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Organizational learning: creating capability through building belief

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It is commonly understood within the individual learning literature that an individual's self-efficacy, i.e. the belief that an individual holds about his or her capability and competence-shapes performance outcomes, including learning (e.g. Bandura, 1977; 1997; Wood & Bandura 1989). Although emotion has received some attention in the management learning literature (e.g. Fineman, 1997), scholars have, on the whole, when approaching organizational learning, focused very little upon emotional and motivational factors, tending instead to examine the processes involved from a cognitive perspective (Huber, 1991; Kim, 1992; Visser, 2008; Zollo & Winter, 2002). Such conceptualisations hold that learning at the organizational level involves a series of stages, whereby learning is transferred from the individual to the organization as a result of knowledge sharing activities (e.g. Crossan, Lane & White, 1999). This approach offers important insights but may not adequately capture individuals' collective sense of whether or not the organization is capable of learning. This collective belief may, in turn, shape individuals' willingness and motivation to apply their learning at the organizational level. One possible way forward may be to explore ways of building belief amongst employees about the capability of their organizations to learn. Doing so would go some way towards achieving organizational renaissance and renewal.

We are interested in this track in papers examining the question of building belief in organizational learning capability. There are at least two questions that deserve consideration: the first concerns developing learning capability, and the second considers how organizations effectively convince their members that such capability exists. We are interested in papers exploring the mechanisms required to enhance learning capability- such as project work, team work and activities linking individuals with the external environment (for example, customer relationships). At the same time, we would like to encourage submissions on the role of training and other HR practices (for example, reward and performance management) in achieving organizational learning and strategic renewal. What are the exploitation/ exploration trade-offs in developing necessary skills while at the same time exposing individuals to new insights and experiences from outside the organization? How can organizations use projects to energise and transfer knowledge while avoiding disruption to day-to-day activities? To what extent can reward and performance management systems support learning and strategic renewal rather than the achievement of existing goals? Finally, we would like to see submissions that explore the question of building belief. What signals should senior management convey to employees about organizational learning effectiveness? Is there a measure or scale that could be devised to capture this collective sense of organizational learning capability? Is there inevitably a relationship between individual learning self-efficacy and this attribute measured at the level of the organization? These and related questions would be of interest for this track.