ABSTRACT

Organisations are increasingly marked with stressful conditions, rapid learning and adaptability. Furthermore, employee skilling has moved from concrete degrees to outcome-based learning where degrees are secondary to skills and application to novel problems. Additionally, the ability of the employee to be resilient and be quick to adapt to novel information becomes crucial for organisational edge. While skill-based competencies have been spoken about literature, the present study focuses on personality as a competency since it predisposes an individual to behave in specific ways. Therefore, the present study conceptualised the role of Need for Cognition as a personality trait that can predispose organisations to be efficient and lifelong learners. Two studies were conducted. Study one used a sample of 675 working professionals to predict resilience, cognitive flexibility and self-directed learning. The mediating role of metacognition was also assessed. Results showed that need for cognition was a significant predictor of all outcome variables used and was completely mediated for resilience and partially mediated for cognitive flexibility and self-directed learning by metacognition. Study two explored the learning approaches amongst high need for cognition employees and the obstacles they face. The results showed that the participants considered learning as a medium for identity building, community and achieving social goals. Relevant implications for organisations have been discussed.

Keywords: need for cognition, resilience, self-directed learning, metacognition, cognitive flexibility