which they share in common. A CoP is a group of people sharing a common concern, intending to improve and learn from each other by creating a rich resource comprising of their experiences, ideas, insights, and suggestions (Wenger, 2011, Akkerman et al., 2008).

A CoP is advantageous to the organization by developing a shared body of knowledge that serves as a resource for the community, and it is a great way for members to gain expertise (Wenger, 2011).

The CoP is formed for various reasons, including the following: need to solve problems, request for more information, finding a knowledgeable member to share experiences, opportunities for mentoring and coaching, reusing assets from different locations or teams, coordination and synergy, discussing developments in the community, domain or practice, help with documentation and identifying knowledge gaps, response to changes (Wenger, 2011, Akkerman et al., 2008, Wenger and Snyder, 2000).

CoPs are informal, and the members organize themselves. The concept encourages learning by focusing and participating in activities or experiences common to other community members (Akkerman et al., 2008).

CoPs need to have a shared domain, a community, and members must be practitioners (Parboosingh, 2002). A domain refers to members having a common area of interest and committing to share knowledge to improve the members of the community.

Another distinguishing factor of CoP is that it has to be a community. It cannot consist of an individual. It is people coming who share ideas, assist each other, and build relationships that encourage learning.

Finally, a CoP is a community of practitioners. The members of the community are practitioners that share insight that they have developed over time (Wenger, 2011, Wenger and Snyder, 2000).

Enhancing OLC in the organization requires an intervention that affects the measures of OLC, namely, alignment to the organization's goals, the flow of communication, management commitment in supporting learning, the ability to take risks.

CoP meets the need of the organization to enhance OLC because CoP encourages learning at work (Boud and Middleton, 2003), helps the organization manage knowledge and the flow of knowledge from the individual to the group, and vice versa.

CoP helps members of the group learn from each other and learn from the community's past experiences. Members of the CoP have a responsibility for managing knowledge. It creates the avenue to improve performance through learning, thus improving its ability to meet goals (Wenger, 2011). CoP gives the management of the company ability to encourage learning non-intrusively (Brown and Duguid, 1991)

2.7 Research Objectives

This section presents this thesis' research objectives. Attempting to meet the research objectives will bring understanding into OLC and its adoption in teams in Company X. This research seeks to bring an in-depth view of OLC, what it means to the teams, its interpretation into action by the groups, and the difficulties faced within groups that hinder or strengthen the enhancement of learning within the team and the organization.

The research objectives seek to understand OLC in the teams by exploring the role of teams in OLC; it answers how the teams exhibit OLC. Understanding how the organization exhibits OLC will provide answers needed to enhance or improve OLC and address challenges that the teams or organization faces with learning.

These objectives will explore the exhibition of OLC on the Sweeper and Operative teams in the Operations Department and provide a deep understanding of how the teams exhibit learning capability. These research objectives seek to demonstrate how OLC is exhibited in teams. The research objectives are divided into the following:

RO1. How is alignment to goals exhibited in teams?

RO2. How is communication flow exhibited in teams?

RO3. How is management support exhibited in teams?

RO4: How is openness to risk exhibited in teams?

2.8 Conceptual Framework

OLC provides strength to the teams and the organization in readiness for the challenges and opportunities that characterize the organization. These occurrences can be internal or external to the organization, such as changes in the political climate; an increase of client base from one customer to over 20 customers; changing the company focus to include not only the provision of services but also the sale of products, expansion, and growth. According to Yeung et al. (1999, pp. 723-724), "organizational learning capability is the capacity to generate and generalize ideas with impact, across multiple organizational boundaries, through specific management initiatives and practices." Transiting to face the changes that come from the organization's dynamic nature requires continuous learning, continuous improvement in every part of the organization, especially in the teams.

There are different perspectives on organizational learning, and each perspective informs the author's view on OLC (DiBella and Nevis, 1998). The most common is the normative perspective, which presupposes conditions the organizations must meet to learn. From the normative perspective, organizations need to possess specific factors to have the capability to learn. On the other hand, the capability perspective presupposes that learning is naturally occurring in the organization, and learning capabilities can be improved or developed.

This research approaches OLC with a social constructionist approach to organizational learning, looking at Company X as an organization where learning is already taking place. This research looks at how the teams exhibit the normative factors of OLC. These factors are alignment to the organization's goals, openness to risk, communication flow, and the existence of management support. These categories are obtained by looking at measures of OLC proposed by different writers and searching for common threads in all the normative measures.

To achieve the purpose of this study, the best research strategy to employ is action research. Action research is iterative, emergent research, which gives a deeper insight into the current state of OLC in the teams and thus allows for a closer look into how to improve these learning capabilities within the teams. According to (Shani and Pasmore (1985) in Coghlan and Brannick, 2010, p. 4), action research " is an emergent inquiry process in which applied behavioral science knowledge is integrated with existing organizational knowledge and applied to solve real organizational problems."

Data collected will be analyzed, from the analysis patterns that emerge from the teams, will be grouped into themes. These themes provided more understanding into how teams exhibit OLC, how the learning capabilities create a synergy that is beneficial to the team or the organization, and the factors responsible for differences in teams' learning capabilities.

Learning capabilities are present in all teams. The use of OLC in teams differs from one team to the other. Every team has their separate experiences, but the capability to learn is available for all the teams to use. These learning capabilities create the ability to generalize the organizations' ideas with impact (Ulrich et al., 1993). However, the presence of OLC for utilization in the teams does not guaranty its use.

The use of OLC in teams is contingent on the teams' characteristics and the teams' ability to thrive in their uniqueness. These characteristics are the nature of the teams, the team leader, the work terrain of the teams.

These challenges change and determine the experiences of the team. A robust OLC in the team will enable the team to deal with these issues and also enable the teams to learn from them. A weak LC in the team will affect the team's results and create more challenges within the team and the organization.

To understand if teams have a high or low OLC entails taking a close look at the teams, the team's challenges, and how these challenges reflect or exhibit OLC. Understanding OLC in teams also means looking at the measures of OLC and its representation in the teams. An analogy is to place a hand on a newly painted wall. The wall will show the marks of the hand, and the hand will show the paint on the wall. This research shows the extent of learning capabilities in the organization and how or if they employ these capabilities.

A prerequisite of management to improve the team's learning capability is to receive timely feedback on what is happening in these teams. The management of Company X should introduce initiatives that enhance its OLC. The dotted line with an arrow in the diagram above represents the initiative from management to the teams.

According to Antonacopoulou and Chiva (2007, p. 291), "A greater understanding of the factors which support or hinder OL as it self-organizes would be particularly important in understanding how learning capability can be developed." This study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of OLC and seeks to give a closer view of the activity of OLC in the teams. Understanding OLC will enable the organization to pinpoint areas where improvement is needed.

This research was carried out with unskilled workers; the research findings showed that the ability to learn is present in the teams even though they are not knowledge workers; thus, the literature applies to both knowledge and unskilled workers. Hence, we see that learning is a natural phenomenon in organizations, DiBella, Nevis & Gould (1996).

Further quantitative research on the measures of OLC is needed in the low-tech companies to analyze the influence of OLC on other precedents and antecedents in an organization with low technological advancement and/or low skilled workforce.

Previous research on organizational learning and OLC has been carried out in more technologically advanced organizations such as the research carried out by Jerez-Gomez et al. (2005) involving 11 companies from the chemical industry in Spain, and also the study carried out by Chiva and Alegre (2009) on eight companies in a ceramic tile industry in Spain. There have also been previous research done by Limpibuntern and Johri (2009) on the telecom service industry in Thailand, organizations where staff are highly educated, such as knowledge workers, in technologically advanced environments.

2.9 Summary

The literature review explores OLC to provide more information about the subject. The literature review analyses the perspective of OLC, the use of OLC; it looks at the precedent of OLC, which is organizational learning. Additionally, the literature review section pointed at the similarities across authors on the measure of OLC.

These measures identified by previous works clarifies how OLC acts in the organization and the variables that can improve OLC in the organization; this identification is needed to improve OLC. These measures were broadly categorized as openness to risk, communication flow, management support, and alignment to goals.

Working together positions the team to improve its performance and be better prepared to face the challenges when they occur. Improving OLC can also mitigate the team's challenges and increase the propensity for the teams to learn from mistakes.

This chapter also described OLC by presenting its definition, relevance, benefits, influence, and impact. It discusses the measures of OLC and shows the measures in four categories, namely: management support, alignment, communication, and openness to risk.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This qualitative research seeks to explore and enhance OLC in Company X by investigating the measures of OLC in the teams, to improve OLC in Company X. This thesis uses action research. This thesis approaches the research through an interpretivist philosophical lens. As an insider researcher, this research is conducted in the organization where I work. This chapter shows the methodology and method utilized to understand and enhance OLC in the organization.

Understanding OLC in teams will give additional insight into how OLC can be enhanced in Company X to improve the organization for better results such as innovation, competitiveness, job satisfaction, and teamwork.

Using an interpretivist research philosophy means that this thesis will seek to understand the participants' views and the display of the measures of OLC in the organization. Using the interpretivist lens, this thesis will seek to understand the perspectives of the participants and the hindrances to OLC in Company X.

Using action research in the organization brings the opportunity to carry out a meaningful inquiry that will enhance the organization's learning capability. Action research will also aid in my development as a scholar-practitioner.

This chapter shows how action research is employed to provide insight into how OLC can be improved in the organization. The action research cycles and the improvements and recommendations are also included in this chapter.

This chapter is organized into 12 sections. The first five sections discuss this thesis's philosophical assumptions, the research method, approach, and strategy. The next four sections describe the research instruments, sampling, and the participants. The final two sections discussed data collection and analyses. The final section discusses the ethical standards maintained before the thesis and in the course of the thesis.

Statement of Belief

I believe it is advantageous to know more about the experiences of the team leaders, to explore the interpretation of OLC in the day-to-day work of the team through the lens of the team leaders.

This qualitative action research study seeks to provide an in-depth view of OLC within the team; this research seeks to highlight issues that affect the use of OLC among teams and to enable the organization to understand how to improve learning within its teams in order to promote organizational learning.

This qualitative study seeks to show the need to understand how OLC is implemented and utilized across teams. The ontological assumption used to inquire into this research is interpretivism, and the epistemological assumption is social constructionism. With this understanding of OLC, there will be more clarity for the organization to improve how OLC enhances the teams in Company X.

This research explores the organization's learning capability and the factors that cause teams to react differently to the enhancement of OLC in different teams through the interpretivist research philosophy. This research seeks to improve the organization by enhancing the factors that improve OLC in the organization.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A research philosophy represents assumptions about knowledge that will be developed in a study. (Saunders et al., 2012, Dudovskiy, 2018) The business environment is comprised of people whose actions largely determine the direction of their organization. That is why organizations are not the replica of each other. People create meanings (Saunders et al., 2012); the organization's social actors have their realities, interpretations, and make different meanings from the structures and practices put in place to improve the organization.

The philosophical assumption underlying this research is interpretivism. This philosophy is subjective; it focuses on the phenomenon under study, it motivates action that and it gives insight into the reality behind the details by emphasizing the contexts of the research (Creswell, 2013, Chowdhury, 2014, Dudovskiy, 2018, Labaree, 2020)

The interpretivist research philosophy emphasizes and studies the meanings created by people. Interpretivism seeks to bring understanding to the meanings created by the participants of the research. It recognizes the differences in individuals and tries to capture their uniqueness.

Business situations are complex and unique due to the fusion of differences in people and circumstances and the meanings they create. According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 140), "the purpose of interpretivist research is to create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts." Interpretivism emphasizes the differences in social actors.

The use of interpretivism as a lens by this researcher will provide access to the communication between organizational actors, providing answers to the research objectives. Through the interpretivist lens, this research gives a more in-depth understanding of the factors that enhance or hinder OLC in the organization. This in-depth view comes as a result of the interaction with the supervisors to understand their perspectives. Using the interpretivist philosophy provides the basis to understand the meanings created by the supervisors. It provides insight into the factors that hinder and enhance the ability of the organization to learn. This research uses interpretivism as the lens to view the participants' interpretation of the company's policies and procedures to promote learning.

The interpretive philosophy seeks to understand and explore the multiple realities of organizational life. This research seeks to make sense of the meanings the supervisors have of their work and the processes put in place by the organization as they relate to OLC. According to Morgan (1980, p. 609), "the interpretive social theorist attempts to understand the process through which shared multiple realities arise, are sustained and are changed." The interpretivist lens will bring out the meanings and the irrationalities experienced in the organization (Saunders et al., 2012).

Through the interpretivist assumptions, this research will explore this meaning and give illumination to the factors that enhance or impede OLC in the team. The interpretivist

philosophy emphasizes the use of the participants and the researcher's interpretation of their experiences.

The researcher is the research instrument (Saunders et al., 2012). The interpretivist philosophy promotes qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, documents, and observation (Chowdhury, 2014). Interpretivism also supports purposive sampling to reveal multiple perspectives (Rudestam and Newton, 2007).

Ontology

Ontology refers to the assumptions people make regarding the nature of reality (Saunders et al., 2016). The interpretivist ontology assumes that multiple realities exist; this is the nature of reality in the organization. Each supervisor has a unique perspective that they bring to the organization. They relate to their teams and the organization in different ways. The interpretivist ontological assumptions are suited to the focus of the research.

This research embodies the interpretivist ontological position by acknowledging the different perspectives and experiences of the participants. This research seeks to gain insight into the realities of the supervisors in seeking how their teams exhibit OLC.

Epistemology

According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 132), "epistemology concerns what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study." This research derives its epistemology from social constructionism. The social constructionist challenges the traditional idea of how learning takes place. Instead of individual or organizational systems and structures, social constructionists argue that learning occurs in conversations and interactions between people, i.e., groups. According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 130), social constructionism "is constructed through social interaction in which social actors create partially shared meanings and realities." Social constructionism embraces the multiple realities of researchers and the subjects of the research (Creswell, 2013), which in this case, is the supervisors. With this epistemological stance, the researcher explores the factors that cause differences in the team's perceptions of OLC.

In Company X, the perceptions of the team leaders and their monitors (safety officers/planters) are necessary because the supervisors are the link between the management and the workers, they implement procedures and decisions of management, and their actions affect the organization.

In their zones, the supervisors represent the organization. Their perspective is necessary to understand how they exhibit OLC in the teams and the reasons for their choices in exhibiting OLC. This knowledge will give an insight into avenues to improve learning in the organization.

Every supervisor has a different reality; exploring these realities will give an in-depth view of factors that influence the teams' display of learning capability and the impact of improved OLC. This research seeks to use the social constructionist epistemological assumption to understand multiple realities faced by supervisors in the process of work, to explore the differences in each team, and the different factors that influence each group. The safety officers/planters' perception is also necessary because they have a monitoring role over the supervisors and the teams. Each planter is assigned to a group of teams.

This section discussed the philosophical influences used to explore this research; It discussed the research paradigm, ontological, epistemological assumptions. The next section explains the research strategy, which includes action research, the researcher's role as a participant observer, and the researcher's role in the organization.

3.3 Methodology

This research seeks to explore and enhance OLC in Company X to improve the learning capability in Company X using action research. To achieve depth and create meaning in the organization, the best research method to employ is qualitative research. The reasons for qualitative research are that it will provide insight into the study. The findings are suited to Company X and bring improvements specific to the company. The researcher also tries to look at quantitative research and explain why qualitative research is best for this research compared to the quantitative research method. (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, Shah and Corley, 2006).

The popularity of qualitative research in social sciences began in the 1900s (Shah and Corley, 2006). Qualitative research can be used to describe, build, and test theories; it uses different methods of data collection. (Shah and Corley, 2006).

In qualitative research, multiple realities exist with qualitative research. The knower and the known are not separate, the subjective knower is the only source of reality (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The interpretivist research methods also incorporate safeguards to guard against sources of invalidity that exist in every research. (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, Shah and Corley, 2006)

Qualitative research provides insight into the phenomenon under study; it gives understanding to the context in which the research takes place; It brings the participants' in-depth view of the study. It considers the participants' unique perspectives. The knowledge produced is specific to Company X and will bring improvements to the organization.

Qualitative research is most suited for this thesis because it tries to show a clear view of the participants' opinions and perspectives; it considers the participants' words. Data are based on participants' categories of meaning. Data in qualitative research are in the participants' words and categories. It aids the exploration of understanding why phenomena occur. It is useful for providing an in-depth study of OLC in Company X. Thus, qualitative research will provide insight and a description of participants' experiences with the measures of OLC. (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, Shah and Corley, 2006, Creswell, 2013)

The disadvantage of using this method of data collection is that the findings cannot be generalized to other companies, and in different contexts, this research focuses solely on one company and compared to quantitative research, data collection and analysis is more time consuming (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, Shah and Corley, 2006)

OLC can take varied forms (Bhatnagar, 2006); it is evident in the procedures, structures, and strategies employed to promote learning. The first research objectives are: to discover the following: how is alignment to goals exhibited in teams, how is communication flow exhibited in teams, how is management support exhibited in teams, and how is an openness to risk exhibited in teams To answer these research objectives, this researcher will consider the diverse ways OLC influences teams, and offer recommendations on the enhancement of OLC in teams.

The next section describes the research philosophy outlining the philosophical assumptions that guide the research. It further outlines the approach to theory development, action research strategy, data collection, and data analysis method.

3.4 Action Research

Kurt Lewin, who is recognized as the founding father of Action Research, is regarded as a major contributor to Action Research (AR) as a methodology (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010, Koshy et al., 2010, Eden and Huxham, 1996). Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a type of AR began in the 1990s. It was pioneered by Kurt Lewin and Paulo Freire in 1994. PAR uses a qualitative methodology to research various fields, including healthcare, business, agriculture, social work, and education. (Hocevar, 2020).

This qualitative action research focuses on an in-depth study of OL in my organization. It follows my development as a manager amid changes and challenges that occur throughout the study and explores my development as a researcher. AR improves the performance of the organization and the outcomes of the research (Ronen, 2020),

Using action research, I explore the state of OLC in my organization and carry out a meaningful inquiry into the enhancement of OLC in my organization. AR, as a methodology, is instrumental to the development of the organization's learning capability and my development as a scholar-practitioner. Action research draws attention to the development of the scholar-practitioner through the cycles of action and reflection (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010).

AR is a form of inquiry that enables practitioners to investigate, evaluate, and improve the conditions and practices of their work environment. AR is also a means to professional learning (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011, Koshy et al., 2010); with AR, both the research and the action from the research are part of the study results (Erro-Garcés and Alfaro-Tanco, 2020).

AR is used to solve real-life problems through an inquiry process that integrates behavioral science knowledge with existing organizational knowledge. AR is an emergent, evolving

inquiry process where knowledge from research is used to solve real organizational problems. AR brings researchers and the organization together. AR results in changes in the organization, development of the efficiency, performance, and qualification of members of the organization, and contribution to scientific knowledge (Erro-Garcés and Alfaro-Tanco, 2020, Shani and Pasmore, 1982).

3.5 Inductive approach

The inductive approach builds theory grounded in data collected from participants who have experienced the phenomenon under study and can provide insight based on their role in the organization. In the process of the research, identified themes and patterns in the data were explored to develop a research framework. (Saunders et al., 2012).

In this thesis, the inductive approach is chosen because it is associated with the data collection and analysis in research methodology, which is qualitative (Dudovskiy, 2018), this approach was chosen because it will help meet the research objective, which is to explore the use of OLC within the teams; thereby bringing insight into how OLC can be enhanced in the Company X.

This thesis's objective is to explore OLC in Company X and the use of the insight gained to improve the learning capability in the organization. This research objective is achieved with the inductive approach because it starts with the research objective. An existing theory was used to formulate research questions that were explored using the literature search. (Dudovskiy, 2018)

The inductive approach to theory development provides insight instead of the deductive approach, which tests a hypothesis. Qualitative researchers use an inductive approach to get the ideas and feelings of the research participants (Chowdhury, 2014). The inductive approach supports open-ended questions, which will create the avenue for the participants to express their opinions and experiences in the interviews. The inductive approach provides an understanding of how humans interpret their social world. (Saunders et al., 2016) An inductive approach in the development of this thesis will give an in-depth understanding of how the operational teams in the organization use OLC.

Inductive qualitative research is used to organize data into abstract units of information and continue organizing until a comprehensive set of themes is established (Rudestam and Newton, 2007, Creswell, 2013). The identified themes, patterns, and relationships were used to create a conceptual framework. (Dudovskiy, 2018)

Cycles of Action and Reflection

The previous section described the strategy employed in this research. This section describes the instruments used to collect data; it provides more details on the interviews, the participants, and the other records that are part of the data used in this research.

The action research cycles are constructing, planning action, action, and evaluating action. Preparing for data gathering, gathering the data, analyzing, and evaluating the data is continued in the research cycles.

This research adopted an induction approach. The theory of factors that characterize measures of OLC, such as alignment to goals; communication flow; openness to risk, and management support, was used to frame the nodes. Then the transcribed data were coded according to these nodes. Some nodes emerged from the data, such as leadership, challenges, communication, and nature of work; these emerged nodes formed patterns. In these instances, sub-themes were created from these patterns. They also give an insight into learning capabilities in teams.

3.6 Research Strategy

The previous section outlines the philosophical assumptions employed in this thesis. This section defines the action research strategy; discusses how this research strategy will answer the research objectives. This section also outlines this researcher's role as a participant observer.

Action research (AR) is defined by Shani and Pasmore in Coghlan & Brannick, (2010, p.4) as "an emergent inquiry process in which applied behavioral science knowledge is integrated with existing organizational knowledge and applied to solve real organizational problems."

This definition captures the essence of the strategy used in this research. Inquiring about a real problem in the organization is an example of how action research can be useful to actual challenges that affect the organization.

In this instance, AR is used to understand the use of OLC among team leaders and the reasons why teams differ in their use of learning capabilities. This research strategy will add knowledge about OLC and the findings from the teams to answer the objectives posed by this research thesis.

Cassell & Johnson, (2006) categorized the approaches of AR into five practices, namely: experimental action research, inductive action research, participatory action research, participatory research, and deconstructive action research. The inductive AR practice describes the approach to action research in this thesis. As described by (Cassell and Johnson, 2006), the labels within this approach include labels such as qualitative positivist or interpretivist and action science. The action science approach calls for the deliberate questioning of existing perspectives and interpretations (Raelin, 2005).

This approach to action research contains features of inductive action research and action science. According to (ibid, 1997, p. 26), "Action science, ... is concerned with making explicit or bringing into awareness individuals' theories-in-use. It operates at an emancipatory or reflective level of discourse, seeking to explore the very premises underlying the perceptions we formulate of our world."

3.7 Description of Research Instruments

The instruments used to collect data were interviews with the supervisors and the planters/safety officers, team attendance records, the supervisors' reports, health and safety reports, and incidence reports.

Interviews

In-depth interviews were used to understand the phenomenon under study better and uncover information that would shed light on the objectives this research seeks to answer. In-depth interviews present opportunities to uncover additional information that was not considered. An In-depth interview allows for data collection based on first-hand experiences (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

The company has 246 employees. The operations group consists of 225 people, including 16 supervisors, 16 assistant supervisors, nine drivers, and two safety managers. Fourteen supervisors agreed to partake by returning their completed consent forms.

We have two types of supervisors. Out of the 14 supervisors, 11 were core supervisors, and three were planters. The planters act as supervisors but do not have any permanent team assigned to them. They check the areas of work, ensure the workers are adhering to the company policy on safety, and bring to the attention of the supervisors' areas within their zones that they might have neglected or might become a cause for concern.

The team leaders in the Sweeper and Operative Sections were approached through the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 1). They were then asked for their consent to carry out this research (see Appendix 1 and 2). The supervisors who agreed to be interviewed returned their filled and signed consent forms.

The first set of interviews was carried out with 11 supervisors. The second set of interviews was carried out with the three planters/supervisors. The third set of interviews was carried out with 11 supervisors. The tables below show the participants who participated in the interviews and their team sizes.

In the first cycle, interviews were carried out for these 11 supervisors. Three planters were interviewed in the second cycle, and in the third cycle, 11 supervisors were interviewed. The total number of interviews conducted in three cycles was 25.

TABLE 1 PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST INTERVIEW

| Participant | Section | Team Size |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Bill | Operative | 8 |
| Carl | Sweeping | 22 |
| Dave | Sweeping | 30 |
| Eze | Operative | 7 |
| Fela | Sweeping | 36 |
| Gary | Sweeping | 37 |
| Henry | Sweeping | 30 |
| Ike | Operative | 6 |
| John | Operative | 14 |
| Ken | Operative | 7 |
| Ladi | Operative | 7 |

TABLE 2- PARTICIPANTS IN THE SECOND INTERVIEW

| Participant | Section | Team |
|-------------|--------------------|------------|
| Mike | Planter/Supervisor | Sweeping |
| Nnana | Planter/Supervisor | Operatives |
| Orlu | Planter/Supervisor | Operatives |

TABLE 3 - PARTICIPANTS IN THE THIRD INTERVIEW

| Participant | Section | Team Size |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Bill | Operative | 8 |
| Carl | Sweeping | 22 |
| Dave | Sweeping | 30 |
| Eze | Operative | 7 |
| Fela | Sweeping | 36 |
| Gary | Sweeping | 37 |
| Henry | Sweeping | 30 |
| Ike | Operative | 6 |
| John | Operative | 14 |
| Ken | Operative | 7 |
| Pete | Operative | 7 |

Reports

The weekly reports are readily available data recorded from the weekly activities of the supervisors. Using these reports as a research instrument adds validity to the analysis. Each supervisor oversees a team. At the end of the week, all supervisors are supposed to fill out reports with their comments, complaints, and recommendations for the week.

In the bid to pass on information from the field to management, the comment form was introduced in the organization and has been in use for some years before the onset of this thesis process. The comment form allowed the team leaders to let management know their comments, observations, and recommendations. The use of these forms was not mandatory, but the supervisors used them to convey information.

The reports provide data that show the context in which the supervisors work. It provides information and insights on the events that are occurring in the organization. It provides collaborative evidence on the interviews by participants. The information from the reports will also provide insight into OLC in the organization (Bowen, 2009).

The supervisors submitted the weekly reports to the Administrative Department. The information was transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and the names of the supervisors changed at the point of data entry for confidentiality. The spreadsheet was transferred to NVivo, where it was coded and analyzed. Data was also collected from the weekly reports submitted by the supervisors this year.

3.8 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was used when collecting data. To answer the research objectives, cases that can give an in-depth view of the phenomenon under study were selected. The Operations Department has more teams and supervisors in the organization. The sample size was the supervisors in the Operations Department.

This research intended to collect data from the monitors (planters/safety officers) of the supervisors, the supervisors themselves, and members of the team.

The use of purposive sampling will ensure the collection of rich information, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 287) state, "with purposive sampling you need to use your judgment to select cases that will best enable you to answer your research objectives." The sample size is selected to provide more depth to the research objective. Supervisors will be part of the research, and their teams will be the frame of reference. Using the group as the level of analysis is advantageous since each team has its peculiar characteristics (Easterby-Smith et al., 2000). These participants will give more insight into the nature of each team, the differences in team climates, decision-making, and other characteristics inherent in the teams.

It is necessary to understand the meanings created by the participants in their respective teams, to discover how OLC affects their work and their teams, and show how the supervisors utilize and interpret the organization's attempts to promote learning and improve work processes. The supervisors represent the organization's management in their teams; they implement and sustain OLC. The supervisor aligns the goals of the organization in operational work; they facilitate the flow of communication from management to the teams and vice versa. They interpret management responses to team challenges; they utilize the learning capabilities the organization is implementing (Goh and Richards, 1997, Floyd and Wooldridge, 1994). Using the interpretivist research philosophy as a basis for this research provides the lens that emphasizes and allows the study of the meanings created by the participants in this research.

3.9 Demographic Analysis

This section describes the demographics of the participants of this study. This section provides details on the number of participants; their age range; gender; the sections they belong to in the Operations Department; the number of participants in each department; the number of workers in each team; and the number of supervisors that represented each section of the Operations Department.

Company X is a private limited liability company; the Company has 246 employees, 225 employees working in the Operations Department. The Operations Department is divided into

two sections, the Sweepers and the Operatives. The Sweepers keeps the streets in our assigned zones clean by sweeping the streets every morning. The Operatives work night and day to clear refuse from receptacles in zones assigned to the company; the refuse is loaded in a compactor and taken to a dumpsite provided by the “Client.” Each section is headed by the supervisor and overseen by a planter or safety officer.

The company has three safety officers, also called planters. They supervise the supervisors with two planters assigned to the Operatives section and one planter assigned to the Sweeper section. The Sweeper section has more employees than the Operatives section. The operatives section has two planters. One planter is assigned to the night shift, and the other to the day shift. All planters also participated. Out of 19 supervisory staff in the Operations Department, only 15 agreed to participate in the research by reading the participant information sheet and signing and returning their consent forms. The table below shows the number and the gender of participants that participated in the interviews.

TABLE 4 NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

| | Male | Female |
|--------------------------|------|--------|
| Sweepers' Supervisors | 1 | 4 |
| Operatives' Supervisors | 7 | Nil |
| Planters/Safety Officers | 3 | Nil |

The ages of the participants were within the range of 22 to 50. The teams represented were seven Operative teams and five sweeper teams. The Operative teams consist of only male supervisors, and the sweeper teams include four female supervisors and one male supervisor. The safety officers/ planters were all males, and two out of three interviewed are supervisors in their former jobs. Although the participants' age and gender are not related to the data analysis, it gives the reader a better perspective of the teams.

TABLE 5 OPERATIVE TEAMS

| Participant | Gender | Team Size | Experience (yrs) | Position at Start of Employment |
|-------------|--------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bill | Male | 8 | 5 | Operative |
| Eze | Male | 7 | 6 | Supervisor |
| Ike | Male | 6 | 6 | Supervisor |
| John | Male | 14 | 6 | Supervisor |
| Ken | Male | 7 | 6 | Operative |
| Ladi | Male | 7 | 6 | Operative |
| Pete | Male | 7 | 6 | Supervisor |

TABLE 6 SWEEPER TEAMS

| Participant | Gender | Team Size | Experience | Position at Start of Employment |
|-------------|--------|-----------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Carl | Female | 22 | 6 | Supervisor |
| Dave | Female | 30 | 6 | Supervisor |
| Fela | Female | 36 | 5 | Sweeper |
| Gary | Female | 37 | 6 | Sweeper |
| Henry | Male | 30 | 5 | Supervisor |

3.10 Details of Participants

This section introduces the supervisors; all names have been changed to ensure that participants remain anonymous. The section describes the respondents starting with the seven operatives, then the five sweepers, and finally, the three planters.

TABLE 7 DETAIL AND SECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

| Operatives Section | Sweepers Section | Planters/Safety Supervisors |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bill | Carl | Mike |
| Eze | Dave | Nnana |
| Ike | Fela | Orlu |
| John | Gary | |
| Ken | Henry | |
| Ladi | | |
| Pete | | |

Error! Reference source not found.7 shows the participants that work in the different sections of the Operations Department

BILL

Bill is a supervisor in the Operatives section, and the number of workers in his team is eight. Bill and his team always work on the night shift. He started with the organization as an Operative and grew to become a supervisor. The number of reports on absenteeism in his team is low. Bill started as an Operative, and after about a year, he was promoted to supervise his team. This team handles their issues by themselves. There are no reports of the supervisor reporting any team member to management. The significant constraints of the group are the unavailability of trucks, which the supervisor describes as causing stress for the team.

The team has no assistant supervisor since the supervisor has made no one an assistant. The supervisor usually names the foreman. Some units even have more than one foreman. The team leader started as an Operative before he became a supervisor. The leader believes there should be a balance between what is done right and done wrong.

This team can be described as aligned with the goals of the organization because they are very target driven. Regarding the communication flow, there have been frequent reports to management through the weekly reporting. For openness to risk, there is some operational flexibility. There is dialogue, but the supervisor is harsh towards achieving the goal, and this leadership style can add to the pressure faced by the team.

Their relationships are attributed to team pressure in the following nodes: trucks, the work conditions, and the leader's belief in a hard-line approach. The hardline method has its advantages and disadvantages, but it earned him a loyal team. He has the respect of his teammates.

The route worked by team Bill is the main route for trucks that carry sand, thus the complaint of dust on the road by the group. Most of the time, the rear of the tippers are not covered, and this causes sand and gravel to spill on the way when the vehicles are in motion. The litter produced by these trucks conveying sand and gravel increases the volume of work on this zone and affects the nature of work.

EZE

Eze was employed as a supervisor and has won awards from the management on the ability of his team to always meet and exceed targets. He has experience working in the industry as a supervisor before company X employed him. The team is also known for speed in responding to directives from management. Sometimes, they complete tasks assigned to other groups. Eze also has a low rate of absenteeism in his team. The supervisor has assistants he trained within his team who can manage the team in his absence.

Eze also reported the shortage of trucks as a challenge for the team. The company has a problem with truck shortage and sometimes unavailability of compactors. The lack of compactors puts much pressure on the teams. Eze works with his team by taking on daily

tasks with his team members, and the team is target-driven. They try to complete more trips than other groups.

IKE

Ike was employed as a supervisor. He is known as a hardliner. The number of workers in this team at the time of the data collection was 6. This team has one of the highest rates of absenteeism in the Operatives section. The team problems are mostly lack of respect and absenteeism. Team issues are sometimes escalated. The supervisor complains about the lack of respect from his team members.

JOHN

John supervises the largest team. His team is divided into two sections, and both parts work along the same route at night and excavate for the same truck. John also has a foreman who assists in the operations. The team leader escalates the issues in the team that he cannot handle. This team leader submits reports. John's team has the highest number of absenteeism in the organization, and he covers up for his workers.

KEN

The supervisors came to their positions through two routes: either they were employed as supervisors or promoted from within the company. Ken was hired as an Operative, and after recommendations from Eze, his supervisor, he was made a foreman in John's team, and then he became a supervisor. He supervises a group of 7. He is the youngest supervisor in the Operatives section. Perceived risks in the group and challenges he could not treat were always escalated to John or the Operations Manager:

LADI

Ladi is also from Eze's team; he supervises a group of 7. Ladi complains of a lack of respect from the team. Ladi was also an Operative who was promoted to a supervisor based on recommendations from his supervisor. The significant constraints of the Operatives were the unavailability of trucks, and the challenges faced by his team were a shortage of manpower.

There was feedback from this team in the weekly reports; issues were always escalated to the Operations Manager.

PETE

Pete supervises a team of 7; he was also employed as a supervisor from the start of the company. There was no record of weekly reports from this supervisor; there is a high absenteeism rate from this team.

CARL

Carl is a supervisor in the sweeper section. She entered the company as a supervisor. Carl has much experience working as a supervisor before she was employed in Company X. Carl gives constant feedback in her weekly reports; she also has team meetings apart from the Friday meetings. This team always completes their work and sometimes goes out of their way to finish the tasks of other groups. Issues that cannot be addressed in the group are reported in the weekly reports.

Team C is in the sweeping section of this department; the team has 29 members, including the supervisor; this team works only during the day. The team leader has an assistant, the appointment of assistants is left to the supervisors; they suggest from among the group, and the management acts on their recommendations.

Communication is vital to the team leader. The leaders call the team members before work, during working hours, and sometimes after work. There are times the Operations Manager calls others outside the team to pass messages to the group members.

Failure to provide feedback or to communicate politely is frowned upon by the leader and considered an act of disrespect. This team is known for hard workers and difficult staff. Information is disseminated in this team through morning meetings, daily phone call reminders, weekly meetings, and talks from the supervisor. Information from the team is sent to management through regular weekly reports and verbal updates to the Operations Manager.

DAVE

Dave's team has 30 workers; the team's problems are solved by the team and not escalated unless it is a significant problem; there is no record of absenteeism in this team. The team leader submits weekly reports regularly, and events encountered by the group are solved before management is alerted. The team leader was employed directly as a supervisor, and she had no prior working experience.

FELA

Fela used to be a sweeper and then became a supervisor when one of the supervisors went on maternity leave; she came from Henry's team to lead Gary's team. At the time, Gary returned there was another opening for a supervisor, so she continued her new role as a supervisor. Weekly reports with feedback are regular.

The first time she started as a supervisor, the team was not happy because she was brought in from another team to lead. When Gary returned and moved to a different team, there was some friction, but it was not as she experienced with Gary's team.

GARY

Gary was employed as a sweeper before becoming a supervisor. She submits reports regularly. Team Gary has 37 workers. She complains of a lack of respect from her team members, and other supervisors have commented on this. Gary also has her daily team meetings aside from the general meetings on Friday.

HENRY

The number of sweepers in this team is 30. Henry has issues with absenteeism, but this issue was solved within the unit without involvement from management. Weekly reports are regularly submitted, and this team organizes their meetings in addition to the general meetings held on Fridays.

THE PLANTERS

The planters are Mike, Nnana, and Orlu. Planters have the same status as supervisors in the organization, but they are not assigned to teams. They report on the supervisors' progress; they check that safety rules are adhered to by the workers and monitor the areas where the teams have cleaned.

Mike has worked for Company X for six years. He started as a supervisor for the operative section, and he has worked for the day and night shifts at separate times.

Nnana is a safety officer/planter for the sweeper section. Nnana has worked for the organization for four years. He started as a planter for the operative section before he was reassigned to work in the sweeper section

Orlu has worked in Company X for six years. He started work as an operative. He was made a supervisor and was finally assigned to work as a planter/safety supervisor for the operative section. Orlu alternates work during the night and day shifts.

The descriptive demographic analysis presents a clearer picture of the participants in this study. The next section describes the process employed in the collection of data. It describes the action research cycles, the coding of the data, and how patterns emerged from the themes in the data analysis done with NVivo software.

3.11 Data Collection

The data was collected through interviews and documents submitted by the supervisors. These documents included weekly reports, attendance records, and incidence reports. The interviews were recorded. Before the recording commenced, permission was obtained from the participants to record the interviews. The participants' names were anonymized, and the data is stored on the researcher's personal computer, protected by a password.

The interviews were carried out in the operational base of Company X. The interviews were carried out in separate sessions, which depended on when the respondents were off work. The respondents were interviewed separately, and one person was interviewed at a time.

The operations and Maintenance Managers cooperated fully with the researcher. Concerning the interviews, they gave all the assistance needed. They ensured the supervisors had time off from work their busy schedules to meet with the researcher for the interviews.

The instruments used to collect data were interviews carried out in cycles, the supervisors' reports, and other records related to the research, such as complaints, attendance records, and incident reports. This data collected was suitable for the research and was meant to answer the research objectives.

The researcher interviewed the supervisors, analyzed the interviews and other documents used by the supervisors in order to provide an understanding of OLC in the teams and issues that hinder the teams from implementing OLC in the teams.

3.12 Data Analysis Methods

The previous section described the methods used to collect data, the research participants, and the sampling methods used to collect data. This section discusses the methods used for analyzing the data that was collected.

Thematic Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79), “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data.”

The first step was to be familiarized with the data by reading, re-reading, and reviewing the data. Immersive reading is an active way before coding shaped the ideas and identification of patterns later in the analysis process (Bowen, 2009, Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Coding and categorizing were done based on the data using the computer-aided data analysis software called NVivo. The recorded interviews were imported into NVivo software and transcribed. In the process of transcribing the data, the names of the participants were changed to hide their identity, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

In NVivo, data is categorized into codes and themes. A code is a unit of data with similar meanings. A code can be a word, sentence, or paragraph. A theme is a category of similar codes and relates to the research question. A node serves as a container for a group of codes with different sources (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, Saunders et al., 2012). NVivo is very flexible; it allows changes to the nodes and themes without affecting the original transcribed data (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013).

The process of analyzing the reports was to be immersed in the data and be familiarized with the contents, to recognize patterns, and categorize these patterns into themes. This analysis was done by collating the reports using Microsoft Excel. The Excel spreadsheet was then imported to NVivo, where it was coded using the existing categories created for the interviews. The data is analyzed with the focus of the study, which is to explore OLC in the team and understand the hindrances to OLC in the team.

3.13 Ethical Consideration

The objectives the researcher aims to answer are how OLC is expressed in the teams in the Operations Department of Company X, and how does OLC work to improve performance, competitiveness, and innovation for this organization? This thesis seeks to develop a deeper understanding of OLC in Company X, how the different measures of OLC work together, and the role they play in the positive impact that OLC brings to the organization. Understanding of OLC in Company X will improve the impact of the teams in the organization. It will pave the way for innovative problem solving, and the organization will have the information needed to enhance the measures of OLC. Ethical considerations are taken into the research to ensure the participants, the researcher. The organization is not exposed to any risks as a result of this research.

The researcher is responsible for applying ethical standards associated with research to the thesis (Cumyn et al., 2019, Holloway and Wheeler, 1995). The guide provided by the UOL ethics review is thorough. It covers every aspect of risk that can occur through research, namely, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of participation.

This section describes the ethics associated with my research. The participants will remain anonymous; the identities of the participants were changed at the data collection phase, and they are referred to by the pseudo names throughout the thesis. The name of the organization was also changed. The participants were also informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they were free to withdraw at any time.

The participants were informed of the nature of the research and the voluntary nature of their contribution to this research through a guideline provided by the researcher to all potential participants called the participant information sheet (PIS).

A template of the PIS was obtained from the UOL. A copy of the PIS was also submitted to the UOL Ethics review committee. The PIS introduces the researcher to the participants, informs them of the intention to carry out research, and invites them to participate in the research.

The PIS also contains the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and the confidentiality of their data. The PIS given to the participants informed them participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage and also to refuse to take part in the study.

The participants also signed consent forms, written informed consent documents confirmed that the participants had read the PIS and were aware of the voluntary nature of the study. It informed the participants of the confidentiality of their contributions, and their anonymity was also granted. Anonymity ensures the protection of participants' identities and that the responses cannot be traced to participants (Saunders et al., 2012). By signing these forms, the participants have understood and agreed to participate in the study, with the assurances that they will their personal data and identities will be protected.

To reduce the risk of discomfort to the participants, the focus of the questions was only work-related. The data was kept confidential in a personal laptop protected with a secure password

accessible to only the researcher. The physical data remains locked up in the researcher's safe in the office. This researcher is the sole occupier of this office and the only person with access to this office safe.

The risk of participants' discomfort during the discussion of their work was minimized by ensuring their anonymity and the voluntary nature of their participation. The participants were informed through the information sheet and consent forms of their freedom to withdraw participation and their option to skip any questions that might cause them discomfort.

Permission was obtained in writing from the Organization to carry out the research. This clarification is necessary to assure the participants and their manager of the researcher's intentions to research the Operations Department.

My role as a manager in the company is different from my role as a researcher. There is a risk that this dual role may cause participants discomfort (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). To reduce the risk of discomfort to the participants, the focus of the questions was work-related, the data was kept confidential, physical data was locked up in my safe in the office, with restricted access. All electronic data was stored in a password-protected laptop, accessible solely to the researcher.

Insider research has its dynamics (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). My professional role is separate from my role as a researcher. To encourage the functional aspect of researching in my organization and dispel suspicions from the participants about my reasons for undertaking the proposed research, the reasons and the benefits of the proposed research to the organization and employees will be clarified in the participant information sheets. This clarification is necessary to assuage any doubts about my intentions to carry out the proposed research.

3.14 Summary

The interpretivism and the constructionist epistemological perspective is the philosophical basis of this research. The interpretivist philosophy emphasizes the study of the meanings created by people (Saunders et al., 2012). Interpretivism emphasizes the differences in social actors, business situations are complex and unique, and they result from different circumstances and differences of individuals that come together at a point in time (ibid).

Social constructionism embraces multiple realities; this perspective acknowledges that there are differences in the teams. Exploring OLC in the organization with this perspective gives a depth of understanding of the operations of the teams and how OLC exhibits in the team. Acknowledging these multiple realities also gives access to suggest solutions that can improve learning capabilities in teams and the organization.

Action research is appropriate for this interpretivist research because it explores the teams and the enhancement of learning in the organization. Action research gives a deep insight into the discovery of reasons for the differences in team learning.

The process of action research is emergent because events continue to unfold; the data collection cycles uncover more areas previously not into consideration; the respondents' experience also develops with time. According to Reason (2006) in Saunders et al. (2012, p. 184), "Action research will not only be informed by abstract theoretical knowledge... however, but also by participants' lived everyday experiences ... and knowing in action."

This section described the methodology used for this research, including the research philosophy, approach to theory development, research strategy, data collection, and methods used for data analysis. This chapter also includes the action research cycles in data collection, analysis, and the proposed evaluation of the results of the analysis. This chapter describes the researcher's involvement in this research.

To understand how enhancing structures, practices, and routines facilitates teams and to understand the current issues hindering or encouraging learning in teams, action research is used to explore realities and experiences in the field. Action research recognizes the changing nature of the organization (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

The action research using an inductive action research approach provided an in-depth understanding of the effect of enhanced capability on the operational teams in the organization (Creswell, 2013). According to Reason and Bradbury (2008) in Coghlan and Brannick (2010, p. 3), action research is "a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview."

Chapter 4. Data Collection and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first part of the findings. It presents the data collected and the analysis of these data. This chapter starts by delineating the context of the organization. It explains the business of the organization under study and the reason why enhancing OLC is important to Company X.

This chapter also discussed the research domain, how the researcher was able to collect data by gaining permission from the organization. It also discusses the guide for the researcher, which was used to formulate the questions asked during the collection of data.

Finally, this chapter presents findings from the action research cycles. Each cycle shows the process of this insider action research. It explains the planning and gathering of data; it explains how the data was coded for subsequent grouping into themes; the themes and codes are presented in tables. This chapter also presents the evaluation of the findings and the actions taken as a result of each action research cycle.

4.2 Organizational Context

Company X is an organization that is the subject of this thesis. This thesis seeks to explore how learning capability is displayed in the organization. More importantly, this thesis seeks to use action research to explore and implement ways to improve the organization's capability to learn.

Company X has different areas of operation. The company is involved in providing cleaning of the streets and receptacles. Cleaning the environment entails clearing refuse and sweeping the streets. The company also manufactures plastic for use by food and beverage companies.

The data collection was carried out in the operations department of the cleaning service section of the organization. The implementation was carried out across the entire organization.

Over time, the organization has been faced with challenges that required drastic changes, including cost-cutting measures, which resulted in the sacking of staff and reducing the scope of our business.

This thesis seeks to provide insight into how Company X exhibits OLC to improve the existing learning capability in the organization. This insight will be achieved by addressing the following four questions.

R1. How is the alignment to goals in OLC exhibited in teams?

R2. How is communication flow exhibited in teams?

R3. How is management support exhibited in teams?

R4. How is openness to risk displayed in teams?

4.3 Research Protocol

4.3.1 Overview of the Research Domain

This thesis uses insider action research to explore and enhance OLC in Company X. OLC refers to measures that strengthen the ability of the organization to learn. This research explores these measures in company X and also explores how these measures will be enhanced in company X. This action research uses this thesis to explore and implement ways OLC is enhanced in Company X.

OLC is relevant to organizations because it improves the organization's ability to solve problems, to respond to challenges, and to disseminate knowledge to all levels and departments of the organization. OLC increases the chances of the organization to grow and

respond to changes in the business environment. OLC impacts the organization's ability to improve learning within the teams and in the organization.

Most research on OLC suggests several measures that identify OLC in the organization management support: alignment to goals, the flow of communication, and openness to risk (Chiva and Alegre, 2009, Goh and Richards, 1997). This research uses the following measures proposed by researchers that access OLC: alignment to goals, communication flow, management role, and openness to risk. These measures are referred to as capabilities, and these labels are used because most capabilities identified by the literature search can be grouped into these four categories

4.3.2 Field Procedures

This research used different sources of information as research instruments. The different sources of information used were interviews, reports, records from personnel meetings, and other records. The researcher also kept notes in the process of the thesis, and parts of these notes were used as a source of information.

Request for permission to access company records, carry out the interviews, and undertake research was granted by the organization after a written application. These participants were also sent written requests for their voluntary participation in the research. Only participants who provided signed consent were involved in the research. All participants remain anonymous; their names and identities were concealed by changing their identities.

Action research is an ongoing process; in the course of the implementation of results from the research, records of meetings were also collected. These records show the changes in the organization over time as a result of implementing findings from the research.

Guideline for Data Collection

The following question was used as a guideline for formulating questions for the interviews and guidelines for collecting data. These were used as a guide to gathering data and were not the questions that the interview participants were asked.

- Are the goals of the organization understood?
- What are the problems faced meeting the Company's goals, and how they were resolved
- What solutions can improve the challenges from these problems
- How does learning together as a group happen in the organization
- How can the organization improve its approach to problem-solving, approach to problems in the team?
- Importance and the role of communication in the group/department.
- How effective are the avenues for communication?
- Do the avenues for communication improve learning capability?
- What improvements in the flow of communication is suited for the organization?
- What is the role of the leader of the team with regard to OLC?
- What lessons can be learned as a result of improving OLC in Company X
- What improvements have happened in the team, and the perceived impact of these improvements?
- What is management's commitment to improving teams and improving the learning capability in the organization?

4.4 Sources of Data

The sources of data for this research came from the interviews, reports, and the evaluation of findings from each action research cycle. The following section gives a clear picture of the data collected and how the findings and analysis of the data contributed to meeting the research objectives.

4.4.1 Action Research Cycle 1

The organization had implemented changes before the thesis. These changes were meant to improve communication and promote continuous improvement in the company. These

changes are regarded as part of the structures, processes, and practices introduced to improve OLC in the organization.

A weekly meeting was also introduced every Friday. All operations staff and one representative from the Administrative department attended. In this meeting, the supervisors talked to the staff concerning issues happening in the field, passed on information, talked about mistakes or other issues happening in the field, and how to mitigate them. In this meeting, employees could ask questions and get answers from the Operations Manager.

We also introduced the weekly forms, which were given to supervisors, to let management know their comments, complaints, and recommendations. These forms served as useful feedback to the Administrative department to know what to discuss with the dumpsite or the maintenance department.

The introduction of forms as a reporting tool was good in a general sense. We had taken many hits as a company, and we learned from it, taking measures to mitigate future occurrences. Unfortunately, some teams would encounter similar circumstances and react in a way that showed that no lessons had been learned. These issues were safety issues, communication with members of the public, meeting daily targets, team member welfare issues, and reporting erring staff to human resources.

Planning and Data Gathering

The interviews with the operatives and sweepers lasted for an average of 30 minutes per person. These interviews took place at the company premises, and the participants were interviewed individually.

The interviews were all recorded. The recorded files were transferred and saved on a password-protected secure laptop, which is only accessible to the researcher. The participants' identities were anonymized at the point of transferring the files to the computer.

For the first set of interviews, five sweepers and six operatives participated. The face-to-face interviews took place in 2 weeks because of the work schedules of the participants

The interview questions were open-ended and semi-structured, and the following questions were used as a guideline to question the participants:

- The goal of the company
- Problems faced meeting the Company's goals and how they were resolved
- Learning together as a group, approach to problems in the team
- Importance and the role of communication in the group/department
- Perception of a role as the leader of the team/lessons learned as a leader
- Improvement in the team and the perceived impact of these improvements
- Differences compared to other teams
- Perception of management commitment in improving teams

This guideline is a result of the literature search conducted and the writing of the literature review chapter. The literature review served as a guide to formulate the questions that will be used to gather data.

Coding and Grouping into Themes

The interview sessions were saved on a secure laptop, with access to only the researcher. The names of the participants were changed to protect their identities and to ensure that they remain anonymous.

The recorded interviews were then uploaded to a qualitative data analysis computer software called NVivo. The uploaded recordings were transcribed, and codes were assigned to phrases or paragraphs that suited the research. The codes were further grouped into themes. The themes that reveal where leadership and communication occurred in the teams.

All the respondents were asked the same questions. During coding, the patterns from these questions included the respondents talking about the company's perceived goal and the problems encountered and understanding the company's goals.

TABLE 8 COMPARISON OF CODES FROM SWEEPERS AND OPERATIVES TEAMS

| Description of Nodes | |
|--|---|
| Operatives | Sweepers |
| How Teams Align to Organization's Goals | |
| Following organizations practices and routines | Organizations structures, practices, and routines |
| Perception of meeting success of org | Team contribution to organization success |
| Targets | Understanding organization goals |
| Teamwork | |
| Delegation | |
| Structures and Systems- Discipline | |
| Structures and Systems- Orientation | |
| Structures and Systems- Reports | |
| Regular Training | |
| Team contribution to organization success | |
| understanding organization goals | |
| Hindrances to Aligning to Goals | |
| absenteeism of operatives | Poor communication with team members |
| complaints from users | Lack of respect for team leader |
| distractions | Problem-solving within teams |
| environmental issues (rain, harmattan season) | Work conditions |
| equipment (the breakdown of trucks) | Tardiness |
| Increase of refuse in our receptacle. | Complaints from users |
| lack of respect from each other in the team | Problems from other teams |
| problems from other teams | Problems between workers and supervisor |
| tardiness | Absenteeism |
| team leadership | Truck availability |
| the challenge of safety, | Distractions |
| the increase of refuse daily | Lack of respect from each other in the team |
| truck availability | Worn out materials |
| attendance | Environmental issues |
| attitude | |
| available working materials | |
| pressure on the team (the breakdown of trucks) | |
| weaknesses identified in reaching success | |

| | |
|---|--|
| work conditions | |
| Facilitators of Learning at Work | |
| problem-solving within teams | Leadership |
| problems encountered | Team learning experience |
| good communication between supervisor and workers | Communication |
| leadership | Lessons learned |
| lessons learned through experience | |
| team learning experience | |
| The flow of Communication at Work | |
| communication during the team meeting | Communication |
| communication during the weekly meeting | Communication during the weekly meeting |
| communication between management and workers | Team learning |
| leadership learning | |
| problems between workers and supervisor | |
| problems between supervisors and workers communication | |
| Learning from Challenges | |
| leadership | Leadership |
| satisfied with work | Attitude |
| When we have issues, we solve them immediately. | Communication |
| leadership by example | Learn by experience - pressure on the team |
| learning by observation | Observation |
| management role in the improvement of learning | |
| consistent orientation | Uniformity in reward and correction |
| uniformity in reward and correction | Consistent orientation |

Evaluate the Findings

The first cycle of findings showed the vital role of leadership and communication in OLC. Each team is defined by its leader and the ability of the team to communicate. This section is the discussion from the analysis that arose from the first interviews; after analyzing the first interviews, the patterns that emerged were communication in the team, with the public, with other teams. Also, leadership in the teams was a recurrent theme in all the nodes.

These patterns in the findings from the first interview informed the data collected in the second interview. In the interviews, this researcher spoke with the supervisors; the sessions were recorded, transcribed in NVivo before they were analyzed.

During the first analysis, the interview guideline was used to create the nodes. Different nodes were formed for codes that could not fit in the nodes created according to the interview guideline. Examples of these nodes were leadership problems in the teams, the nature of the teams, and the nature of work.

The findings show that there is an interpretation of the organization's mission and goals in the field. The findings give an in-depth view of the reality in the field and the efficacy of the structures and the practices the organization has put in place to improve the organization over time.

The interpretation of the company's mission is the most interesting. The teams enforce salient aspects of the goal, showing an understanding of the organization's mission and how this is interpreted in the field.

One of the key tenets of OLC is an imbibed understanding of the organization's mission and vision by the employees. The display of the organization's statements on the walls of the company might encourage employees to read them. However, there is evidence of double-looped learning when this is interpreted in actions. Those actions are examined until the mission becomes accepted by the field.

From the interviews, I saw various interpretations of the organization's statements, the problems the teams faced with the statements. A look at these problems is key because they show the consideration and reconsideration of the organization's mission and vision by the various teams.

Improvement of OLC in Company X

Meeting with Supervisors

The action emanating from this data collection cycle was to improve the trucks and the awareness of the goals of the organization. There was a meeting with the supervisors. The

meeting aimed to introduce measures that will improve the learning capability of the organization.

During the supervisor's monthly meeting, the supervisors were given an orientation concerning the direction of the company and the importance of their work to the organization.

One of the supervisors' suggestion was to use short meetings held before the commencement of work on each shift. This system was already in use by some supervisors. They agreed to use the toolbox meeting to prepare for work and improve communication with the team members.

The day's target was to be reiterated before the start of work through a toolbox meeting. The agenda for the meeting was the same for all teams across the organization. It was to remind everyone in the team of the organization's goal and the team, safety measures, assign work roles, and discuss the expectations for the day.

The supervisors were also encouraged to utilize the existing reporting structure. There was already a weekly reporting structure, but most supervisors were not using it. The importance of information reaching the organization from the teams and the supervisors was discussed, and the supervisors promised to use the weekly reports to communicate with management.

Providing more trucks involved seeking involvement from another department. Attempts were made to enlist outside help in maintaining the truck. The maintenance department received complaints concerning the breakdown of trucks and the issues arising from it.

4.4.2 Action Research Cycle 2

Planning and data gathering

In the second cycle, the weekly reports were analyzed. These were reports written by supervisors in the last three months. The supervisors made an effort to use the reports to communicate with the organization concerning comments about their week, problems during work that affected their targets, and recommendations on how the organization can improve.

In total eighty-nine reports were used. The reports used were only from the participants who had given earlier consent at the start of the data collection phase.

The names of the participants were changed at the point of recording. The aim was to evaluate the measures of OLC, and the areas where OLC can improve in the organization.

The supervisors (planters) for each section were also interviewed. The sweeper section has one supervisor and the operative section two supervisors (one for each shift).

The reports and the interview from the supervisors will give a glimpse of the use of the introduced measures by the participants.

The report from the supervisors was introduced as a measure to know how the Administration Department could keep abreast of the occurrences in the field and thereby improve the internal processes in the Administration Department. This report contained the comments, complaints, and recommendations of each team. The use of the reports was not compulsory, and many supervisors were not submitting the reports. After the meeting, the use of the report improved, and the reports were used as a source of data to gain insight into the exhibition of OLC in the organization.

The reports were submitted weekly. In addition to fulfilling the aim of the reports, the supervisors also added reports on every aspect of their work, including issues facing the team with equipment, trucks, and with members of their teams. Most of the challenges were mentioned in the interviews, but the reports captured these challenges at the time it was happening.

Coding and Grouping into themes

The reports were transferred to Microsoft Excel. I used tables to analyze the reports for a better understanding. The columns for the excel sheet was the date, the supervisor's name, the weekly comment, complaint, and recommendation.

The Excel sheet was transferred to NVivo, where it was coded into existing nodes, and new nodes were formed when they were no existing nodes. From the analyses, it was easy to compare the results from the reports with the previous data collected from the supervisors. The themes and nodes show the number of sources that contributed to data collection

TABLE 9 SUPERVISOR REPORTS ANALYZED

| Teams | # of reports | Comments | Complaints | Recommendations |
|--------|--------------|----------|------------|-----------------|
| Bill | 6 | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Carl | 9 | 9 | 9 | 7 |
| Dave | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| Eze | 6 | 6 | 3 | 5 |
| Fela | 11 | 11 | 8 | 6 |
| Gary | 8 | 4 | 8 | 8 |
| Henry | 4 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Ike | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| John | 13 | 1 | 7 | 6 |
| Ken | 9 | 9 | 1 | 8 |
| Ladi | 6 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| Totals | 87 | 62 | 59 | 67 |

TABLE 10 REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS IN PERCENTAGES

| Teams | Reports | Complaints |
|-------|---------|------------|
| Bill | 6.90% | 10.17% |
| Carl | 10.34% | 15.25% |
| Dave | 11.49% | 15.25% |
| Eze | 6.90% | 5.08% |
| Fela | 12.64% | 13.56% |
| Gary | 9.20% | 13.56% |
| Henry | 4.60% | 1.69% |
| Ike | 5.75% | 1.69% |
| John | 14.94% | 11.86% |
| Ken | 10.34% | 1.69% |
| Ladi | 6.90% | 10.17% |

TABLE 11 CODES FROM THE ANALYSIS OF REPORTS**SUMMARY OF REPORTS FROM OPERATIVES**

| COMMENT | Count | Percentage |
|--|--------------|-------------------|
| Absenteeism | 5 | 7% |
| Break down of trucks | 29 | 38% |
| Encouraging staff through recommendation | 5 | 7% |
| Feedback on repair of truck | 3 | 4% |
| Feedback on working materials | 20 | 26% |
| Impressive turnout of workers; | 4 | 5% |
| Improved group performance and cooperation | 5 | 7% |
| Improved teamwork and tolerance | 2 | 3% |
| Problems between supervisor and workers | 3 | 4% |

SUMMARY OF REPORTS FROM SWEEPERS

| COMMENT | Count | Percentage |
|--|--------------|-------------------|
| Working materials are in good condition | 27 | 30% |
| Request for replacement of working materials | 16 | 18% |
| Absenteeism | 14 | 16% |
| Improved group performance and cooperation | 14 | 16% |
| Problems between operatives and sweepers caused by breakdown of trucks | 9 | 10% |
| Problems between supervisor and workers | 7 | 8% |
| Leader working as a sweeper | 1 | 1% |
| Workers absence during weekly meeting | 1 | 1% |

The planters were interviewed on the company premises. The researcher was the only person with the participants at the time of the interviews to ensure that they had privacy. The interviews for the planters happen in 2 days as a result of their work schedules.

The recorded interview was saved in a secure laptop with a strong password and is only accessible to the researcher; to safeguard the data collected and the information of the participants. To protect the identity of the participants, their names were changed at the time of transcribing the data.

The interview was uploaded to NVivo and transcribed by the researcher to protect the participant's privacy and identity. NVivo was also used to analyze the supervisor's reports.

TABLE 12 CODES FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH PLANTERS

| |
|---|
| Hindrance to Learning Capability |
| Breakdown of trucks |
| Poor communication between supervisors and team members |
| Supervisors are harsh |
| Workers disrespect supervisors |
| |
| Improving Learning Capability |
| Offering Incentives to team members to curb absenteeism |
| Early start |
| Working on feedback from Customers |
| Learning from teams that are exceeding their targets |
| Monitor the vehicles |

Evaluate the Findings

Their responses corroborated the first interviews and provided more insight into the work experiences of the supervisors. After the first interviews, it was necessary to understand the perspectives of the Planters. The interviews revealed management commitment in the team and how the organization enforces OLC. After this, the weekly records were analyzed, and similar patterns emerged.

The improvement and enhancement of the capability to learn to affect the extent to which learning takes place. An understanding of the organization will reveal the workings of the organization and how learning takes place within that organization.

From the reports, there is evidence to show that the supervisors play a large part in the interpretation of the organization's goals to the operations. Operations differ based on the supervisor because they are the middlemen between the management and the operations.

The interaction between the leader and the team fosters communication within the team, the supervisor's approach to the members of their team determines the impact of the procedures, structures on the team.

The planters also pointed out that the teams were not learning from each other. Although they used the toolbox meetings to discuss the day's work, some teams had improved their performance. The planters suggested that there should be a system where the performing teams share their experiences with the other teams in order to improve performance.

Improvement of OLC in Company X

After the first and second cycles, some practices were introduced in Company X. Among the practices was the regular meeting with Dumpsite management or the company's Maintenance Department. The information garnered from these meetings was passed to the Administration Department. The Administration department processed this information and disseminated any corrective measures to staff.

There were also meetings of staff in an improvement committee that met to talk about the issues concerning staff. Staff was selected from various departments, i.e., the sweepers, the operatives, the supervisors, the safety officer, and the Administration Department, who attended these meetings. They met periodically to talk about what would be beneficial to the employees and improve their working conditions; they also made recommendations to management on corrective actions.

4.4.3 Action Research Cycle 3

Planning and Data Gathering

These measures, such as leadership within teams, promotion of teamwork, procedures, policies, and meetings, were put in place to improve the work within the teams, but what happened was the improvement was not the same in all the teams. Various issues affected the impact of these learning capabilities in the organization. Therefore, there is a need to seek more understanding of these issues by gaining an in-depth view of the supervisors' perspectives to know the supervisors' experiences at work.

In the third interview, the researcher spoke to the supervisors about areas they had earlier discussed during the first and second interviews. These were based on the findings. The interview was based on the responses to the first interviews and sought clarity from the supervisors in problem resolutions, communication, leading the teams, and reasons for complaints or lack of it.

The themes and the findings from the previous two cycles were the basis of the interviews in the third cycle. The participants in the first and second interviews were the supervisors and the planters, respectively. The Planters gave a different perspective of the issues raised by the Supervisors. The Planters' perspective and the themes that emerged from the interviews with the Supervisors became the basis for the interviews with the supervisor in the third cycle of interviews.

These third interviews focused on leadership and communication within the teams, their perception of the structures of the organization within the teams, and their constraints faced while adopting OLC within their teams

Coding and Grouping into Themes

After collecting the data, the researcher created another project on NVivo and looked at the data a second time. The research coded interviews and the records on NVivo a second time.

The reports were analyzed using Excel and transferred to NVivo. They were coded to reveal the patterns in the reports and the interviews.

TABLE 13 ANALYSIS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

2nd Interview with Sweepers

THEME: ALIGNMENT TO GOALS

Nodes for Alignment to Goals

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Alignment \Achieving goals | Teamwork |
| Alignment \Achieving goals\Understanding Goals | Teamwork |
| Alignment \Encouragement | Systems Perspective |
| Alignment \Leadership by example | Systems Perspective |
| Alignment\Collaboration | Teamwork |
| Alignment\Covering Up coping | Teamwork |
| Alignment\Division of labor | Teamwork |
| Alignment\Prompt Implementation | Systems Perspective |
| Alignment\Targets | Clarity of Mission and Vision |
| Team Nature\Target Driven | Clarity of Mission and Vision |
| Team Nature\Team Leadership | Systems Perspective |

2nd Interview with Sweepers

THEME: COMMUNICATION FLOW

Nodes for Communication Flow

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Comm Flow \Internal communication | Dialogue |
| Comm Flow \Leadership Style\Morning routine | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Comm Flow\power of orientation | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Comm Flow\Prior information | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Comm Flow\Team Meeting | Dialogue |
| Comm Flow\Training | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Comm Flow\Weekly Meeting | Dialogue |
| Comm Flow\Weekly Reports | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Event\Other Meetings | Dialogue |
| Event\Ride to work | Dialogue |

2nd Interview with Sweepers

THEME: MANAGEMENT

COMMITMENT

Nodes for Management Commitment

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Structures and Systems- Orientation | Leadership Commitment |
| Management Role\Culture for Learning | Continuous Development |
| Mgt Support \orientation | Continuous Development |
| Mgt Support \Structure and procedures\Team Meeting | Leadership Commitment |
| Mgt Support \Structure and procedures\Training | Continuous Development |
| Mgt Support \Structure and procedures\Weekly Meeting | Leadership Commitment |
| Mgt Support \Structure and procedures\Weekly Reports | Leadership Commitment |

2nd Interview with Sweepers

THEME: OPENNESS TO RISK

Nodes for Openness to Risk

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Leadership Style\Tolerance | Openness and Experimentation |
| Openness to Risk\Decision Making | Openness and Experimentation |
| Openness to Risk\Problem Solving\Working in Unity | Group Problem Solving |
| Openness to Risk\Speaking Out | Openness and Experimentation |
| Team Nature\Leadership style\Creativity | Climate of Openness |
| Team Nature\Leadership style\Fact finding | Climate of Openness |
| Team Nature\Leadership style\Lessons from work | Climate of Openness |
| Team Nature\Leadership style\Morning routine | Climate of Openness |
| Team Nature\Problem Solving\Group Problem Solving | Climate of Openness |
| Team Nature\Recommendation for Mgt | Climate of Openness |
| Team Nature\Leadership Style\counsellor to workers | Climate of Openness |

2nd Cycle of Interviews with Operatives

THEME: ALIGNMENT TO GOALS

| Nodes for Alignment to Goals | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Alignment \Collaboration | collaboration |
| Alignment \Encouragement | Systems Perspective |
| Alignment \Leadership by example | Systems Perspective |
| Alignment\Achieving goals | Teamwork |
| Alignment\Achieving goals\Understanding Goals | Teamwork |
| Alignment\Collaboration | collaboration |
| Alignment\Division of labor | Teamwork |
| Alignment\Prompt Implementation | Systems Perspective |
| Alignment\Set Team Targets | Clarity of Mission and Vision |
| Alignment\Shared Identity | Teamwork |
| Alignment\Team work | Teamwork |
| Team Nature\Delegation | Delegation |
| Team Nature\Target Driven | Clarity of Mission and Vision |
| Team Nature\Team work | Teamwork |

2nd Cycle of Interviews with Operatives

THEME: COMMUNICATION FLOW

| Nodes for Communication Flow | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Communication Flow\Weekly Reports | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Communication Flow\Interaction with the external environment | Dialogue |
| Communication Flow\Public Complaints | Dialogue |
| Communication\power of orientation | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Communication\Prior information | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Communication\Problems with Public | Dialogue |
| Communication\Public Appreciation | Dialogue |
| Communication\Relationship with public | Dialogue |
| Communication\Team Meeting | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Communication\Training | Knowledge transfer and integration |

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Communication\Weekly Meeting | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Event\Other Meetings | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Event\Ride to work | Dialogue |
| Team Nature\Internal communication | Knowledge transfer and integration |
| Team Nature\Recommendation | Knowledge transfer and integration |

2nd Cycle of Interviews with Operatives

THEME: MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Nodes for Management Support

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Management Role\Culture for Learning | Continuous Development |
| Mgt support\Continuous Improvement | Leadership Commitment |
| Mgt Support\orientation | Continuous Development |
| Structure and procedures\Team Meeting | Leadership Commitment |
| Structure and procedures\Regular Training | Leadership Commitment |
| Structure and procedures\Weekly Meeting | Leadership Commitment |
| Structure and procedures\Weekly Reports | Leadership Commitment |

2nd Cycle of Interviews with Operatives

THEME: OPENNESS TO RISK

Nodes for Openness to Risk

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Openness to Risk\Decision Making | Openness and experimentation |
| Team Nature\Group Problem Solving | Group problem solving |
| Problem Solving\Working in Unity | Group problem solving |
| Openness to Risk\Speaking Out | Openness and experimentation |
| Communication Flow\Mitigation | Openness and experimentation |

Evaluate the Findings

The third cycle focused on getting more information about the data collected in the interviews and records. By the time I coded all the data again in the second NVivo project, looking for nodes that show how the codes related to OLC factors were identified in the literature review. The coding was done separately for each team, and patterns emerged from the coding, which formed groups.

Coding the individual teams were to enable investigation within the teams and to understand OLC in the teams and the differences in the teams. The patterns that emerged were further analyzed by test propositions and looking for alternative explanations and conclusions (Saunders et al., 2012).

This section described the data analysis methods, the software used to analyze the data gathered, action research, and the cycles in the process of analyzing and evaluating the data. It also describes how the data analysis will inform the conceptual framework, which will be presented in the final thesis.

During the 3rd cycle, the second analysis was done; during the second analysis, nodes were created for each participant. The codes from the interviews were stored in nodes. After reading the transcript several times, words, phrases, or sentences that were related to the measures of OLC were coded, and the nodes were created as the coding progressed. Some words or phrases that reoccurred, such as ‘trucks,’ ‘working materials,’ were also coded and placed in a node titled ‘nature of work’ for each supervisor. Below are excerpts of the nodes and codes from two participants.

In the process of coding, relationships between nodes became evident. These relationships that emerge were stored in separate nodes. Below are the relationships between the data that emerged in the process of analyzing the data on NVivo.

TABLE 14 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NODES

| From Name | To Name |
|---|--|
| Challenges | OLC - Communication Flow |
| Challenges\pressure on the team | Leadership Style |
| OLC – Alignment | Problem Solving\Working in Unity |
| OLC – Alignment | Leadership Style |
| OLC – Alignment | Nature of Teams |
| OLC Management Role\Continuous Improvement | Challenges\Difficulty faced with Workers |
| Challenges\lateness | Communication Flow\Public Complaints |
| Work Conditions\Trucks | Challenges\pressure on the team |
| Work Conditions\Trucks | Absenteeism |

In the process of searching for patterns and relationships in the data, the following propositions were formulated:

- Alignment to goals is influenced by the teams' reaction to challenges
- Communication flow is related to alignment
- Openness to risk differs across teams due to the team leader
- Work condition influences alignment
- Management support influences alignment to goals

I found that teams are different from each other. The differences are, in some cases, clear and in others subtle. The supervisor's ability to gain the respect of their team members also affected the team climate, the nature of work.

During the interviews, the supervisors were asked to talk about their perception of the role of their teams in the organization's success. The findings show that the perception of the role the teams play in the organization is based on; the job assigned to the team, the combined efforts of the team members, the attitude of the team to work, and communication in the team and between the supervisor and their manager.

The team's success is based on teams' the importance of the job to the organization, the team ascribe importance to some areas of work than others, the factors that cause this range from the availability of trucks in that area, the volume of work, amount of appreciation form residents in that area of work. There was much dissatisfaction expressed when teams were moved temporarily to high volume areas.

Improvement in Company X

This section describes the actions in the organization that occurred as a result of this research. It describes in detail the actions from the point of each theme discussed in the conceptual framework and how they worked together to result in positive changes in the organization.

This section also shows that the changes in the organization are not stagnant but fluid, and improvements happen as a result of the organization's reaction to challenges. These changes are guided by the need to align with the organization's goals. It is important to note that these are all possible because the teams were able to communicate these problems to the necessary department and to provide adequate feedback on the effects of the changes in the organization. The following actions were taken as a result of the findings from this research

Management Support

Clarity of Policies: The organizational policies that will guide the organization were formulated and disseminated throughout the organization by placing them in frames and positioning these frames in strategic parts of the building. Furthermore, the policies were to inform staff of management's overall position of quality as regards the products, service, staff, and customers.

From the policies, each department was given work expectations that explained how the organization expects them to adhere to the new policies. Targets for the organization were set, and the goals were broken down into departments. Each department was given directives towards achieving their weekly, monthly, and yearly goals.

Training

In addition to the quarterly meetings, the following training was conducted to improve the awareness of acceptable behavior among the staff of the company. A hindrance to teamwork is the inability of the team to work together. A cohesive team can easily improve learning capability by aligning to goals, communicate, and working on challenges together. A cohesive team can share ideas, experiences, and opinions. To improve OLC, one of the recommendations from this research was to train all employees on the following

- Team building

- Training on safe work practices

We trainings so far on team building, and the entire staff and management attended the training. The training included topics on communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, and active listening.

The safety meetings and presentations now include everyone. The presenters are taken from among the staff, and all staff has to give a safety presentation. The topics are assigned every month, and the speaker is informed at the weekly staff meeting.

Alignment to Goals

Alignment to goals was done by the formation of Action teams in Maintenance, Marketing, and Sales Departments. The participants were drawn from different departments in the organization. These teams aimed to bring about the awareness of the staff to issues challenging the organization's ability to meet its goals and also to create the necessary focus on meeting the organization's goals. These organizational goals were given at the start of the month and broken down to departmental goals.

The reports from these groups are expected at weekly and monthly intervals to show progress. They are also discussed in the next section on communication flow.

Communication Flow

The importance of the reports and records in every department was reiterated to all staff in the various departments. The reports served as a feedback mechanism for management and staff across different departments.

Weekly meetings and departmental review meetings were carried out every week. The reason for these meetings was to identify areas that we need to improve and to address action items as they arise.

The use of social media (WhatsApp) for urgent updates from operations and maintenance departments was also introduced to keep everyone updated daily and share relevant information, such as sudden machine breakdown and family emergencies that affect a worker's ability to come to work.

Openness to Risk

Promotion of dialogue and experimentation. Each department discusses the challenges encountered during the week, and these challenges are discussed. Possible solutions are proposed, and these are explored. The actions taken are discussed at the next meeting. This is also connected to the discussion above on communication flow and management support.

Chapter 5. Findings

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how OLC is exhibited in teams within Company X and to improve the learning capability of Company X. It is to understand the challenges experienced by the teams in capability and to improve the organization's response to these challenges through actionable steps in an action research study.

The thesis approaches the study to provide more understanding of OLC and its exhibition in the teams. This chapter is the second part of the findings chapter. This chapter presents the findings from the data collection and analysis. It outlines the actions in the organization as a result of each of the action research cycles, how they informed the action research cycles, and how they improved learning capability in the organization.

The findings chapter also describes how the themes from the data analysis are presented. The findings are organized firstly into research objectives, then secondly into the themes that emerged from each research objective.

This chapter seeks to discover the factors that affect OLC in the organization, seeks to enhance the understanding of the issues surrounding the supervisors, and how these issues hinder the implementation of measures to promote learning in the organization.

5.2 Theme 1 - Alignment to Goals

This section gives more understanding of the methods used by teams to be aligned with the goals of the organization. The hallmarks of OLC in the organization include the ability of the team to align with the organization's purpose. Alignment to goals entails understanding the organization's direction and working towards achieving it.

A cohesive work environment is essential for the organization to meet its goals. For Company X, our goal is to ensure that our zones are clean before the stipulated time. This goal must be achieved daily to avoid complaints from the road users, residents, and the “Client.” This goal informs the daily objectives of each team. When the teams work efficiently, there is an impact on the overall goal of the organization, and it improves the perception of the company in the public eye and with the “Client.”

5.2.1 Teamwork

Teamwork involves setting clear roles for members of the team in line with their ability. The ability of the workers is different. The nature of work needs, strength, speed, and ability to talk to people differ from one team to another.

Some teams meet their targets and align with the organization’s goals by complementing each other’s efforts. Among the Operatives, the tasks needed are shoveling or digging, packing, and compacting. Some Operative teams work by assigning some workers to shovel and others to pack. Not everyone is good at digging. Where the supervisor can identify workers that are fast with the shovel and packers, this becomes an advantage to the team, enabling them to work at a quicker pace.

For the sweepers, some are faster than others, and some people have people skills. The supervisors sometimes appoint people to complete portions. For those with people skills, the supervisor can use them as assistants to ensure those around them finish their work.

The reality is that these teams struggle to meet the target because of many hindrances posed by the nature of work. A team leader that understands the team will divide the work. This helps the team complement each other and complete their assignment on time. Team Ladi, for example, shares the work based on the strength and ability of his team. Also, he explains what is expected of them. According to the Operative supervisor on team Ladi

“We go to work, some of them, they know how to handle shovel, some of them will carry basket, the ones that know how to handle shovel, you give them a shovel, and

the other ones will carry baskets. I also make them clear on how the work is, for them to understand how the work is, so they do not have to complain about it.”

The Operative Supervisor on Team Henry, below, explains the team's frustration with completing tasks when the team must weed. In this case, work is not apportioned; everyone is expected to weed, pick, and sweep. From Henry's statement, some workers express this unhappiness, and this causes friction with the supervisor.

Team Henry (Operative Section)

“Where I was, we weed... that grass will grow, it will make the whole place look unkempt, despite the weeding. So, each time we weed all those things, the whole place will be neat. If they do not obey you, you will be so angry because you are trying to exercise authority.”

Apportioning tasks, according to member's ability, makes work easier and faster for both the supervisor and the team members. It is easier to reach daily goals by assigning jobs.

However, when duties are not assigned, especially when there is an extra task to complete, the workers will express dissatisfaction. The team will find it more challenging to achieve their targets. Teams also utilize other methods to align with the organization's goals, such as encouragement, the manner the supervisors talk to their team members' matters because it influences the actions of the team.

Alignment to goals is a measure of OLC, and achieving goals through teamwork, is a sign that the team aligns with the objective of the organization. In the interviews, some teams expressed an understanding of the goals of the Operation's Department and how this goal is achieved. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Bill,

“The goal is to achieve the expected success of the organization to be exceptional.”

According to Operative Supervisor on Team Dave,

“The goal is to meet our targets to clean up the place, make everywhere neat.”

According to the Operative Supervisor on Team Eze,

“I tell them I work with time.”

Where the teams are unable to align with the objectives of the department, this affects the organization negatively, through warnings and fines from the “Client.” According to the Operative Supervisor on Team Ken, challenges with equipment affects the ability to achieve goals within the time frame.

“When we have challenges of compactors, sometimes we wait like there is a time when we get to that place, we wait till 11 -12 pm, before we start work and secondly, this dumpsite problem, that is some of the biggest challenges we have. When we get to dump, sometimes we will go to dump by 11, we will stay at that dump till after 4 am.”

Below, the Sweeper supervisor on team Henry talks about the impact of unclear objectives on the team’s ability to align to goals.

“There is something about teamwork. if your objectives are not clear... you end up confusing and creating more problems in the team.”

The Operations Department is structured in teams of Operatives and Sweepers. Every team is comprised of people who are put together to make a reality from the circumstances and tools available to them. Whether the outcome of an individual's actions is good or bad, the credit or blame goes to the team. The supervisors apply effort to get results from their team.

According to the supervisor on Team Fela (Operative Section)

Fela (Operative team)

Like when we were still working, my work ended at Dominion City. While HENRY’s own started from after this person to that person, our workers did interact. When any of my workers intend to be absent, they will tell HENRY’s workers, and they will cover up for them, so they interacted very well.

For instance, from their own choice, the teams Ike and Carl display team effort in alignment. On their own, they make sure all spaces around their zones are completed daily, even though it has not been assigned to them. This alignment is evident by the display of team effort: going out of the way to complete the tasks that have not been assigned to their supervisor.

Carl's team worked together to complete tasks even in areas not assigned to them, which affected their zone. They also worked together to complete vacant portions when the designated team member is absent. According to the sweeper supervisor in team Carl:

Even when you do not ask them, they gather and finish the work.

According to the Operative Supervisor on team Ike:

When we are through, I will call the Operations Manager to inform him that we are through and if he wants to send us to go and support other teams. He will make that known, and we comply. After, I call him again to notify him that we are through and if he wants to send us again to another place.

It requires extra effort to achieve the daily goals of the team and assisting the Operations Manager in achieving a good result. Not all teams are willing to do this. Some groups complained about additional tasks given to them after completing their work.

Alignment to the goals of the organization means the goals become a part of the team, indicating double-looped learning among the members of the group, including the team leaders.

Team effort in some teams is not an easy task. The team finds it difficult to achieve their goals where there is disunity between the leader and the members of the group. The below excerpt is from Sweeper's supervisor on team Gary, expressing frustration with the team.

I cooperate with them; sometimes, they are the ones who say I do not conduct myself as a supervisor, and I respond that I see them as my children, friends, or anything you can think of, so I cooperate with them. Even if they talk to me anyhow, I do not see it as anything as long as we achieve our goal of being there.

Team effort in some teams made them extend work outside their boundary. However, in another unit, we see disunity in the group. Other supervisors (Henry and Carl) also commented on the relationship between Gary and her team.

Setting targets each day was employed by some supervisors to meet their daily objectives. When the members of the team are aware of the targets set for them by their supervisor, they can direct their energies to reach their set goals and avoid time and effort wasting activities. According to Eze, the workers are given goals to ensure a quicker and shorter work time. According to the Operative Supervisor on Team Eze,

"I tell them that I work with time so that you can close quickly and go and rest. If I

come out by 7.00 pm, let's say by 9.30 - 10 pm, let the first trip be full so that when they cover the first trip, they can meet up on the second trip... I give them targets because I want them to be fast. From 7 - 9.30 pm, I make sure it's a full trip. That is why I am the first to dump."

This supervisor sets targets for his workers and gives them the reason for the goals. Targets direct the efforts of the team to the tasks the team the supervisor has assigned to the group. This team can make additional trips because they finish on time, hence improving teamwork and aligning to the goals set by the team and invariably the aligning to the organization's goals.

5.2.2 Systems Perspective

There are many ways supervisors communicate with their team members; the words of reassurance from the supervisor also add to achieving teamwork and stirring the team to have a systems perspective. From the data collected, the supervisors have their way of talking to their teams to get the work done. Despite the problems experienced by the team, some supervisors appreciate the good things about the team. According to Sweeper supervisor on team Carl

"The way I talked with them at times will ginger them and encouraged them to do the work more."

During the interview, Carl described his team saying they have the strength to work; Fela explained how he achieved the goals of the group by encouraging the members of the team to go beyond themselves and do more.

Alignment to the company's goals through exemplary leadership is observed in instances where the supervisor assumes a supervisory role and also takes on a role in the team. From a systems perspective, the supervisor works with the team to reach the goals set for the day.

In the excerpt below, Ike explained how the team achieved their daily goals by following the leader. The leader works with the team; he takes up tasks in the team and is involved in the day-to-day work. Ike is a supervisor who also takes on the tasks of an Operative. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Ike

“When we go front, we work, when we reach in front to work on another bit, I jump down, everybody jumps down, and we start work, fast, fast, to meet up the time we close.”

In the next excerpt, the team and the leader do not agree; the leader tries to cope with the rest of the team. According to Sweeper Supervisor on Team Gary,

“To be a leader is not an easy task. Some of them, are hot-tempered, different, different character traits. I have been trying my best to make sure I cope with them and lead them.”

A positive perception of the leader is necessary for the team to follow the supervisor. On the other hand, when the supervisor and team members tolerate each other, alignment to goals will not happen by example but through other means.

Having a systems perspective implies acting promptly on changes, making sure the members of the team receive information quickly about changes to the way of work or their routine. Quickly implementing modifications allows teams to rapidly ally with the policies and procedures of the organization. In the interview, Henry explained that even if the information comes after the close of work, he still contacts the workers to prepare their minds for the next working day. On the other hand, Dave gives an instance where the information comes during working hours, and the team implements the changes at once. According to Sweeper Supervisor on Team Henry,

“And again, the information will come from up, like my operational manager, like information came something like this afternoon, and work has already closed. There is a need for you to pass this information, so I have the attendance [records], and I have their data like their contact.”

Alerting the members of the team about changes to work on time suggests that the team members can prepare themselves for the next day's task, the supervisor will save the time it

will take to pass on the information

In this section, alignment to goals has been described from the findings; this measure of OLC is reflective of the learning in the team. It shows the team's efforts to achieve the goals of the organization through teamwork and a systems perspective.

5.3 Theme 2 - Communication Flow

Alignment to goals is achieved in different ways, as discussed in the previous section; the other capabilities work to support the teams to coordinate their activities with the goal of the organization. One such capability is communication flow. Management structure, practices, and mechanisms contribute to the development of learning capability in the organization. Implementation, feedback, and maintaining these inputs from management requires communication flow.

In discussing the role of the team on the organization's success, the supervisors talked about the reports, feedback from their manager, general operations meetings, team meetings, and the need to clarify the company's purpose among team members.

After coding, different sub-themes emerged under the code communication flow; these are relationships with other teams, orientation, meetings, and training. Communication is not a one size fits all affair; these supervisors had their way of making sure information flowed in their teams and feedback given to the Operations Manager or the management team. These sub-themes will be discussed in the subsections below.

5.3.1 Knowledge Transfer and Integration

Working without orientation is akin to driving a car without learning to drive. There can be disastrous consequences. The sweepers must know how to sweep and, at the same time, avoid

vehicles on the road. They must know how to place their safety cones on the road. They must understand why it is important always to wear their reflectors, gloves, and hardhats. The Operatives must know how the compactor operates and why they must put on safety coveralls, gloves, boots, and caps.

When new workers do not understand the importance of what others are doing, they tend to argue and want to do things their way. Orientation transfers valuable knowledge about the running of the department, the expectations of management, and safety information to the workers.

Workers an orientation is the function of the safety department. However, it is not the duty of only the safety department; the workers need to hear this information until the company's expectation is followed.

The safety department sometimes assigns supervisors to carry out the orientation for new workers. This way, the supervisors also learn and relearn when they teach others. This system passes on the knowledge to the supervisors more efficiently. Every supervisor carries out worker orientation, thereby ensuring the supervisors know the basic expectations of the company and why it is essential. This encourages them to enforce the procedures, and the workers can have consistent orientation from their supervisors and the safety department.

Additionally, consistent orientation is a way that helps new employees quickly understand the culture of the Operations Department and the company's expectations from its employees. Consistent orientation is done repeatedly concerning areas that the workers are not following stipulated safety guidelines. Orientation can occur during individual team meetings, at the weekly general meeting, or for a person and group of persons who need it. Orientation is done by the safety department, the supervisors, and the Operations Manager.

Communicating the safety procedures to the workers in this form makes them ready to respond appropriately when such situations arise. Henry bolsters this point by his observation that he can point out workers who have not been given proper orientation. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

“Consistent orientation, a time came I went to safety. When it is obvious is when we get a new worker, when the person starts misbehaving, I will tell the supervisors who and who did orientation? You can see the difference. So, I will tell safety [the

planters]; you have to come back and talk. That is the only way to tell them to do the things that the company has asked them to do. So, both the supervisors must use any strategies to make it consistent.”

5.3.2 Knowledge Transfer (Personnel Meetings)

The supervisors used team meetings to pass information, to ensure that their teams were different and better than the other teams. Additionally, when information comes from management, the team meeting is a way of quickly disseminating this information. In the team meetings, the supervisor gets instant feedback from the members of the team. The team can rub minds together on the best way to tackle the day's job. In his interview, Fela said he calls for a team meeting as a means of disseminating information that will make his team the best in the organization. According to Sweeper supervisor on team Fela,

“I will go back to my team, call for a meeting, and tell them that I want this group to be the best team among all the teams.”

Henry, talking about how he passed information about corrective actions, he used meetings. These meetings served as means of raising strategic awareness among the team, allowed them to learn from their mistakes, and even when the behavior reoccurred, where it happens, the severity was not as the previous occurrence. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

“Anybody that disobey any instructions, when one or two persons did anything wrong, I will now call a meeting, I will now use the person to site an example. When I am doing that, I am using the person to pass information to others. So, before you know it, such a thing will not happen again. Even if it happens, it will happen in a mild form. One thing about teamwork, if you do not handle it well, because they have agreed, if any mistake is obvious, they can learn, based on the person controlling the purpose.”

From the analysis, team meetings are for different reasons by the supervisors. Fela uses team meetings to encourage the workers in her team. Henry, on the other hand, uses team meetings

to pass corrections and mitigate problematic situations in his team. Here team meetings have been described, and the reasons behind the meetings, which are determined by the supervisors.

Weekly meetings are like team meetings; the difference is that it is for the entire Operations Department. In this meeting, the agenda is that the workers always pray before commencing with the rest of the meeting agenda. They pray for the organization, the department, and they pray concerning the workers.

After the prayer session, the meeting starts; during the meeting, the Operations Manager or a supervisor talks to the staff about the progress of work during the week. The weekly meeting is also an avenue where supervisors talk to the workers in general. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

“Now, when we started doing prayer, having a meeting, anytime I have a little time to give charge, I was rotating my info on mindset. So, what am I trying to achieve, so that I can be able to achieve[meet] the objective given to me by the leadership?”

The weekly meetings created the avenue for management to pass information to the Operations Department. The Operations Manager delivers the talks during the meetings, the safety supervisors, and Henry, the supervisor. Henry explains that he always talked about mindset; this meeting was used to transfer knowledge that will help the workers align with the organization's goals.

Orlu is a planter/safety supervisor who supervises the operatives' group; the respondent reiterates the importance of communication to obtain the necessary information that the company needs to improve teams.

According to Orlu, a planter for the Operative teams,

“Let's look at a particular group that ends their work by 2 am, this group ends their work by 10 in the night, while these people end by 11 am. So if we are to improve this particular group that ends by 11 am. We ask them, what and what do you need to improve in your time, making sure that you meet up these

people that end at 10, ...so what you do is you adopt this progressive factor in order for the company and the work to move forward. "

From the findings, communication flows from management to the field, between teams, from the supervisors to management, and how supervisors interfaced with the public. Also, the findings capture the different ways supervisors passed information to their workers.

Communication to the field is through phone calls to the supervisors. The teams communicate during their meetings, and the feedback came to management in the form of weekly reports. The communication between the supervisors and their manager was one way, most of the time, from the manager to the supervisors. The comments in their weekly reports raised issues that concerned the Maintenance Manager. These issues form the basis of the interaction between the administrative and maintenance departments. Most of the time, these were issues with the shortage of the truck. A system where their manager receives feedback on the frustration and stress faced by some operative teams due to a shortage of trucks, the manager would have put more effort into repairing the trucks. Company X needs to improve communication flow; this will enhance the team results.

Communication with the public, for some of the sweepers, was not a very cordial relationship. The supervisors are the interface between the public and the organization. The supervisors and workers meet members of the public every day, residing or working in communities situated in our zones. The sweepers have to clear the road in front of shops or areas where cabs park to pick passengers or where cars can park. If a car is parked where the sweepers are supposed to work, it is difficult to clear that area. Also, if the driver comes later to collect the car, that area will look untidy. The interface between the sweepers and these sets of people is a problem; if the supervisor does not handle the issue with tact.

The organization and the teams, through the feedback mechanisms, receive information from the field, which influences and adapts the ideas for enhancement. The information from the field also improves the systems and mitigates any problems arising from the system.

Continuous development is the advantage that comes from implementing and sustaining OLC; it ensures newness and fresh ideas between the management to the field. It ensures that the experiences faced by the teams are opportunities to learn.

The design of the company's work can make it possible to have workers that do not know themselves. The zones are in different places, and workers can come to work every day without any interaction.

An event can happen to one team if the entire body of the Operations Department does not hear about it and learn from it; unfortunate incidences will keep repeating themselves. The way to ensure that this does not happen is to set time every week for all teams to come together.

One of the instances from the safety department contained an incident that occurred in one of the teams. A worker wanted to start much earlier than others did, and she was attacked while working alone in the early hours of the morning. The attack was a regrettable incident, but if it was not discussed and solutions were not offered to prevent the reoccurrence of such incidences, it could happen again.

From this incident, management enforced the resumption time, but at the weekly meeting, the workers decided to go to work with partners. That way, they will look out for each other. The weekly meeting gives the opportunity to communicate safety tips, talk about improving work processes, and exchange ideas.

During the weekly meetings, there are presented the opportunity for teams to meet and share ideas. Supervisors talk to their peers, ideas and experiences are exchanged amongst supervisors and workers. The weekly meetings are an informal way to exchange tacit knowledge among the workers and the teams. Best practices are transferred between workers. Fela explained how he became familiar with the other supervisors and workers. He knew supervisors who were open to share information and take correction and those who were not. Since the workers carry out their duties in different zones, this is the perfect opportunity to have relations and learn from and with other teams. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

“We just thank God for that prayer [meeting] we started doing, a kind of... it served as a very big formidable force uniting the whole group. And again, the bus, the bus was another avenue of unity. That was another advantage Company X had over other companies. That bus, in terms of communication, though inside one bus we have 2 to 3 different groups, all of them come together so if DAVE is the one there, CARL if she wants to pass information, she will pass it generally. She wants to punish; she does it

there.”

“Whether you are in HENRY's group, whether you are in CARL's group, you are on that bus. So that bus was fostering unity despite your group. When you enter that bus, you are Company X.”

The bus and the weekly meetings were avenues where the teams could relate to themselves. Henry suggests that unity increased among teams who rode together on the same bus during the bus ride to work. Also, the weekly meetings allowed all groups to have a forum where information could be exchanged.

Knowledge transfer and integration between groups improve alignment with the goals of the organization. Lessons learned are efficiently discussed at these times. Inter-team relations bring improvement and bring team experiences together.

The supervisors also used the weekly reports to give feedback to management about problems encountered during the week, comments, and recommendations. The weekly reports are submitted once a week to the management. However, some supervisors did not send in any written reports. In addition to the suggestion boxes, these are systems put in place to bring the problems of the field closer to management. The weekly reports gave the supervisors an avenue to vent their feelings and frustrations; it gave me an understanding of the frustrations the teams experienced due to the breakdown of trucks, shortage of workforce. It also gave more understanding of the challenges faced by the teams. These reports corroborated the oral accounts of the supervisors. For instance, Carl's comment below was also captured in the report sent by the supervisor. The other procedures targeted by the company to communicate with the workers disseminated information to the workers. The weekly reports, on the other hand, brought information from operations straight to management. This practice prepared the climate for double-loop learning because the supervisors were encouraged to speak out and air their views without fear of repercussions. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Carl,

“If you look into my report every time, I will report that management should ask the workers why they will drop from work without taking permission. That is the only problem I get with them.”

Communication flow entails effective knowledge transfer and integration, strategic awareness, and steers the teams towards achieving the mission of the organization. For communication to be effective, it should break team barriers and deliver feedback on management's practices, structures, and other initiatives. From the data analysis, communication flow in the teams is seen in relations between groups, orientating workers, meetings, and reports. In the next subsection, the findings on management commitment are discussed.

5.3.3 Dialogue

Ken describes his frustration with some team members who deviate from his instructions. These misunderstandings create an atmosphere that can affect the work environment. Such misunderstanding that Ken describes is not common in all teams; this is one difference in his team, which has the potential to limit the team's achievement of their daily objective.

According to Operative Supervisor on Team Ken,

“Sometimes when you give instructions, they will like to do it their way... before the week runs out, we normally have some kind of misunderstanding. “Why do you do this? Why do you do that?” but when you tell him to do this, he will want to do it his way. “

According to Sweeper Supervisor on Team Fela

“The issue I have with them is like this when I want them to do the work the way I want, some of them will be doing it the way they want. So, we will have a little argument there. I say this is what I want; you do not tell me what you want. So, what I want for me, that is what the company wants.”

Some supervisors are not open to suggestions from the members of their teams and do not encourage dialogue. Where Ken or Fela was to dialogue with his team members, there can be more understanding of different ways to achieve the results for the team.

This is also reflective of the leadership style of the supervisor. A bossy attitude will create a hostile climate. Ken, Bill, and Fela, were promoted from among the Operatives or the Sweepers to supervise teams.

Absenteeism is a problem faced by all teams in the Operations Department. Absenteeism slows down the pace of work. When workers take permission, the supervisor and the team are prepared. However, when the workers absent themselves without notice, the team is not prepared, and they must make quick contingency plans. Absenteeism affects the team's ability to meet their daily objectives when the staff does not ask for permission; it suggests flaws in the communication flow and alignment to the organization's objectives. This is a challenge faced by the teams that make it difficult to exhibit the advantages created by enhanced OLC in the teams. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Ken,

“Some of them, when they want to absent themselves since they did not have enough reason, or they didn't even have genuine reason; they decide not to even ask for permission. They will just absent themselves.”

5.4 Theme 3 - Managerial Commitment

It is the responsibility of management at any level to bring solutions to challenges. It is also the supervisor or manager's role to implement those solutions and keep applying practices that will improve the organization. Henry describes the part of management as a standing system. The statement below gives us a glimpse into the synergy that management tried to create to continuously improve and, as a result, enhance learning within the teams and the company. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

“Because of the leadership, we had a standing system, from every angle, both salary, payroll, we had a working system, everything the leadership brings. There was even a reforming, trying to remold, trying to reform things before you know it, we change the database before you know it we want to know this.”

The statement by Henry captures the perception of the supervisor and team members regarding the implementation of the OLC from management. He confirms the implementation of directives from management and reiterates interest in the enhancement of the system.

Henry

"The moment you say this is what the manager said, everybody is doing it. Because it was good to enforce. In fact... I saw a strong system that has a working..., I mean a working system."

The workers must see the commitment to enhancing learning acquisition, creation, and transfer. Management should be aware of what happens in the field. With this knowledge, there follows the improvement of these processes and the effective transfer of this knowledge to the field. When everyone is involved in this process, it entails good feedback and an information system that touches the fabric of the organization.

The reaction to the enhanced learning capabilities has to be implemented for OLC to be useful in the organization. The approach the supervisor takes to implement improvements coming from management is also as important as the role of the top management. Suppose the supervisor chooses not to implement the structures, practices, and routines, coming from management. In that case, this will put the efforts of OLC in peril. Additionally, the supervisors must accept that the practices that enhance OLC by management are vital in establishing, enhancing, and improving the team's performance.

The provision of working materials and equipment for the teams to work is the fundamental role of the top management. From the analysis of the reports and the data collected from the supervisors, a shortage of trucks was a source of concern and stress to all supervisors.

Bill

We are encountering a very big challenge for trucks because the two new trucks are down, and it is causing a lot of pressure and stress.

Eze

Challenges on truck and we need a solution

John

We thank the management for providing all our needs, and we pray to God to give them more power to put all the trucks in order so that the job will go forward.

These are excerpts from the supervisor concerning the effect of trucks on completing their jobs. Through the reports, the management received feedback from the supervisors. The unavailability of trucks started a series of events, causing the Administrative Manager to overstep work boundaries to assist, firstly, through leasing trucks, then inviting external mechanics to assess the trucks, and fixing some of them. These actions caused a massive problem for the Maintenance Manager. After some time, the external mechanics were prevented from gaining access to the base. The upside from this was that the maintenance department became more aware of the urgency to provide trucks on time.

The management of the company created avenues for learning to take place within the teams by creating rules, renewing procedures and practices. One instance is the weekly meetings for the operations staff. From the nature of work, there is no opportunity for the operations staff from different teams to meet and share ideas. The operations meetings brought all operations staff together, enabled them to share ideas, and addressed staff challenges. It made it easier for the team to learn about the organization's stance on many issues. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

“So that was what we all would be struggling every day. Even with that system from leadership, they've given us the rules, what we must do, so you know.”

Management support enabled the system to work. It provided avenues for the supervisors to achieve their targets; it also allowed the teams to know the goals of the company and how they can meet them through their daily tasks. Where a practice is not working, the management kept improving the system. The meetings were useful avenues to transfer learning across the teams faster. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

“So that the system that the management or the leadership has given to me can work. So, there was a working system that made every supervisor, every worker to work in order to achieve that objective. So, we had a working system from the leadership.

When this plan A did not work again, by next year, you have a meeting, you see plan

B, and this thing has been working. So, it was a working system, the people managing it, even the manager will tell you, "me being here, I have learned a lot of things."

The Operations Department had weekly meetings, where they will pray, talk about issues that need clarification, and the supervisors will address areas where the workers need improvement. Many times, Henry spoke during the meetings, and he will get his input from other supervisors in areas where they wanted the workers to improve. Management also used this medium to correct specific behaviors and misconceptions. Hence his statement was referring to the achievement of objectives from management. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

"So, it was like even, anytime I have a little time to give charge, I was rotating my info on mindset. So, what I am I trying to achieve so that I can be able to achieve the objective given to me by the leadership. So, I think even my workers, I had some leaders; I have team leaders."

Training the supervisors is another method management used to pass on information, skills, and work culture to the team leaders and the employees. Henry mentioned that the training gave him the opportunity to change his mindset and the mind of the workers concerning areas where they refused to change. According to Sweeper Supervisor on team Henry,

"When we came for the training on communication, when we finished it when we will be talking, kind of interacting, we were just using our experience. So, when I went back, I said to myself, 'I need to change things.'"

From the analysis of interviews and reports, a management role in supporting learning in Company X comes from a commitment to improving learning in the organization, creating a culture for learning, and training programs for the supervisors and their teams.

Meetings and weekly reports gave the organization the opportunities to provide feedback and address issues affecting work. Through the meetings and the weekly reports, the teams could make decisions to address these issues. The management of Company X gave the supervisors the enabling environment to increase learning and to attempt to solve problems facing the teams.

5.5 Theme 4 - Openness to Risk

The fourth research objective is focused on the exhibition of openness to risk in Company X. In the previous sections, there has been an in-depth exploration of the teams' display of communication flow, management commitment, and alignment to the company's goals.

From analyzing the data, areas where the supervisors displayed an openness to risk, were coded, and themes emerged that highlighted the different ways the supervisors approached the risks in their various teams. The themes include how experimentation and a climate of openness.

The reasons that will be investigated in more detail are the team leader and his/her leadership style, events that the team experience, the work conditions, the attitude of one or more team members, and the challenges the team faces.

The team leader deals with accessing materials when needed, working amidst human resource problems resulting in short staff, truck breakdowns, keeping a good working relationship with the truck drivers, meeting management expectations, and, at the same time, managing the members of the team.

The organization faces a myriad of problems daily, a look at the difficulties reveals issues with the members of the team, the leadership of the group, equipment, and the stakeholders. The system for reporting the difficulties was not robust enough to proffer solutions for these problems. The work conditions could not get more comfortable; the machinery was, on a large part, affected by the work conditions. The system for reporting problems and complaints was the weekly reports; there is a big difference between what is reported in the interviews and the written reports (in terms of the function. The weekly reports gave opportunities to treat issues affecting the field and to receive feedback from the field. (the interviews provided the opinions of the supervisors concerning questions asked)

During the interviews, the supervisors were asked to talk about their perception of the role of their teams in the organization's success. Excerpts show that the perception of the role the

teams play in the organization is based on the team's combined efforts, the team members' attitude to work, and communication in the team and between the supervisor and their manager.

The team's success is based on the teams' view of the importance of the job to the organization; the teams ascribe importance to some areas of work more than others. The factors that cause this range from the availability of trucks in that area, the volume of work, amount of appreciation from residents in that area of work. There was much dissatisfaction expressed when teams were moved temporarily to high-volume areas.

5.5.1 Experimentation

Every victory comes from battles fought and won; the problems solved in the teams give them the experience to overcome more significant hurdles. Below are instances from the data of problems faced by sweepers and Operatives. According to Sweeper supervisor on Team Henry,

“... and if you are doing work for somebody that is not around, you do not do it later, you do it first, before going to your own. So that before the manager will pass that place, it's already clean... In addition, he won't say anything because the place is already neat. I was thinking upfront, so it was really helping me, ... and anytime it will not work according to my plan, I will be so concerned.”

According to the Operative supervisor on Team Ken

“There was this incidence of a boy who threw his refuse on the road despite being told to put it in the truck since it was parked at the site, an operator, M slapped him before I realized it and he went home and called his older siblings. It created a big scene, but I managed to calm down the situation though it wasted our time.”

The operational goal of the company is to finish work on time, every day, as stipulated by the “Client.” Failure to do this will attract a penalty from our “Client.” This mission of the company is to excel in service by meeting the needs of the clients. To do this effectively, the daily tasks must be completed satisfactorily and on time. For the teams to achieve the goal

and the mission of the organization, they must overcome numerous challenges; these challenges vary from day to day and from one team to the other.

Some supervisors go early and position their trucks along with strategic areas in their zones so that the public can dispose of refuse straight to the trucks; this saves much time, and the trucks can make three trips to the dumpsite with this method. This method only applies to supervisors who have a good working relationship with the truck drivers because the drivers will have to resume an hour or two before the rest of the team.

The teams face many challenges; some of the challenges were a result of the team characteristics, such as the leader, the team climate, problematic interpersonal relationships, etc. Ken was much younger than the workers on his team; Bill was promoted to be a supervisor over his teammates. Fela was brought in from Henry's team to supervise a new team. According to Sweeper supervisor on Team Fela,

“The problem I faced was when I was appointed to work, that is to take over GARY, so I was asked to supervise so the supervisor could go on her maternity leave. Therefore, my co-workers thought I was made a supervisor then. But the Ops told them that they would be paying me the same amount they are paying you people, which is what really happened. But they really attacked me. They attacked me very, very well; they abused me; they insulted me, not even only my group.”

Carl is much older than his workers are; Carl was a supervisor in the previous company he worked for before coming to work in Company X, so he has more experience than other supervisors. Respect is fundamental to Carl. He has reported staff to the organization for lack of respect, and he demanded respect. The same OLC measures apply to all teams, but the teams are different in terms of how they approach challenges within the team and how it shows experimentation.

All the teams face some sort of pressure; there are relationships between pressure and breakdown of trucks, shortage of workers, leadership style, and working conditions and meeting the daily tasks before the deadline. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Bill,

“The challenges we encountered are numerous, but the major challenges we have are trucks, which had brought [the team] stress and pressure.”

Other challenges faced by the teams have to do with absenteeism, the work terrain, failure to communicate, complaints from within and outside of the teams, work conditions, lack of respect for the team leader, and other problems such as gossip, tardiness, distractions.

From the findings, the shortage of manpower causes differences in teams; the reasons for the manpower shortage differs according to the team. In the reports, there were 33 complaints of staff shortages from these supervisors Carl, Fela, Gary, Henry, and Ladi. The shortage of workers is different from absenteeism because, in this instance, the workers stopped or were asked to stop, and the replacement for those positions is yet to be filled by the human resource department. According to Sweeper Supervisor on Team Carl,

“When I use 22 [workers] to cover 32 [portions], they will say 'ma this is too much, ask the manager to employ' I will say no worry, manager employ [in] January, when January reach they will ask, ma it is January now, ask manager, I'll say 'June, madam says June', they'll say ok till now.”

If a new supervisor is brought into a new team, it takes time for the team members to accept the new supervisor. In Fela's case; she was a sweeper from Henry's team sent to lead Gary's team the period Gary had to go for her maternity leave.

When the supervisor of Team Gary went on maternity leave, a sweeper, Fela from Henry's Team, was brought in to lead the team. Henry had several times recommended Fela for excellent performance in his team through the weekly reports and at supervisors' meetings. When a vacancy arose, Fela was asked to cover for Gary.

The forming of a new team with a sweeper from another team started the development of a new team. The stages of team development are forming, storming, norming, and performing. The phase of storming was characterized by mistrust, insubordination, anger, people left the team and hence the organization. In 3 months, attendance dropped, the size of the team dropped from 37 to 25; this excludes the people that were replaced.

After the maternity leave, Fela was given her team to handle, the road (portions) was readjusted, and Rumuokuta to Road C was carved out because we moved some sweepers to the Road O area as a result of the road completion. Road O was part of our zone, but when road construction was ongoing, we were not sweeping the road, we were only evacuating.

The new team comprised some sweepers from Henry and some sweepers from Gary's team and new sweepers. For the supervisor it was the same process; only this time, she moved to lead a team. She was already a supervisor. However, her team dropped from 36 to 22. 13 stopped work. According to Sweeper Supervisor on Team Fela,

“The problem I faced was when I was appointed to work, that is to take over GARY, and so I was asked to supervise so the supervisor could go on her maternity leave. Therefore, my co-workers thought I was made a supervisor then. But the Ops told them that they would be paying me the same amount they are paying you people, which of course that is what really happened. But they really attacked me. they attacked me very, very well; they abused me, they insulted me, not even only my group.”

For Bill's team, this was different; he noticed that new workers in his team copy the behaviors of the other teammates, but where the worker came from another team, there was friction. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Bill,

“you find out that if a new person is coming to join the team, one or two weeks the person will imitate as if you go to Rome, you join as the Romans, after observing them you want to behave like them. I have been trying to work on them.”

“yes we face problems from other teams, like when there is no truck when some other persons come into the group, you know there will be this, kind of sentimental something, 'this is how you will do in our group,' 'we don't behave like that here' and all that.”

There is a problem with the trucks, the company even leased more trucks, but the rate of truck breakdown is high due to many factors. The breakdown of trucks affects the Operations Department because it affects the number of trucks available to work.

The local governments around our area of operations use two and sometimes three dumpsites. These dumpsites are not enough for the number of zones in the state. The queues at the dumpsite are usually long and characterized by many companies waiting to dump refuse. The wait to dump takes hours. The shortage and the frequent breakdown of trucks are related to

the pressure faced by the team. Teams face different pressures, and so differences will exist in teams. In this instance, the teams on the major highways are given preference when there is a shortage of trucks, causing the other teams to delay starting work and completing their tasks. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Bill,

“The challenges we encountered are numerous, but major challenges we have are trucks, which had brought stress and pressure, an increase of refuse in our receptacle.”

Openness and experimentation build the ability of the teams to align with the organizations' goals. Experimentation occurs by making decisions regularly, problem-solving, and operational flexibility. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Ike,

“When we are through, I will call the Operations Manager to inform him that we are through and if he wants to send us to go and support other teams. He will make that known, and we comply, after which I call him again to notify him that we are through and if he wants to send us again to another place.”

Another exhibition of openness to risk in the teams is through their actions to deal with this problem. Some teams have contingency plans to deal with absenteeism since it is a regular occurrence in the department. Where the team members accept the plans, the effect of absenteeism is less on the team's ability to meet their objectives. Especially among the sweeper groups and a few Operative teams, the workers cover up for each other, and sometimes some teams cover for other teams. They have agreed among themselves on a fine for defaulting workers. The proceeds from the fine go to the people that completed the spaces, and the presence of a penalty reduced absenteeism among the sweeper groups. The workers and their supervisors reached this decision.

5.5.2 Climate of Openness

To enhance learning capability, teams need the right climate, which is largely determined by the team leader and the nature of the team. Team leaders are different, and so are their

engagement with their teams. This is related to the leader's ability to take risks and solve problems. Openness to risk differs from the leader. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Ken,

“I cannot take action by myself; I cannot make a decision on my own, I must, first of all, consult the manager.”

According to Operative Supervisor on Team John,

“Not everything, you extend to the management. There is that we can handle too.”

According to Operative Supervisor on Team Ike,

“If anyone makes too much trouble, I will call the Ops Manager telling him that such worker was giving troubles.”

From the quotes above, the supervisors talk about how they handle challenges in the team. There are different ways the supervisors handle stressful situations within the team. In John's team, the supervisor naturally assumed the leadership tasks. In Ken's team, decisions the supervisor called on the Operations Manager to make decisions for him. In Ike's team, when the challenge is more than he can handle, he reports the worker to the Operations Manager.

Every supervisor is the manager of their teams. They make decisions for their teams, and this decentralized structure ensures that decisions are made faster. Where the team leader cannot handle the situation, then it is escalated. This also shows the leader's propensity to risk. Some like Fela did not escalate but handled issues in his team. Other team leaders left decisions in their teams to be carried out by the Operations Manager.

Where the teams could make decisions, they learn faster, minimize reprisals from their managers, and the employees learn from their mistakes. It improves the experience of the supervisor, and the teams can improve themselves. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Fela,

“Human beings are very, very critical, and dangerous to handle; you need the wisdom to follow them up. You know when to do the right thing. You cannot carry the right thing and go and do it at the wrong time. You cause more problems for the boys and yourself. In your area, you use yourself as an example, when, what do I do that is

not good to me? Because as at that moment you will not know it is not good, it is after doing it; you go back to yourself ... you monitor them, you watch them, you watch how they act towards it and how they reflect towards it, then you can get a better result.”

From my interviews, I discovered that not all the team members imbibed the company's procedures or showed teamwork. In Henry's Team, the supervisor said he posted 'problem workers' to areas where their work might not be noticed.

Even when the team members involved display an unwillingness to work, the supervisor displays an understanding of the company and takes necessary actions to protect the organization. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Henry,

“When they assign me a particular portion, I select where I keep problem workers, so even if they do not come to work and I cannot cover it, it will not show. So, if you check all of them, I take them down to the road to the airport, down, down, where cars are not flowing.”

According to Operative Supervisor on Team Pete,

“I play a lot with them and shout when it becomes necessary and which draws comments from them such as, “he does not shout, now that he is, let us work,” and they go-ahead to do the task. Again, when they call me late to request to be absent, I bear it, and sometimes, it gains me suspension from the Operations Manager. I will still go to that worker's home to confirm that the request was genuine. I do it cheerfully despite the cut from my salary.”

In the analyses, the themes that emerged showed the role of the supervisors in the team's ability to learn. The supervisor influences how the team communicates, the team's approach to risk, the feedback to management. The type of leader in the team affects the nature of the team. For example, according to Bill:

we have learned that it is good to work in unity, I have learned how to interact with them give them a listening ear, and get their suggestions.

The relationship between the leader and the rest of the team improves communication and unity in the team. An environment of trust is also needed to solve problems as a team.

Dave

I have learned to be patient, just try and be patient with them. This is my first working experience. I have learned how to leave the house early, to communicate with people

Ladi

I learned to encourage them and to make them understand work very well. I make them work together as a team.

The excerpts show three supervisors and the climate they set for their teams, Bill wants to work in unity, Dave is patient, and Ladi encourages the team members to work as a team. The teams are trying to reach one goal. However, the supervisors have a considerable part in creating an environment in the team, which is conducive to learning.

The teams are different; this difference allows the supervisors to employ the OLC to improve the team. The nature of the team includes the challenges faced by the team, the type of team members, the experiences encountered by the team, the relationship between the team leader and the rest of the team, and the supervisor's ability to lead in the team.

According to the Operative Supervisor on Team Orlu,

“The way the supervisors handle them, their attitude towards the work, their approach also towards the workers, because some supervisors like using harsh voice, and while the workers they do not like it. However, this other way, this other worker needs a harsh voice while the supervisor is very, very calm.”

According to Operative Supervisor on Team Henry,

“I now became a counselor to my workers. So, when they have problems, they will come to me.”

According to Operative Supervisor on Team Gary,

“Sometimes they will talk to me as if I'm not their supervisor ... I will be telling them the way you people act is not good.”

According to the Operative Supervisor on Team Fela,

“When I want them to do the work the way I want, some of them will be doing it the way they want.”

According to the Operative Supervisor on Team Eze,

“At the site, when shovel work becomes hard for them, I will pick up the shovel and make sure I work.”

According to the Operative Supervisor on Team Dave,

"Sometimes you go, "you are doing well, you are trying, but you have to put in your best," it is not every time you shout.

The teams faced different working conditions, which made them different in their reaction to work and the acceptance of practices from management. These conditions put extra pressure on the team, and these were not issues that the management of the company could respond to with the alacrity the teams demanded.

One of such problems was the frequent truck breakdown, where the maintenance department imports the part of the truck from outside the country, the time to repair these trucks will take a long time. Moreover, the other backup trucks will have additional pressure, which will mean frequent breakdown.

A recurrent factor in all the teams was absenteeism. Being absent with or without permission puts pressure on the team members available to work. Although the workers worked around this to meet their objectives, absenteeism remains a significant problem in all teams.

According to Operative Supervisor on Team Bill,

“The trucks, the pressure on the team, and the increase of refuse daily... The challenge of safety, worn-out materials, and we are still expecting more materials, absenteeism of Operatives, this is due to the process of trucks. If the trucks are available, most times, you have some workers that will come to work. Another cause of absenteeism is too much trekking on that road.”

Financial incentives remain a motivating factor in organizations. The researcher discovered that some supervisors offer financial incentives to their team members before getting them to put in the extra effort. The ends will justify the means, that is why research is relevant because it gives light to the actions employed by the team leaders in the organization. In Eze's interview, he described how he was able to make his team go for three trips. The standard requirement is to go on two trips. Sometimes two trips are not enough, but at the time they complete two trips, the Operatives will be tired, and they know that the primary requirement the company needs is for them to go on two trips. To motivate them to continue working, he offers money as an incentive, and this works.

Carl, on the other hand, buys snacks and refreshments for the members of the team. The supervisor described instances when one person was too tired or ill. She uses the offer of meals and refreshments to convince other members of the group to conclude the portion of the person that cannot do the work. According to Operative Supervisor on Team Eze

“They call me, 'supervisor, are we going for the second trip?' Sometimes, as we reach there the second time, I just pay 1,500, just buy them something to eat, 'we have to go back for the third trip.' Let us complete the three trips; they will say ok.”

According to Sweeper Supervisor on Team Carl

“Yes, talking to each other is really good, it helps a lot, most times some of them will come and say, 'super, I'm not well, help me please,' me as a supervisor, I will now look for people I know that if I call they will just respond to me immediately. I will go to those people and pick them, so when some of them will be saying, 'ah supa, I will not do,' on my own, I use to use my money, I will buy them biscuits or mineral, to make sure they cover that place for me. So, when they express themselves to me, I use to give and help them. I am not giving them because I want something in return, no. I am giving them because I want them to do the job for me so that the job will be okay.”

These two instances of financial incentives are the same. The supervisor is not paying the workers extra to do their jobs, but buying them lunch or giving them money for lunch shows the supervisor understands the team and shows empathy by going out of his way to ensure the workers are strong enough to meet their targets.

5.6 Summary

This chapter presented the analysis of data from the data collection cycles. The findings are displayed in themes and subthemes from the research objectives. By seeking to answer the research objectives, this section provides a better understanding of OLC in teams.

This chapter explored how teams exhibit the four measures of OLC presented in the literature review. This chapter presented how teams displayed the following: alignment to goals, communication flow, management support, and openness to risk. The next chapter discusses these findings and understanding learning capabilities in teams.

Chapter 6. Discussion of Findings

6.1 Introduction

To gain insight into the development of learning capability in the organization, it is necessary to understand the factors that affect the development of OLC in the organization (Antonacopoulou & Chiva, 2007). This qualitative study seeks to fill this gap by showing an in-depth perspective on the factors that support or hinder the implementation and sustenance of OLC in teams. This study shows how these factors interact and work together to enhance OLC in the organization.

The Discussion chapter will discuss the result of implementing the findings from this research in Company X and how OLC improves the organization's achievements in dealing with customers, teamwork, and the organization's attempt to expand its operations. The discussion chapter also presents the study implications, the implementation, and the recommendations.

This chapter discusses the findings from the data collection and analysis. It looks at the conditions that exhibit OLC, as discussed in the literature review and the exhibition of OLC by the teams.

6.2 Alignment to Goals

DiBella, Nevis & Gould (1996) argue that OLC is not a new idea in the organization, and learning is not a new phenomenon in the organization. Every organization learns, but the improvement and the enhancement of the capability to learn can affect the extent to which learning takes place. An understanding of the organization will reveal the workings of the organization and how learning takes place within that organization.

Previous research on organizational learning and OLC has been carried out in organizations where staff are highly educated, such as knowledge workers, in technologically advanced

environments. This research was carried out with unskilled workers; the research findings showed that the ability to learn is present in the teams even though they are not knowledge workers; thus, the literature applies to both knowledge and unskilled workers. Hence, we see that learning is a natural phenomenon in organizations, DiBella, Nevis & Gould (1996).

Alignment to goals entails the teams having a systems perspective; this shows the team understands the organization's objective and contributes to its achievement. Alignment to goals is an essential measure of OLC. According to (Goh and Richards, 1997), "Systems perspective entails bringing the organization's members together around a common identity." The findings show the teams shared the common goal of Company X to finish work on time; there was the presence of the systems perspective. The supervisors set targets for the day's work in line with the organization's purpose.

The findings reveal that all other capabilities work together to support the teams' alignment with the purpose of the organization. According to Jerez-Gomez et al. (2005, pg. 717), "Viewing the firm as a system implicitly involves recognizing the importance of relationships based on the exchange of information and services." The findings suggest that alignment with the goals of the organization is at the center of OLC (DiBella and Nevis, 1998). The other determinants of OLC are geared towards achieving a better alignment to the organization's purpose; they pivot at achieving a systems perspective among the various teams or departments in the organization.

The alignment of the team to the objective and goal of the organization is an indication of the success of the learning capability of the company. Alignment implies that the team understands the bigger picture. The team utilizes the procedures and structures put in place to implement learning, and the team uses these structures to achieve the needed results. A closer look at alignment in the teams shows the different ways the teams display alignment.

The finding shows how the teams aligned with the organization's goals; the teams showed this alignment in several ways. OLC carries the ideas, procedures, processes the organization seeks to implement to improve the organization to the rest of the units in the organization. From the analysis of the data collected in the interviews, the researcher discovered different ways through which the teams aligned to the organization's goals.

In aligning to the organization's goals, the teams show they possess a system perspective to work. In their unique ways, through an effort from team members, group problem solving,

operational flexibility, covering-up, division of labor, encouragement, leading by example, prompt implementation, regular training, reminding the team of the organization's objectives, and setting targets daily. All teams displayed a strong alignment with the objective of the company.

The implication is that understanding how alignment occurs in the organization is key to improving it. In Coy X, the teams aligned to the organization's goals through different ways introduced by the teams.

The organization's articulated purpose is instrumental in achieving alignment (Goh and Richards, 1997). This finding is important because it shows that to improve the organization's alignment, the organization must articulate its purpose and ensure that it is understood throughout all levels of the organization (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005). This subsection has given more insight into how the teams align with the goals of the organization and how the other capabilities support the systems' perspective. Next is the discussion about communication flow in the teams, the organizations, and how the teams use feedback as an instrument for continuous improvement.

6.3 Communication flow

Communication flow ensures accountability from all teams, departments, and leaders in the organization. It is essential to finish work at the prescribed time; the ability of the supervisor to coordinate the team to finish on time is crucial to the perception of the organization to the public and the agency.

The literature search describes communication flow as knowledge transfer and integration, strategic awareness, interaction with the external environment, early customer involvement and envisioning (Limpibunterng and Johri, 2009, Chiva et al., 2007, Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Goh and Richards, 1997, Nevis et al., 1995).

Communication flow can occur through oral or written communication, subject to the structure put in place by the organization (DiBella and Nevis, 1998). In Company X,

communication flow occurred through oral and written communication in the form of orientation, meetings, and reports. With the right structures, communication that aligns the organization to its goals can be achieved. The importance of communication flow is its advantage in decision-making, the improvement of the organization's existing structures, awareness of feedback from customers, and organization members.

Communication flow allows teams to align with the organization's goal (Goh and Richards, 1997) by ensuring teams are provided with information on the opportunities and challenges of the department or the organization.

Communication is a significant part of any organization; it ensures the right information reaches the field of management, and the right information gets to management from the field. Communication is two-way, meaning both sides need to have feedback on the information sent across. According to Goh and Richards (1997, p. 578), "Communication needs to be clear, fast and focused. Information should cross-functional and sub-unit boundaries within the organization." Additionally, the knowledge transferred should be integrated into the organization and evident in its processes.

Communication Flow also entails transferring knowledge from one team to the other. From the findings, transfer of knowledge in the teams is related to other teams, the orientation of new workers, team and departmental meetings, and written reports. Through meetings and reports, knowledge is transferred, and the various staff and departments can utilize this information and make decisions.

Communication is like the oil that lubricates all parts of the organization and keeps it running. The supervisors need to communicate with management and his/her team members for the structures and practices to embed in the organization. According to Chiva et al. (2007, p. 228), "learning is a function of the spontaneous daily interactions between individuals. The chance to meet people from other areas and groups increase learning." Communication flow is an indication of the learning capability the organization has initiated for knowledge to transfer and be integrated into the various areas of the company and the external environment. For instance, the weekly reports give the Administrative Department information about the use of working materials. It gives the management information about the conditions facing the workers in the field. It shows the maintenance manager the frustration that truck breakdown causes for the workers.

The weekly reports provide feedback about the challenges faced by the teams; these reports brought challenges and other comments to the attention of the Administration Department. This report was the tool the Administration Department used to improve the services and support to the field. According to Prieto & Revilla (2006, p. 499), "Firms need to transform and refine their knowledge bases by the environmental conditions, and this is possible through learning processes." The findings show that communication increases the chances of the organization to enhance and improve its learning about opportunities and challenges; this, in turn, should lead to a better understanding of how the organization can improve its learning capability.

Knowledge transfer and integration are linked and need to synchronize through different means such as inter-team relations, how the team communicated with the external environment, integrating newcomers into the teams, timely information, team meetings, training, and reports.

6.4 Management Commitment

Management commitment in the team is an essential factor in the learning capability of the team. It can stifle or enhance learning capability. Management commitment is to support and encourage learning across all teams. Management commitment includes improving and introducing mechanisms that encourage learning, but it does not stop there. It also includes ensuring it gives an adequate and timely response to feedback from the teams.

Management commitment in the review of literature consists of managerial commitment, empowerment, management skills, strategic development practices, creativity, and continuous improvement (Limpibuntern and Johri, 2009, Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005, Goh, 2003, Morgan et al., 1998). Additionally, creating a culture of learning and timely provision of working materials, and reacting to feedback where the sub-themes discovered in the findings. According to Jerez-Gomez et al. (2005, p. 717), "Management should recognize the relevance of learning, thus developing a culture that promotes the acquisition, creation, and transfer of knowledge as fundamental values."

Management, at any level, plays a crucial role in how the organization embraces learning capabilities. The workers must see the commitment to enhancing learning acquisition, creation, and transfer. The role of management is to know what happens in the field, and with this knowledge follow the improvement of these processes and the effective transfer of this knowledge. Everyone is involved in this process; it entails good feedback and an information system that touches the fabric of the organization (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005).

Management at the organization played a role in how the organization embraced learning capabilities as a result of the recommendations of this thesis. This was done by providing training on how the measures of OLC could be enhanced by creating feedback mechanisms and addressing issues raised by the field. This was achieved through the weekly operational meetings where the operational manager and sometimes supervisors gave talks to workers on issues challenging the operations department, such as safety issues, absenteeism, and attitude to work.

Management support shows the drive and the determination of management at all levels to enhance organizational learning. People in management positions decide the direction their direct reports will take. Managers pursue what they desire; their actions indicate this. From the findings, the supervisors went outside the call of their duties to ensure their teams align with the organization's strategy. For instance, one supervisor calls the sweepers in her team early to ensure they prepare early to join the bus; this will ensure an early start to the day's work. Eze's team always finished their assigned task and assisted other teams; the company does not compensate for this extra work. Some supervisors use their resources to provide refreshments for their team members as an encouragement to conclude their assigned tasks. The supervisors take these decisions because they had the backing of the organization's management. The management was interested in their actions. They were able to provide feedback through the weekly reports, calls, and meetings.

Management structure supports the learning capabilities in the teams; the findings show management leaves some decisions to the discretion of the supervisors, such as the choice of a foreman to assist in the team and the delegation of roles within the team. Additionally, management respected some decisions made by the teams. These included decisions on how the team tackled absenteeism and how the teams devised means to complete their daily tasks.

The top management formulated the policies, introduced the ideas, and introduced the

strategy to the rest of the organization. The middle management interpreted the information from the superiors and aligned it to suit their various departments. The supervisors implemented the directives from the managers in their teams. The implementation showed that the supervisors not only understood how to apply these instructions, but they understood why the organization needed their various teams to meet the objectives.

The right environment that creates the opportunity for the enhancement of OLC is the responsibility of management at all levels of the organization. The procedures, practices, policies, the generation of ideas with impact are all created and enforced by the management of the organization at all levels, including the management of the various teams.

Some capabilities are cut across all teams, such as management support, the flow of communication, and the alignment to the goals of the organization. The prevalence of these capabilities is attributable to the structures, practices, and policies the organization has put in place. It is essential to understand the structure the organization has put in place to enhance learning in the teams.

The structures, practices in company X include the following; the organization of the workers in the Operations Department into teams disseminating the goals of the organization to the various departments and the teams, organizing meetings, practices of giving feedback to management through the weekly reports, organizing seminars and training sessions periodically. Structures and systems in the organization need to encourage teamwork and group problem-solving by employees and reduce the dependency on upper management (Goh and Richards, 1997).

Concerning communicating between the different levels of the organization, the decentralized structure allowed the supervisors to decide on their teams. From the findings, management's structures are uniform for all teams, the supervisors, and the organization's workers. The capability that differentiates teams is the team's approach to risk.

Goh and Richards (1997, p. 217) describe learning capability as "The ability of the organization to implement the appropriate management practices, structures and procedures that facilitate and encourage learning." Having mechanisms to enhance learning is not enough. The supervisors must implement them, ensure they are utilized, and improve these systems in line with their task. Finally, this has to be communicated to management for the process to continue. The use and interpretation of these structures differ among the teams;

they oscillate in types of display. They differ in the depth of use by the teams, from scarcely visible at all to fully utilized by the teams.

There are some instances where supervisors ignore the structures put in place by the organization regarding reporting the issues that come up inside the teams and handles the issue differently from what the organization has ascribed. The communication flow with the team does not focus on the expectations of the organization. Instead of reporting the dissatisfaction with the number of people in the team in the reports, the supervisor contains the issue within the team by telling them management has promised what the company never agreed.

The interpretation of the company's mission is the most interesting. The teams enforce salient aspects of the goal that apply to their area of work, showing an understanding of the organization's mission and the interpretation of the mission in the field. For the sweepers, the response from the supervisors was that their mission of the organization is to clean zones. Moreover, the operatives described their mission as to clean zones on time.

One of the critical tenets of OLC is an imbibed understanding of the organization's mission and vision by the teams and reflecting this at work. The display of the organization's statements on the walls of the company might encourage employees to read them. However, there is a suggestion of learning when this shows in actions, and those actions keep improving until the mission becomes accepted by the field.

6.5 Openness to Risk

In an attempt to achieve alignment, the teams face many challenges. These challenges determine the unique experiences of the teams hence the teams' differences. According to (Goh and Richards, 1997, p. 577), "organizational learning does happen, but conditions and managerial practices are needed, and the organization should be appropriately structured and managed for effective learning to occur." Challenges that prevent the teams from working together or achieving their goals hinder the teams from aligning to goals which is discussed in the openness to risk subsection. Examples of these challenges from the findings

misunderstand in teams and absenteeism. Another example is where a new supervisor was sent to head a team. There were quarrels, insubordination, and other issues until the supervisor was transferred to a different team.

Openness to risk is one of the measures of OLC. The team leaders' approach to risks and challenges that the team encounters shows the propensity to learn from the problems or the problems to present a hindrance to the learning capability of the team. From the findings, supervisors in team Henry and Bill showed high openness to risk because they address challenges in their teams themselves. On the other hand, supervisors on team Ike and Ken, handle their challenges by involving their Operations Manager. The members of the team should be able to speak out and present their ideas to the rest of the team. Openness to risks includes openness, experimentation, operational flexibility, dialogue, and personal mastery.

OLC varies across teams. Teams that have a high level of openness to risks look for solutions to challenges by searching for ideas within the team. Where a team has a low openness to risk, every challenge is passed on to the middle, or top management decides on behalf of the team leader, dialogue within the team is not encouraged. On the other hand, teams that attempt to solve problems but do not reach a viable conclusion also pass on the problems to management.

Openness to risk affects the team's response to challenges; if the team improves in this area, it affects the ability of the team to respond to challenges. Response to challenges affects the teams' alignment to its goals. A team with high openness to risk can respond faster to challenges, thereby improving the morale of the team members. On the other hand, teams with low openness to risk will have a slower response to challenges because they wait for management to decide before acting.

Openness to risk also gives a better understanding of the difference in the team's display of learning capabilities. In this section, the insight into OLC in teams continues by looking into the ways the teams respond to or mitigates risks. Approach to risks is dependent on the supervisors' style of leadership and their relationship with their team members. A closer look at how the teams approach risks also gives an idea of how the organization solves problems. From the data gathered, the supervisors employed systems that they deemed fit when it came to managing risks. These included making prompt decisions, talking to their teams,

generating and implementing ideas that will solve problems faced by their teams, speaking to the members of the team involved, and operational flexibility.

Supervisors have the responsibility to handle issues in their teams, they are the team leaders, but in the event the supervisors are unable to respond to the challenges, then it is escalated to the manager.

Openness to risks also encourages double-loop learning; it fosters a climate where the members of a team can communicate freely with the team and with the supervisor. The teams are not the same, in their approach to problems, even in their approach to the day's work. Each team looks at the nature of their work and reason out the best way to handle the day's work that will achieve the best result. The enhanced learning capability regarding practices, policies, ideas from management is meant to improve the organization. However, for double-looped learning to take place, the teams must expand on the organization's capability and improve the system.

While all supervisors decried the problems faced during work, the learning improved because there was a considerable effort to align the teams' daily results with the overall goals of the organization. The supervisors spoke with a sense of pride about the challenges they overcame and were willing to give more information about how they jumped the hurdles.

The implication is that it is essential to articulate the challenges faced by the teams and the effect of the challenges on the teams' objectives. To embrace and overcome these challenges is a step towards keeping the teams aligned and focusing the organization towards having a system perspective. This view is in line with the capability perspective of the learning organization. According to DiBella and Nevis (1998, p. 14), "the capability perspective represents a pluralistic view toward organizational learning. It assumes that there is no one best way for organizations to learn and that learning processes are embedded in an organization's own culture and structure."

The team leader, the nature of the teams, and the work conditions contribute to the challenges that hinder the teams from exhibiting OLC. These are specific to the teams, and they present challenges for the team.

Differences in teams result from the experiences in the teams, the nature of work, and the reaction to challenges and these experiences. The teams' experiences affect their reaction to

challenges and opportunities'. Learning from these strengthens the team to face other challenges and tap into new opportunities. The improvement in the teams' response to challenges is achievable, where the team leader aligns with the goals of the company and represents the management of the company in his/her team. The team leader's willingness to align affects the behavior of the team members.

Every leader needs followers; the team members' willingness to follow their leaders affects the decision and the behavior of the supervisors. Some supervisors expressed frustration over their team, the manner some members of the team addressed them, and it would seem these supervisors no longer had the respect from their team. The team needs to respect and trust the leader, and the leaders need to earn the trust and respect of the team members. Even where there are disagreements in the team, without respect, the leaders will find it difficult to address the internal challenge in the team.

From the analysis of the findings, the newer supervisors passed the risks to their manager, and the older supervisors either looked for solutions to the challenges or attempted to solve them before escalating. The supervisors' approach to problem-solving means that the experience of the team leaders is an advantage. The leader with more experience on the job can proffer more solutions to the challenges faced by other teams.

The size of the teams and the nature of work also affected the difference in the team. The large teams, which are the sweeper teams, had more stories to tell, faced different challenges with the public, the team members, tools, and absenteeism.

The sweeper teams had more workers than the operatives, but absenteeism was more among operatives than sweepers. The sweepers hardly reported absenteeism, but they have more complaints about absenteeism. The difference was that the sweepers worked around the problem to ensure they minimize the consequence of absenteeism. The difference between these teams shows that communication flow is as good as the reports from the team leader. Management has to look for other ways to ascertain what happens in the field, to corroborate the reports from the field.

The sweepers' report on absenteeism is also attributable to supervisors in charge of that department. There was a proactive approach to dealing with absenteeism, more with dialogue than fear. The operatives' planter made reports on the absenteeism challenges in that department. The planter in charge of the sweepers' department, swept these challenges under

the carpet. The sweepers' attendance reports do not reflect the level of absenteeism uncovered in the course of the interviews.

To solve problems, the company needs to know what problems to solve. Adequate communication flow helps management to know what areas to apply more effort. According to Goh & Richards (1997, p. 578), "problems faced by the organization present opportunities for experimentation. The organization's structure and systems need to support this practice." Company X requires systems in place that capture these problems; this presents management and the team with opportunities for improvement through experimentation.

6.6 Study Implications

The organization is not a static environment, the journey to where we are now has unfolded gradually, and this scholar-practitioner expects more changes to come in the future as procedures and practices change to improve the system and meet customer demands.

This thesis happened at a time the organization was planning to expand, to look for other avenues of income. For years Company X had just one client, which posed many challenges. We had started with plans to expand the company to include a plastic manufacturing section. This move was to minimize the exposure if our one customer decided to pull out. Moreover, when our major customer did pull out, our contract was terminated without notice. This turn of events plunged the company into uncertain times. We were installing new equipment and battling to keep the company alive.

The company had to release over 200 workers in one day. Only the supervisors in the operations department, the maintenance department, and the key staff in the administrative department were unaffected. We turned to lease these trucks, and the supervisors worked with the trucks whenever we had a job to do. As time went by, the supervisors were retained on a contract basis. This was the time the second interview for the operative and sweeper supervisors was conducted.

Due to the turn of events, the results of this thesis were implemented when the participants were no longer working for the company. Only the administrative staff were still in the company. We have new workers who do not know and sometimes do not appreciate where we are coming from, and they do not understand our stories. Our staff strength went to 11. Operations changed from rendering service to manufacturing products. A new operations manager was employed, and income drastically reduced by almost 70%.

Solving one problem brings other challenges that had been previously hidden from plain view. To solve or mitigate these challenges, one has first to understand them deeply. There is a need to understand how solutions can be implemented and the route to implementing solutions that cannot be taken. There is a need to understand what other problems the solution will reveal. What problems will the implementors encounter? How will they provide solutions to issues that will arise from implementing these solutions?

Organizations are two-sided: the external side that the public sees and the internal one that is chaotic and full of uncertainties that the insiders experience. Organizations cannot exist without challenges, but management can provide respite from these challenges by solving some and adapting to others. However, management has to understand these challenges to take the right action.

That is where OLC comes in. Company X has introduced a lot of processes, procedures, and structures over time. These procedures to enhance learning are relevant, but more important is the follow up to understand why the expected results are not achieved, to understand the experiences of the workers. This will enable the organization to refine these routines, practices, and procedures to achieve the desired result in the middle of organizational storms.

This in-depth view adds to research on OLC because it brings insight into how organizational learning manifests at the team level of the organization. It adds to the existing knowledge on the subject by highlight other issues that can influence the ability of the team to learn, either positively or negatively. This in-depth study into OLC in Company X will provide avenues for further insight into academic research, to the link between learning and the response by teams and the organization.

The work environment is dynamic, and the organization prepares for changes that occur. A robust system is better prepared in the face of challenges when Company X lost her major customer; the supervisors immediately produced an idea to tap into opportunities that kept the company in the business, which was to find clients who needed our services. The influx of ideas that improve the system is one of the advantages of OLC; it increases innovation, performance of the organization, and it helps the organization adapt quickly to unforeseen circumstances.

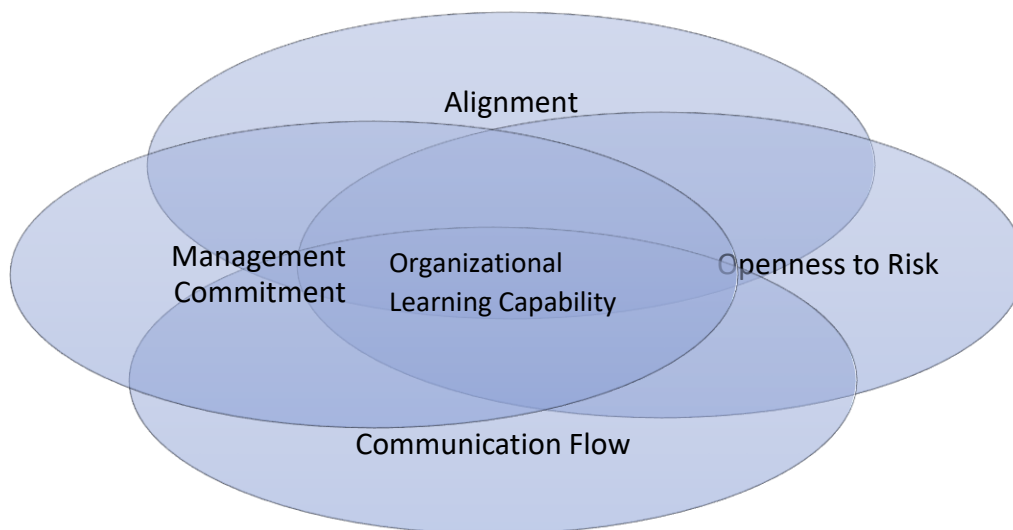
The implication of this research for Company X is that OLC allows the achievement of maximum results to meet the needs of the “Client.” With OLC, the organization is always prepared to respond to changes in the environment; challenges can come from anywhere; it can be planned or spontaneous. The organization should always improve the ability to learn by firstly approaching challenges as opportunities to improve, then supporting learning and introducing mechanisms to improve existing practices. The organization can also enhance OLC by correcting any challenges that hinder learning in the organization, encouraging staff,

every department, and every process in the organization to align with the objectives of the organization

6.7 Study Outcome

This section describes the study outcome of this thesis. It suggests a pictorial representation for understanding the exhibition of OLC by teams, how they work together, and how learning capabilities can be enhanced and improved to yield better results. Understanding OLC in teams also provides insight into the differences in learning capabilities in teams. This thesis recommends further quantitative research to provide a model that will bring insight into how measures of OLC works together and, thus, how to enhance or improve these capabilities in teams.

FIGURE 1 PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF RESEARCH OUTCOME



Above is a pictorial representation of the outcome of the analyses in this study, adapted from a relational social constructionist model (Endres and Weibler, 2017). It shows the organization at the center and the other measures of OLC that affect the organization.

6.8 Summary

The purpose of this empirical study was to explore the OLC using teams as a frame of reference to understand the reasons for the differences in team learning capability and to bring insight into ways the organization can improve its ability to learn.

This study uses the conceptual framework to give more understanding of the interaction of learning capabilities and to give more insight into how these capabilities can work to support the goals of the organization.

The findings revealed that learning capabilities are expressed by the teams in different ways, such as communicating with staff, meeting the daily goals of the team, and dealing with challenges. These learning capabilities, when they work together, align the teams with the goals of the organization. The findings also revealed that the leader's approach to challenges differentiated teams. Other themes that emerged that make teams different was the team leader and the nature of the teams.

The team leaders were different in their mannerisms, approach, and how they spoke about their teams. They differed in the responses they gave to the interview questions. The nature of the teams also differed in size, the area of work, the challenges faced in their different zones, the characters of the workers in the teams, and the personality of the team leader.

Additionally, the findings revealed areas where the organization needed improvement to enhance its learning capability. The results of the findings show that OLC is exhibited in Company X, the measures of OLC work together, and differences in the exhibition of OLC exists. The findings also support an integrated view of OLC in the organization. These findings agree with (DiBella and Nevis, 1998) integrating the developmental, normative, and capability perspectives to organizational learning.

The summary of findings generated by this thesis is the following:

- It is possible to enhance OLC in the Organization by focusing on improving the four measures of OLC, namely, communication flow, alignment to goals, openness to risk, and management support.

- The measures of OLC are expressed in different ways in the Organization, depending on the leader of the team or department. From the findings, we see that teams differed in how they expressed different measures of OLC.
- OLC can be hindered by the actions of leaders in the organization: leaders can take actions or decisions that hinder the teams' ability to learn. From Company X, some team leaders did not participate in any initiative to improve learning. Although this is also an indication of a lack of follow up on the part of management, the actions of the team leader affected the ability of the team to learn.
- The upper and middle management influence the impact of OLC in the organization: The involvement of upper and middle management in the implementation of initiatives to improve learning in the organization will affect the seriousness of the staff attached to these initiatives.
- Challenges can hinder or enhance OLC: challenges are different from teams and the conditions of work. For instance, when the supervisor communicates these challenges, the organization can find ways to improve continuously until these challenges are resolved. In this instance, the challenge will enhance OLC.
- Measures that makeup OLC work together: from the findings, the measures of OLC are inter-related.
- Alignment is related to problem-solving: the changes that problem-solving brings to alignment occurs where the organization mitigates challenges and tries to improve continuously.

Chapter 7. Scholar-Practitioner

7.1 My Reflections

Literature Search and Methodology

Action research as an inquiry brings the researcher and the organization together, even though I have worked in this organization for years before attempting this research. The information gathered from the research showed me more insight into the organization.

The article by (Goh and Richards, 1997) especially gave insight into how my organization's learning capability can improve our performance. However, these characteristics mentioned by the author was already existing in one way or another in my organization.

I found an answer in the article by DiBella (DiBella and Nevis, 1998), which explained the perspectives of OLC in the organization, and how these perspectives were not to be viewed separately but where different ways of looking at the organization. From the normative perspective, the organization improves the ability to learn by meeting the criteria of the learning organization. From the capability perspective, the organization can appraise what they have and how they are learning.

This understanding from (Alegre and Chiva, 2008) brought clarity to the topic and improved my understanding of how I can improve learning, so I tried to assess as much of their articles as to gain a better understanding of improving the ability to learn in the organization. The measures of OLC, which I nicknamed CRAM, became a yardstick to my activities as a manager, and it became a way that helped me focus on meeting my targets. (CRAM represents the four measures of OLC; namely communication flow, risk-taking, alignment to goals, management support).

The search for relevant material and writing the literature review broadened my knowledge on the subject of my study. It gave me insights on how OLC was impacting other organizations in different fields and different countries.

Data Collection, Analysis

After the 1st interviews, I transcribed and analyzed the data. A recurring problem with the workers was the shortage of trucks. Unfortunately, this was not my responsibility, but I felt I had to do something about it. The workers were absent from work too often because even when they come to work, they have to wait for the truck to be available. This was putting too much pressure on the workers.

I directly intervened by inviting an external company to fix the trucks. This intervention was not well received by the organization. In no time, the trucks broke down again. I resorted to hiring trucks and left the maintenance of our existing trucks to the appropriate department.

During the interviews, the participants raised many issues, including the problems with maintenance and suppliers of work materials. I had a meeting with the administrative officer and the purchasing officer, and I was told that the supervisors were not using the weekly reports to highlight these issues because they felt no one would pay attention to them.

I called a meeting with the administrative officer and the operations manager to discuss the importance of responding to matters raised by the supervisors in their reports. We decided that we would go through the reports every week and take action where necessary. I decided to be part of this so the supervisors would know that I took their opinions and ideas seriously. I also was a part of it to dispel any doubt about the sincerity of the reasons for my research.

Next, I was present during the next supervisors meeting. Their manager informed them about the importance of the weekly reports in that meeting. I also stressed the importance of their opinion. I reminded them that they were important to the company because they were the link between the customers and the management of the organization. As such, their opinion should be captured, and also that whatever they submitted will be taken seriously.

One of the supervisors suggested having a small meeting of not more than 5 to 10 minutes before the start of the day to remind the team of the work to be done, their safety, to check if all materials needed for the day's work was with them and to pray with the team. Some supervisors said they were already doing this. So, it was agreed that they would discuss how the day's work will be accomplished, discuss ways to make the work better during these toolbox meetings.

The steps to enhance OLC through improving communication between the supervisors and the organization through the reports, improving communication within the team through the

toolbox meetings, improving alignment through the setting of targets before the start of work, risk-taking in the teams was already in existence due to the nature of work, the supervisors are faced with challenges that they have to deal with as they arise, but the reporting and escalation will be done through their reports. Moreover, management support of the process created the opportunity for continuous improvement.

The information shared between teams during the meetings was useful for improving work performance. It was well-received among the operatives, and they completed their tasks early and were able to achieve better results when they had a predetermined target to achieve for the day. The sweepers had difficulty with this practice for various reasons. However, the main reason was that the portions for the workers were already known, so some workers came early and would start work before the other workers arrived.

After the interviews with the planters, I discovered that the planters had a different perspective than the supervisors. The planters talked about the communication within the teams from their assessment of the situation.

I met with the improvement team, consisting of myself, the administrative officer, and the operations manager. We met weekly to review the supervisor reports; one of the issues addressed was the quality of working materials supplied to the sweepers. There were complaints in the weekly reports, and during the meeting, we decided to address this issue. Different materials were procured from the existing suppliers and new suppliers and distributed to the workers for trial. Based on the feedback from the field, we decided to get their working materials from a new source.

This is an example of how communication flowed from the team level to the organizational level, and feedback flowed from management to the team. It was also an example of the improvements that occurred from improving OLC in the organization.

From the reports, we highlighted issues that needed to be addressed. We decided that the operations manager and the administrative manager will give the workers talks concerning issues that needed to be addressed from the reports.

The truck breakdowns persisted; the company tried to put the trucks in order several times, but they still broke down. We supplemented with hiring trucks from other companies, but the hired trucks also broke down.

Actions

The specific actions that should continue as a result of this action research done in my organization should be to continue with the improvements gained, to start Communities of Practice among the supervisors, the maintenance team, and the drivers, to take advantage of staff training and to assess the impact of the initiatives introduced to improve OLC as a result of this thesis.

The most important action the organization should take from the recommendations of this thesis is to continue with the initiatives introduced in the course of the thesis. The improvement of this research included the following:

- introducing toolbox meetings,
- utilizing existing reporting structures to improve communication among the teams and within the levels in the organization,
- starting the improvement committee,
- training staff on teamwork,
- team building and safe work practices,
- forming Communities of Practice
- using social media among teams and
- the use of meetings to promote dialogue.

The formation of a Community of Practice will ensure that all measures of OLC are always at work in the organization. This ensures that OLC is always enhanced in the organization at any time, despite any challenges the team or the organization might encounter. A CoP will ensure that learning capability in the organization is continuously improved.

The organization should continue the periodic training of staff. Informed training arising from the identification of training needs will introduce information needed for the staff to enhance their skills in using the measures of OLC.

Also, management could do a yearly assessment of the impact of the initiatives introduced following my recommendations to ensure learning capabilities are continuously enhanced. This will improve the organization's ability to learn.

These recommendations were welcomed during the process of the thesis, and they have become a part of the organization's improvement initiatives. The organization will respond

positively to these suggestions by implementing all of them. The implementation of the recommendations is in progress, as is stated in the previous chapters.

The toolbox meetings are short, usually ranging from 5 to 10 minutes before the commencement of work. The teams use this opportunity to remind themselves of the company's goal and how the day's work aligns with the goal. They also discuss safety measures, the team leader also assigns work roles during the toolbox meeting, and the expectations of the day are discussed. The indication that the teams are using the toolbox meeting will be evident in how well the teams align to the organization's goal, the flow of information within the team, and how well the team members understand their tasks. The meeting minutes will also indicate what was discussed during the meeting and the members of the team that was present during the toolbox meeting.

The flow of information is vital for the learning capability of the organization. It is one of the measures that indicate OLC. To show that the organization follows the recommendation to utilize the existing reporting structures such as the weekly reports, the flow of information within the levels in the organization will significantly improve. Avenues for improvement through staff recommendations and complaints can be gathered from the weekly reports. This information is a useful input for the improvement committee.

Another suggestion from this thesis was the formation of the improvement committee and action teams. This gives staff from different departments in the organization the opportunity to discuss and recommend improvement to management. While the improvement committee discussed working conditions and staff welfare, the action teams looked into the reasons that the organization's goals were not reached. The meeting minutes of this committee will indicate the frequency of the meetings, the staff who have served in the committee at different times, and the improvements in the organization that originated from the committee. These meetings promote dialogue, help the organization align to goals, support from management, and ensure the flow of communication.

Use of Intervention as an Action Research Process

This research showed the importance of enhancing OLC in Company X. I understood from the perspective of the workers how the organization's goals are achieved and what challenges

or circumstance influences the teams' ability to align to the organization's goals. I understood that the measures of OLC work together. Through this research, the ways to improve the synergy of these measures were developed.

The action research cycles entail making interventions in the organization. In this research, action research was done in 3 cycles. Each cycle brought implementations that sought to enhance the learning capability in the organization.

The actions from the first cycle of research included the introduction of the use of toolbox meetings by teams before the start of the daily tasks. Additionally, the supervisors agreed to increase the utilization of the organization's existing reporting structure. Failure to utilize the existing reporting structure showed that the feedback from the teams to management was lacking, such as complaints from users, challenges between teams and within teams. This suggestion came from a meeting held with the supervisors after the first cycle.

The actions from the second cycle of action research highlighted the need for the administration department, the maintenance department, and the dumpsite management to exchange information. This was done by recommending a periodic meeting to know how the organization can improve its work conditions, staff welfare, and the corrective measures the organization needs to take to improve learning capability. The improvement committee was also formed to discuss problems faced by staff. This initiative was consistent with improving the openness to risk by creating avenues for dialogue and experimentation in the organization.

The intervention from the third cycle brought clarification on the organization's policies. Staff tasks were also clearly described; every staff was given a job description that showed they contributed to the organization's mission. The use of WhatsApp was introduced to improve communication with teams. Weekly review meetings and action teams were started to improve the organization's learning capability; their tasks were to review areas that are challenging for the organization to align to goals.

My recommendation is for the company to engage in training once a month, to enhance continuous improvement. Due to the nature of work, most times, our training schedules conflict with times there were issues in the field. To address this, we will use downtimes to make up for training sessions. The purpose of this training is to give all staff in leadership positions knowledge about issues such as how to work with others to achieve results.

7.2 Implementation of Findings

The lesson I learned was to look for the presence of the measures of OLC in decision making. This was only possible through the implementation of the findings of this thesis in Company X.

The recommendation from the research necessitated the alignment of the activities of all teams and departments to targets. This target was broken into monthly and yearly targets. I suggested setting targets that were in line with the organization's goals, and every department was given targets to meet. The following sections describe how the findings were implemented in the organization.

Review meetings

The review meetings replaced the weekly reports because our mode of operations had changed. To enhance communication flow, the head of each department went over the activities that week, the problems encountered, we addressed problems together, and the process was repeated every week until any issues concerning the challenges were fully addressed.

Training

The recommendation to the organization as a result of the research was training about the actions the organizations can take to improve OLC. This training centered on discussing the measures of OLC, so the teams can understand their role in the improvement of learning in the organization.

The first training session was delivered in two days, each training session lasting about 3 hours, from 9 am to 12 noon. All workers were in attendance. From the findings from this

research, the importance of a cohesive team to learning capability was evident, and the importance of our awareness of how our actions affect the organization.

The first training sessions focused on the following:

The Role of Management and Alignment to goals - Team building and the role of the team in meeting the organization's objectives. The discussion during the training sessions started by reiterating the role of every department to the success of the organization.

Communication Flow - The other topics addressed during the training session were communication among ourselves and our customers, conflict resolution, teamwork, and active listening.

I facilitated the training. We had discussion sessions, role play, and team-building games. The discussions were engaging, and it was an opportunity to improve team relations.

The second training was held the next week, and it lasted for 1 hour. This training was on work practices, and everybody was in attendance. All employees were encouraged to take an active role in this initiative by continuing with this presentation concerning safety in the workplace and dealing with challenges at work.

After the first session my, the organization continued with this initiative. The employee chooses the topics, and this training continues to take place once a month.

Feedback Mechanisms

Setting and Monitoring targets for each department

The use of targets in the teams and the success of this practice in the team's performance in this research were repeated across the different departments in the organization. The departments were given monthly and yearly targets, the monitoring of the targets is done during the weekly review meetings.

Weekly review meetings

The weekly review meetings are designed in such a way that issues are highlighted and addressed every week. Each department presents the review, action items are given, and this is reviewed in the next meeting. This process is carried out every week. The meetings enhance communication between different departments; it is an opportunity to share ideas and opinions and make recommendations for improvement. The meeting is recorded and stored. The records are available to all departments. Any department or employee in need of information can obtain it from the records of the review meetings.

Use of social media platforms to improve informal communication among staff. The operations department were encouraged to share information through the WhatsApp platform. The information centered around working with the equipment.

7.3 My Development as a Scholar-Practitioner

I discovered that a lot is happening that I do not know from my perspective in the organization, even though it has been present the entire time. This is possible through seeing the organization from the eyes of others and gaining insights into their perspectives.

My understanding of myself as a manager, the organization has deepened from my knowledge of OLC. The knowledge I gained and the improvement in my organization is a useful resource bridging the gap between theory and practice (Marshall, 1999), learning from the thesis and my work experience; understanding OLC, and implementing recommendations from my research in the organization (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010, Rigg et al., 2008)

I chose the topic because I wanted to bring an improvement to the organization. I wanted to strengthen the organization from within and prepare us for the future. During the literature review, I looked forward to implementing the results of the research in my organization.

However, in this thesis process, while working on the findings, I discovered that what defined the teams and also the organization where the problems we overcame. Our stories came from the challenges, in terms of what decisions the challenges forced us to take.

I had imagined that researching my organization will bring many positive changes and improve our chances of surviving as an organization. I also imagined that the changes would be welcomed because it was for the good of the organization. I was mistaken in this regard. My recommendations put me at loggerheads with other managers. I was accused of overstepping my boundaries, even though the actions I took were well within my boundaries.

The chairman of the company had to intervene many times; we were fortunate because the senior manager welcomed the opportunity for improvement. It is worthy to note that even though action research is collaborative research between the researcher and the participants, power and politics in the organization can be a big hindrance to carrying out any changes in the organization. The freedom I felt I had to improve learning in the organization had to be balanced with the challenges of resistance from other managers who saw any advancement as a threat.

The thesis has allowed me to look at my organization from a different perspective, to evaluate myself, the effect of my decisions, and to understand its effects on the teams and the staff. Many things have happened since the process of this thesis started, but the lessons from the process have remained the same. I discovered that the weekly meetings are not enough. To create continuous improvements, we have included meetings on Mondays, which include representatives from all departments, and the changes include giving action points that we address in the next meeting. This is also allowing us to see how teams affect each other.

There are also external factors that affected the research and the direction of the research. The macro-economic factors that affect the organization can also affect the insider action research and change the course of the research. During the period of the second cycle, the political changes in the state affected our work. We had an economic downturn and the fall of the Naira, there was a recession in the country, customers could not meet up the obligation to pay because they were also not getting paid. All this affected the organization, causing us to take serious cost-cutting measures.

I had to manage both companies, but with the second division, structures that will enhance learning was implemented from the beginning. During this time, there was also a change in the management of the authority of our major customer in the street cleaning division.

This resulted in the termination of our contract. I could no longer work directly with the company, so I contacted the new contractors with no equipment and became a sub-contractor to a few companies.

This challenge put a heavy financial burden on the company. We had to release over 200 workers. Most of them were transferred to the new customers, but many of our workers were still laid off.

Our new customers had their structures and ways of working. The measures to enhance learning gave the organization the avenue to perform work. The supervisors were still retained, and they performed their meetings before work. They were able to perform well and meet targets with new customers.

It was challenging to sustain the street cleaning division after we lost our major client, the new clients were not meeting their financial obligations, and it was difficult to maintain trucks without getting paid.

At the time of analyzing the data from the 3rd cycle, I had a better picture of OLC in the organization. It was clearer to see the effect of the measures in the organization.

Leadership, to me, now means tackling problems headlong to avoid these problems cascading to the various departments. It connotes speaking out and asking questions that allow me to know the feedback I need to improve myself. This thesis process has helped me understand the teams more and how they align with the company's goals. They are not the same; an understanding of what makes the teams different gave me a better insight into the results of the teams.

Chapter 8. Conclusion and Recommendation

8.1 Summary of Study

This qualitative research aimed to provide an insight into OLC within the teams to bring understanding to how the teams implement organizations structures, practices, and measures in their work. The study also aimed to highlight the challenges faced by teams that obstruct learning and other factors that result in differences in teams.

This thesis's focus was to understand OLC within teams to get a more in-depth insight into the challenges faced by teams. This thesis tried to show the effect of these challenges on the ability of these teams to utilize the tools placed by the organization to encourage learning. Furthermore, this thesis aimed to exhibit the effects of the measures of the organization placed to enhance learning.

From all the interviews with the supervisors and the planters; and the weekly reports, data were analyzed and grouped into research objectives, themes, and sub-themes. These results gave a more in-depth understanding of OLC in Company X. From the analysis, the action needed to improve the organization emerged.

An understanding of OLC provides the road map to strengthening learning capability in Company X. This thesis gave the company the necessary insight to bring an improvement in how teams work in the organization; the outcome of this work also included a conceptual framework, which indicated how Company X could continuously enhance its learning capability.

This qualitative action research aimed to explore and enhance OLC in Company X. This thesis sought to provide an insight into OLC within the teams to understand how the teams implement the measures of OLC in their work.

The study participants were the supervisors in the organization; data were collected through interviews and reports. The data collection was done in three cycles. Each cycle brought insight into how to improve learning capability in the organization.

The findings showed how the thesis explored OLC. The findings showed how the teams exhibit each measure of OLC. Although the measures of OLC were grouped into four categories, this research showed that they work together to improve the learning capability in the organization. The following improvements were achieved as a result of this research

- introduction toolbox meetings,
- the use of existing reporting structures to improve communication among the teams and within the levels in the organization,
- use of the improvement committee,
- training staff on teamwork,
- team building and safe work practices,
- the use of social media among teams and
- the use of meetings to promote dialogue.

The next section discusses the recommendations of this research. The recommendations made are geared toward improving the learning capability of the organization. These recommendations included using the existing reporting tools, training, toolbox meetings, review meetings, action teams, and starting Communities of Practice. When implemented, these recommendations will strengthen the measures of OLC and lead to the continuous improvement of the organization's learning capability.

8.2 Recommendation for Management

The recommendation of this thesis is the continuous training of supervisors and members of staff, establishment of Communities of Practice, to improve awareness of the company's expectation, team cohesion, and safety at work and to continue with all the initiatives from this research such as the reports, meetings, and reviews.

The results of training, such as flexibility and cohesion among teams, are essential for learning organizations and a necessary foundation for OLC (Jerez Gomez et al., 2004). Training is necessary since learning takes place through members of the organization (Stan and Vermeulen, 2013), (Argote, 2011). Building OLC encourages employees to continuously learn and increases their competence, effectiveness, and ability to innovate (Goh, 2003), (Bontis et al., 2002).

The ability of an organization to improve its effectiveness contributes to the overall image of the organization and the overall view of its capability both within the organization and to other external stakeholders. One of the ways an organization can enhance learning is through training at the team and the organizational levels (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009), (Yeung et al., 1999), (Ulrich et al., 1993). According to Jerez Gomez et al. (2004, p. 237), "team learning contributes towards creating a collective corpus of knowledge that is submerged in the organizational culture, the work routines and processes, and other elements making up the organizational memory."

Further recommendation from this research is the establishment of a Communities of Practice (CoP). A community of practice requires a domain, practitioners, and a community. All three requirements for a CoP exist in the organization. The set up of a CoP will improve learning capability in the organization, create a climate of openness where the teams can share knowledge, and at the same time, improve their skills.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 - Participant Information Sheet



Title of Study: An Exploration of Organizational Learning Capability and its Effect on Team Learning

Version Number: 1.2

Date: 30 January 2015

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Uloma Diriyai, I am an employee of OC and Sons and also a doctoral student studying at the University of Liverpool, doing research for my thesis. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research.

Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask me if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand.

Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends and relatives. I would like to stress that **you do not have to accept this invitation** and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading this.

The purpose of this research is to provide a better understanding of the effect of improving structures, routines and practices in the company that promotes learning in teams and in the organization.

The study aims to enable the organization better to understand how to improve learning within its teams and to promote overall learning in the organization.

To achieve this aim, this research will seek to explore the impact of improving learning capability on the organization and exploring the factors that cause differences in learning within teams. This research will involve your participation in filling out questionnaires, your involvement in interviews.

This research aims to give a better understanding of the missing link between training, experience, learning on the one side and the organization's role in enhancing their effect through organizational learning capability on the other side.

You have been selected to take part in this research because you are a supervisor or team member in the operations section of your company. Your experience in this organization can contribute to understanding your perspective and providing insight of learning within teams and in the organization.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You do not have to participate, if you participate or not it will in no way affect your work or status in the organization. It is your choice whether to participate or not. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

There is a risk that you may be uncomfortable if your responses are made public, to guard against this your identity will be changed (anonymized) and I also want to inform you that your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw at any time, and you can choose not to answer any question that might cause discomfort.

My role as a manager in the company is different from my role as a researcher; there is a risk that this dual role may cause you discomfort. To reduce the risk to you, the focus of the questions will be work-related; your identity will be changed, the data collected will be kept confidential, physical data will be locked up in my safe in the office, I am the only person with access to my office safe.

The data in my computer will be password protected with a strong password, my password is not shared with anyone, and I am the only person who has access to and who uses my computer. You can choose not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. Your participation is voluntary, and you can choose to withdraw your consent at any time without explanation.

There is no compensation, gifts, rewards, or incentives for your participation. The advantage of partaking in this research is the satisfaction of knowing you are a part of bringing a positive development in the organization.

Procedures

The interview will last about 20 - 30 minutes. During the interviews, I will sit down with you in a comfortable place at your organization. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so, and then I will move on to the next question. No one else will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one except me will have access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be tape-recorded, but no one will be identified by name on the tape. The recording will be stored on the tape recorder. The information recorded is confidential, and I will have sole access to the recording. I will repeat this process three times; I will ask for more clarification on an issue or ask more questions to understand your opinion.

I will provide and collect the questionnaire. If you do not wish to answer any question included in the survey, you may skip them and move on to the next question. The information recorded is confidential, your name is not being included on the forms, and no one else will have access to your survey. The data collected will be stored for at least five years, after which it will be destroyed.

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting Uloma Diriyai, 08057047721, and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then, you should contact the Research Governance Officer at ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

The results of the study will be used for a doctoral thesis, which will be available from the University of Liverpool. You will not be identifiable from the results; your name will be changed during the interview process to protect your identity. No one will be able to identify you from the interview transcripts.

You do not have to decide today whether you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. If this form contains words, concepts, or parts you do not understand, please ask me at any time during the research, and I will take time to explain.

You can withdraw at any time, without explanation. Results up to the period of withdrawal may be used if you are happy for this to be done. Otherwise, you may request that they are destroyed, and no further use is made of them. Please be informed that the results may only be withdrawn prior to anonymization (name and identity changed).

If you have further questions, please contact:

Uloma Diriyai
132 Fiddil Avenue, Trans Amadi, Port Harcourt
08057047721

University Research Participant Advocate
USA number 001-612-312-1210
liverpoolethics@ohcampus.com

Research Governance Officer at
ethics@liv.ac.uk .

When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher involved

Appendix 2- Participant Consent Form

Committee on Research Ethics

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: An Exploration of Organizational Learning Capability and its Effect on Team Learning

Researcher(s): Uloma Diriyai

**Please initial
box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [DATE] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant Name

Date

Signature

Name of Person taking consent

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Principal Investigator:

Name

Work Address

Work Telephone

Work Email

Student Researcher:

Uloma Diriyai

132 Fiddil Avenue, Trans Amadi, Port Harcourt

08057047721

udiriyai@yahoo.com

Version 1.1, 11 Nov, 2014

Optional Statements

- The information you have submitted will be published as a report; please indicate whether you would like to receive a copy.
- I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications.
- I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research and understand that any such use of identifiable data would be reviewed and approved by a research ethics committee.
- I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded and I am aware of and consent to your use of these recordings for the following purposes, transcribing and analysing using NVivo Software.
- I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research.
- I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
- I understand and agree that once I submit my data it will become anonymized and I will therefore no longer be able to withdraw my data.
- I understand I do not have to decide today if I will participate in this research. Before I decide, I have a week to talk to anyone I feel comfortable with about the research.
- I understand that I can contact the Student Researcher (Uloma Diriyai) to ask questions at any time during the research.