

Effects of Utilization of the Components of Learning Organization in Higher Education

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Abstract

One of the ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education learning is being learnable. Using the view of the components of the learning organization by Marquardt (Knowledge management, capacity building, technology application, the dynamics of learning and organizational development) is among such methods. The principles of the university as a learning organization and development of quality processes of higher education have the great impact. This paper describes an analytical method for studying the effects of student organizations of the university and tries to analyse the basic concepts of a learning organization in connection with the Higher Education and offer some recommendations to improve its learnable rate.

Keywords: knowledge management, organizational transformation, the dynamics of learning, educational technology, enabling

Introduction

Due to the dynamic environmental changes in the present era, it is very difficult to manage modern organizations. Guidelines for the management of organizations in the past have lost their efficacy. So, to deal with this issue in the management field, we always have new ideas. To implement such ideas, it is necessary for organizations to create fundamental changes in the traditional learning institutions and their management techniques to be always ready to learn and entertain new ideas to adapt the changes. One of the ideas of modern management that emphasizes continuous learning and compat-

ibility is a “learning organization” (Bani si and Esmail lahme, 2010).

Higher education has this feature that seeks its success in the more learning and constantly learns and teaches. They also learn to teach their students and themselves more and better, because they know the situation is always changing and there are always new material to learn. Individuality in learning organization is meaningless and organization made up of people but when a person enters the organization, is part of the whole and integrates in it. University as a learning organization does not show resist against changes. Unlike traditional organizations that people have a negative reaction against any change always tries to be in change and evolution. Regarding this matter that learning organization is an organization that considers learning as a permanent need of all staffs and in addition to emphasizing on learning, how to learn, absorption, and distribution of new knowledge, paid to creation of new knowledge and required information and all this knowledge is reflected in the behavior and performances (Ghahremani, 2009).

To have all above features, in order to increase its dynamic, higher education needs to have the Components of the learning organization. This article will try to analyze based on the elements of a learning organization considering Marquardt perspective (Learning dynamics, organizational transformation, empowerment, knowledge management and technology application).

Literature Review

Learning organization

This is an organization in which members continually develop themselves in order to achieve the

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goals and aspirations they really seek. New models are particularly prevalent to expand new models of thinking, there are space for the collective idealism, and finally, are an organization whose members are continually learning how to learn collectively (Bahramzadeh, 2000). Also based on Ghahremani's perspective (2004) it is an organization in which learning is a permanent need of all staffs and in this organization that as it emphasizes on learning, how to learn, absorption, and distribution of new knowledge, paid to creation of new knowledge and required information and all this knowledge is reflected in the behavior and performances (Ghahremani, 2009). Based on Marquardt's view, organization is the structure of the body in which individual and organizational learning occurs and movement from non-learning organization to learning organization is called organizational transformation (Zali, 2006).

The world around us and the environment, in which organizations are, becomes more complex every day. Organizations are forced to match themselves with increasing knowledge and technology developments to survive in this changing environment (Shahabi, 2005). In other words, organizations must quickly learn to adapt quickly to environmental changes otherwise will not have durability. In every transition period, the dominant and in decline types (such as non-learning organizations) and new flexible types (such as learning organizations) and live together. Organizations in which is no learning will soon disappear because they are not able to adapt to the changing environment around. Based on Alvani's idea, one of the effective ways to adapt to the environment and respond to uncertain opportunities is to become a learning organization. Today, learning is seen as a source of competitive advantage. Organizations cannot continue to survive only with prior knowledge. They must learn continually to survive in today's turbulent world (Alvani, 2010). Learning organization creates knowledge and uses it in work method and experience. Correct their behavior to adopt the change, in this way allows the creation and use of new knowledge to grow and learn in an endless cycle. The idea of a learning organization, often directly linked to the rise of collective technologies, such as the group increased but this concept was raised before in terms of the collective work that was supported by the computer. In an inclusive organization, leaders are designers, supervi-

sor and teacher. Their responsibility is to build organizations where people continually expand their abilities to identify and understand the complexities to clear up the aspirations and develop the shared mental methods. It means that leaders are responsible for teach staff (Sobhaninejad, 2006).

Comprehensive systems approach to learning organizations: according to Dodgson creating structure and strategy in learning organization contributes to organizational learning (Dodgson, 2003). Marquardt perspective on the whole concept of a learning organization is identified by 5 types of subcategories as follows:

1. Learning
2. Individuals
3. Individuals
4. Knowledge
5. Technology

An attempt to identify or transfer to learning organization without understanding the all five mentioned dimensions will lead only to partial success in procedures and principles needed to move from non-learning organization to learning organization (Marquardt cited in Zaly, 2006)

Instructing the staff for better productivity

Karimi and Rangriz believe that those organizations which look at instruction positively realize that they are in a world of skill shortage. These organizations know that tangible and non-tangible benefits of instruction justify its costs and will increase organization and staff's productivity. They also consider some points for staff instruction.

1- Instruction strategy: Instruction strategy requires spending a long time on expressions, knowledge level, staff qualifications and company's needs.

2- Instruction relevance and suitability: Some organizations use instruction just as instruction for the sake of instruction not as applied instruction.

3- Instruction in relationship with principles: Instruction should be sensitive enough so that it would be able to plan for filling the gap between what people want and what they do.

4- Activity-oriented instruction: it means that the instruction should be practical and active and aim at making the staff follow it.

5- Productivity-oriented instruction: Productivity-oriented instruction philosophy should express relevant instructions especially with regard to functional needs

6- Permanent and continual instruction: The

philosophy of continual instruction proves that instruction is not just for the new job entrants or vacant positions, but it should be continual.

Need for new learning

Manvil (2001) says that despite the need for new and more flexible and faster learning about how to get things done, there is yet not a suitable method for doing things better and creating velocity and effectiveness in differences. So, learning has not only become a vital process but it is also followed strategically and in a practical and realistic manner. This progress has not occurred by chance, but it has been developed through the daily experiences and “learning about learning” of functional and executive managers who know the value of learning and emphasize its application. We do not want to discuss the simple change of organization’s external elements (products, activity, or its structure), but the changes and modifications of internal method of its performance, values, attitudes, and even its main purpose (Manvil, 2001).

Organization learning skills

Hutchins (1991) believes that learning in dynamic environments occurs along with some unwanted and unpredicted situations with which the organization encounters and creates some models. By using these interactive models among staff, technologies, cultures and processes, an organization can come out of difficult situations successfully and expand learning (Hutchin, 1991).

Today, organizations are facing drastic and rapid changes in all fields and along with these changes; organizations and their employees should change accordingly for their own survival and achieve the required knowledge and preparedness to do this. Therefore, the issue of the learning organization was raised. A learning organization is an organization that improves its operations through increased awareness. (Alvani, 1995)

These organizations continually increase their capacity and ability and their management and employees are always learning new methods of thinking and working. Environmental changes have made the organizational to find the best strategies to continually adapt themselves to the environment and thus achieve a competitive priority. Therefore, one of the ways for gaining scientific and competitive priority is emphasizing employees continual learning in order to achieve organizational goals with utmost effectiveness (Sobhaninejad, 2006).

Universities and higher education centres, as a vast organization, is one of the centres whose officials and policymakers have made serious efforts to catch up with the rapid improvements. It seems that learning organization has higher importance in universities. These organizations should be able to move along with rapid technological advances in order to be able to train forces that are efficient and can solve society problems.

Today, there is a clear need for managers who have individual, social, scientific and specialized competence in administrative, scientific and educational activities of the university.

In case of ignoring these needs, some problems will develop in the society. Considering the variable factors today, survival and improvements of educational organizations is subject to extensive knowledge of the environmental factors. Lack of environmental confidence due to the economic, social and cultural changes has caused an increasing need for emergence of learning organizations.

In these organizations, learning is the important elements that contribute to its survival.

Organizations are dynamic that have created the necessary foundations for continual change. Such organizations react to changes in their environment and are actively involved in the changes as they see themselves a part of it. (Translator, Divine, 2000)

Today, due to the demands placed upon them, organizations require learning in their work environment with faster speed, less costs and higher efficiency. They are a flexible work force that is under daily and regular changes (Zali, 2006).

In organizations such as a university that is an educational, Scientific and Cultural organization, emphasizing learning in all aspects is necessary and planning in order to make the necessary foundations for spreading learning and managing knowledge and creating the culture of learning organizations is vital.

Since the background for every cultural and scientific improvement is the necessity to identify potential strength and weaknesses of individuals and organizations, utilizing the aspects of knowledge management, information technology and leading scientific management and enabling employees and management of learning in systematic thinking can have a fundamental effect in organizations being a learning organization and being able to achieve its goals. Higher education has no other way than entering into a cycle of continuous learning and qual-

ity. Assuring quality of being a learner is not possible without learning from the new patterns and parameters and creating new capacities and knowledge-based production requires that higher education systems give learning organization a pivotal role in their programs so that they can help the institute improve their quality.

Conclusion

Changes in the educational system and the development of higher education in terms of learning are a beneficial way because it affects its processes directly or indirectly. And based on different evidence being learning of this organization will affect students' learning, behaviour and learning experiences and it will transform their behaviour and experiences. Fundamental changes will occur in the education system, and it will have wide consequences in integrating processes and parallel to that it will have production and output in higher education.

University is an organization that changes and you cannot consider it as a situation that has already defined. The dynamics of learning in the university is very wide and all its elements (Staff, Students, Teachers, Academic Culture, University environment, etc.) will affect communication between elements. So that university life can be summarized in a similar multidimensional process. We can mention management role based on understanding the university processes, as a fundamental role in scientific exploration of concepts of learning. University with various processes is an organizer. This indicated its complexity that can bring creativity and innovation.

Today Educational organizations should be able to adjust themselves with the constant change to get to success. The increasing extension of science and skills, more complication of social economic and cultural conditions, presentation of new different thoughts, non-environmental confidence, non-definition and changes in the world, require the organizations of school with power, to update themselves to the latest strategy and skills and could be adjust with to the latest development in new science and respond in due time to stimulus and with acquiring knowledge and extensive information in a dynamic and vivid form continue its way in improvement area and development of the organization.

The best way for dynamism of university organization is the improvement of human resources. The improvement is a kind of stimuli for the op-

erational movement of knowledge. Also knowledge management as a vital tool in organization could be effective in growth and the process of learning.

So we could draw this conclusion that the change in the knowledge structure of teachers based on the change in learning strategy of the organization and with the use of team and group learning can lead to change in their behaviour and consequently could cause growth and knowledge for teachers. This change in the learning behaviour of the teacher could be effective in his/her teaching methodology and presentation. And as a result could lead to technical and educational growth of the organization. The usage of different component of learning organization especially in technology field need skilfulness and up to date knowledge of teachers and also the improvement and augment of their knowledge regarding to educational hardware and software seem necessary.

The impression of universities from philosophical and scientific thoughts in that era and the incompatibility cause in this way is the newest reason for predicting crisis in such systems. The new world with evolution and change need a kind of university in which compatible with it and wants to do change in its traditional education and management procedures.

All these need for creation of a university entitled learning university. This model is an extension of general management concept. With rethinking in higher education management in making a flexible and changeable system is a necessary need. Achieving such a university needed changing view of managers, employees and faculty members and students from one dimension and all people in society from other dimension.

Current insights in governing higher education, there is a wonderful views of the experience, one of its aspect is due to structuring and organization of higher education and is influenced by analytical thinking and based on this, it is necessary to increase performance and increases the effectiveness of each component separately. To achieve the learning university, higher education administrators should have group meetings in the context of the organization to achieve such capacities. Individuals cannot get it singly. For this reason it is necessary for managers to provide a context of system-oriented thinking in universities to help those who are involve, to see relationships among components and processes instead of seeing things apart and search the issues and problems in higher education within

the improper design of the system contrary to what the faculty members have attributed to the external factors and others. If the university is learning, leaders in higher education are taking new roles. Leader can see the facts in the role of master, fully define himself and advise his colleagues to act appropriately. In the role of designer can design operating principles for the purposes, original ideals and value in schools. It is possible to develop Innovation and creativity in the educational structure of university by informing teachers about the components of a learning organization and transforming teaching and learning. It is possible only if underpin the development of the organization by the growth and development of knowledge, and also by learning how to acquire knowledge and knowledge management and raised school with the benefit of educational technology as a learning organization that is today basic need- particularly in the development of learning skills and knowledge.

Recommendations

Because of the effects of the components of the learning organization in higher education, some suggestions are presented to improve the status of higher education and pace into growth and development as a learning organization.

1. Learning in academic institutions by computer-based information system will be effective and efficient.
2. Groupware technology based on group Process management such as project and meetings management can be used in academic organizations.
3. It is necessary to continuously share learning strategies and new solutions should develop in university.
4. It is necessary for university organization staffs to learn creative thinking, innovation skills and practical experience.
5. University educational organization actively seeks information that improves organization's activities by product integration or out of tasks processes.
6. Higher education institutions need to increase the participation in conferences and review of published researches.
7. Learning opportunity in operations and programs should be considered in higher education organization.
8. All members of the University committed in improving continuously learning.

9. The importance of becoming a learning organization is considered throughout the university.

10. Director of Higher Education supports the vision of a learning organization.

11. Systems thinking and personal empowerment, personal and group abilities, be institutionalized higher education.

12. Review of special needs and deficiencies of organization and creation of individual and group learning opportunities for teachers in the terms of face training and non-face training for teachers to learn how to use technology cause the growth of teaching and learning process in higher education.

13. ICT is effective in the field of information storage, retrieval, application, distribution, exchange and dissemination of knowledge. And it is necessary for teachers to use technology and ICT to manage knowledge effectively.

14 - Effective knowledge management ties the faculty and technology, and it is strengthened by training teachers for the proper use of technology.

15 - Administrators support of the suggestions and ideas of faculty and to apply these ideas in the formulation of plans for achieving the goals and to provide the elements of a learning organization.

16 - Effective monitoring of the university organization by means of comparison and continuous evaluation of the desired position from the directors cause that the flaws and potential problems are scientifically removed.

17 – Teaching systematic thinking and learning and knowledge management in education by teachers is effective. It is recommended that we manage Teachers and the personnel by creating a judgmental environment and holding scientific meetings.

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