

The Dimensions Of The Learning Organization In Omani School From Employees Point Of View

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Abstract: This research is aimed to study the existence of the dimensions of the learning organization in basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman from its employees' point of view. Also, this study aims to identify the differences in the estimates of workers in basic education schools to the presence of learning organization requirements attributable to any of the variables of gender, and qualification. A theoretical framework of learning organizations developed by the researcher is used in this research. The questionnaire was used as a tool to get to know the reality of the existence of the requirements of the learning organization on a sample consisting of (1098) of the workers in basic education schools. The research concluded that to become a learning organization, basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman needs to promote all the dimensions of the learning organization.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, an organization should become more flexible, responsive and capable of adapting to change in order to ensure its survival (Hamzah & et al, 2011). Many organizations have recently shown an interest in the concept of "learning organizations" in order to maintain competitive advantages. The current organizations are operating in a turbulent environment characterized by continual and disruptive change (Thomas and Allen, 2006). Fortunately, some of the same forces that created the changes in the environment and atmosphere can serve as the the foundation stones for building the Learning Organization (Marquardt, 1996). The concept of the Learning Organization was developed in the early 1990s and has found a lot of support until today (Oberberger, 2005). Businesses can improve competitive advantage and facilitate organizational learning by drawing from organizational learning as well as the related fields of knowledge management and intellectual capital (McElyea, 2002). Learning Organization have mastered the art of adapting quickly on the one hand the preserving their own direction and identity on the other (Swieringa & Wierdsma, 1992). Peter Senge's (1990) seminal book "The Fifth Discipline" introduced us to the art and practice of the "Learning Organization" (Bass, 2000). Senge (1990) was instrumental in identifying strategies for companies to transform themselves into organizations in which continuous learning occurs and in the identification of leadership traits necessary for the conversion into a learning organization. The construct of learning organization has been defined in different ways. According to Senge (1990), learning organizations are "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results which they truly desire, new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, collective aspiration is set free and people are continually learning to see the whole together". Organizational learning is neither possible nor sustainable without understanding what drives it. Yang et al (2004) defined a learning organization as an organization that has capacity and the ability to adapt to change and create alternative futures for the organization. A learning organization, systematically defined, is an organization which learns powerfully and collectively and is continually transforming itself to better collect, manage, and use knowledge for corporate success (Marquardt, 1996). Toremén (2001) lists the factors that oblige organization to transform into learning organizations as follows:

- 1- The aim to reach the best performance and gain superiority in competition.
- 2- The effort to intensify client relations.
- 3- The effort to improve quality in order to prevent regression.
- 4- The concern for understanding risks for differences.
- 5- The aim of innovation.
- 6- The desire to improve quality of the staff.
- 7- The tendency to settle the disputes.
- 8- The effort to increase the role of cooperation.
- 9- The aim to be independent and free.
- 10- The aim to realize the importance of solidarity.

Different writers proposed different characteristics for learning organization. According to Pedler, et al (1997), the learning organization has to meet the following characteristics:

- 1- A learning Approach to Strategy.
- 2- Participative Policy Making.
- 3- Spreading of Information.
- 4- Formative Accounting and Control.
- 5- Internal Exchange.
- 6- Reward Flexibility.
- 7- Enabling Structure.
- 8- Boundary Works as Environmental Scanners.
- 9- Inter Organization Learning.
- 10- A Learning Climate.
- 11- Self-Development Opportunities for all.

Edmondson et al. (1999) identified three building blocks of a learning organization: Learning environment and culture, learning processes and leadership for learning.

Senge (1990) conceptualized a learning organization on five frameworks:

- 1- Personal Mastery.
- 2- System Thinking.
- 3- Shared Mental Methods.
- 4- Team-Based Learning.
- 5- Building a Shared Vision.

Watkins and Marsick (1992) developed seven dimensions of learning organization:

- 1- Continuous Learning, in this dimension an organization creates vast opportunities for learning to all individuals.
- 2- Inquiry and Dialogue, in this dimension the organization designs strategies to promote the

culture of questioning and raising views, receiving feedback and conducting experimentations.

- 3- Team Learning: which deals with encouraging collaboration, learning and working together.
- 4- Embedded System.
- 5- Empowerment: people in the organization are involved in sitting, owning and implementing the collective vision of the organization.
- 6- In the dimension of system connection. The organization shows that is capable to scan and connection with its internal and external environment.
- 7- Strategic Leadership.

Table (1): Assessment instruments

Author/Tool	Content	Methodology
Watkins and Marsick Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire	Leadership, Structure, Systems, Communication, Technology	Self-assessment (i.e., organizational members assess the organization against the criteria). Likert scale format.
Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell Characteristics of a Learning Organization	Leadership, Structure, Systems, Communication, Technology, Learning Methods	Self-assessment. Likert scale or "checklist" format.
Dixon Organizational Learning Competencies Survey	Communication, Information Systems	Self-assessment. Likert scale format.
Nevis, DiBella and Gould Organizational Learning Inventory	Team Learning, Vision/Strategy/Structure, Communication	Assessment by researchers. Likert scale format.
Richards and Goh Learning Organization Survey	Learning Processes, Mission/Vision, Processes, Systems, Leadership	Self-assessment. Likert scale format.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The capability of an organization to learn and apply what it learns can be the only path for sustainable competitive advantage (Bierly et al., 2000 ; Robbins and Coulter, 2005).. Given the limitations of learning organization research, the main purpose of this research is to address the gap in empirical research by examining the characteristics of the learning organization in basic education schools in Oman. This research will therefore focus on exploring the following research problem:

Do the dimensions of the learning organization exist in basic education schools in Oman from its employees' point of view?

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of this study were the workers in basic education schools in Oman. The sample was selected by using a simple random sampling method and it consist of (1098).

INSTRUMENT

This research has used a modified framework(questionnaire) developed by the researcher to make it suitable for the school setting under investigation. It

Many assessment instruments have been developed for measuring learning organization capability (Cors, 2003). Table (1) provides an overview of some of these instruments. Most of the assessment instruments adopt a normative perspective: they identify whether or not the organization has in place the attributes prescribed by literature. The most common approach is the use of surveys that gather opinions of employees in the organization or those of experts engaged to assess the organization(Al-Telbani& Salem, 2011).

consisted of (58) item, which are aimed at evaluating the attributes (dimensions) of the learning organization. These dimensions are: Leadership, Organization, organizational learning, Technology and evaluation. The questionnaire was reviewed and evaluated by experts specialized and interested in the field of learning organization and statistics to guarantee the questionnaire's validity and reliability and to clarify any ambiguity in the questionnaire items. The five dimensions of the questioner have acceptable Cronbach coefficient alpha reliability estimates, of 0,98, which means that there are significant and highly reliable coefficients.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

First : result related to the 1st Question :

To answer the Question " What are the requirements to transfer primary schools in Sultanate of Oman to learning organizations ? The researcher calculate the average , standard deviation and quota sampling to evaluate the sample test on every axles to determine the requirements of transfer primary schools to learning organizations . The opinions of the sample test were the members of administrative and teaching staff of these schools . And to provide responses compares , the researcher used the available requirements for learning organization as :

Table (2): The Likert scale model in answering the questionnaire.

Arithmetic Means	Availability of learning organization requirements
4.50-4.50	very big
3.50-4.49	big
2.50-3.49	medium
1.5-2.49	weak
1.00 - 1.49	very weak

Table (3) shows the standard deviation and quota sampling to evaluate the sample test on every axles to evaluate the sample test the 5 axles for the study related to transfer primary schools in Sultanate to learning organizations organized in count down for each axle.

Table (3): standard deviation and quota sampling to evaluate the sample test on every axles to evaluate the sample test the axles for the study related to transfer primary schools in Sultanate to learning organizations

Grade	Arithmetic Means	Standard deviation
leading	3.42	0.66
organizing	3.39	0.63
educating & organizing knowledge	3.33	0.60
evaluating & reviewing	3.31	0.76
technology & ?Technique	3.20	0.72
axles Total	3.34	0.60

Table (3) shows the standard deviation and quota sampling to evaluate the sample the axles 5 related to transfer primary schools in Sultanate to learning organizations move to (3.20 – 3.42) where the leading axle was the biggest axels for the availability of learning organization in the Sultanate schools requirement , then the organizing axle with medium grade , learning and educating grade , evaluation & reviewing with medium grade , technology & technique with medium grade too . in general the standard deviation for total axels was (3.34) , so the test sample see that the requirements of transferring primary schools to learning organization availability is medium , that's return to the basic of building an learning organization but has no application in the reality . Table (3) reveal that there is small different in the standard deviation for the axels , and the leading axle is the biggest for the availability of learning organization availability in the Sultanate schools due to total training programs provided to principals and their assistants including administrative skills , supervising , education management bachelor , school management diploma which may contribute in developing of thinking and the

administrations practices related to learning organizations. Table (3) results reveal that the axle of technology and technique was less and medium availability in schools and , despite the ministry of education was adopted for the idea of electronic management in schools curriculum , but still the schools from the weakness of necessary infrastructure due to lack of tools , and available techniques , weakness of networks , and financials. To find out the main terms for each axle , explained as following : First axle : Leading System : Result reveal that the all axle terms related to learning organizations leading was between (3.27 – 3.56) , which is mean that the availability of the terms of this axle was big and medium , where the terms came in level (1-2) incorporated under big level , and the rest came in level (10-3) incorporated under medium level , and the top term was " the school management helps the staff to solve problems related to work " solving problems and the one who can solve it considered the core of daily school work . And for the term " the school management executing unusual creative and innovative works " was under last grade due to routine work over school work which the main obstacle for creating something new in school work.

Second axle : Organizing : Results reveal that the all terms of second axle related to the requirements of organizing in learning organizations was between (3.23 – 3.52) , the availability was big and medium , the term came in top incorporated under big level and the rest under level (2.16) incorporated under level medium , where the employees of government schools in the Sultanate see the requirement of organizing system to their schools to learning organization is big and medium in availability , and the top term was " the school reward the team works for their achievement " , the second term was " the school deign their employees for the efforts provided by them " And both terms deigns individual and team works for efforts and achievement which is necessary for the condition of financial availability and occasions to deign those employees in the schools such as day of education and , day of the teacher , and for the term " we deal with the members of those terms in equal way in regardless of their jobs , and how educated they are or any other different was the last grade because of weakness in work skills , the designation of team work , weakness discovering skills and using it .

Third axle : Learning and Organizational Knowledge

: Result reveal that the all axle term related to the requirements of learning and organizational knowledge in learned organization was between (3.56-2.8) which it means the term of this axle availability incorporated under (16-3) under level medium , in other hand the employees in government schools see that the requirements of learning system and organizational knowledge to turn their schools to learning organizations , the availability was big and medium .and the term " encouraging employees to continue educating them self to devolve their ability and skills to adequate with the new circumstances and data's . was on top level with honor and that was maybe due to self-educating is the easier and best ways in schools .

Forth Axle : evaluating system and review : Result reveal that the al 5th axels related to requirements of

evaluating and review was between (3.46-3.17) which it means the all terms of this axel with medium level , where the employees in government schools see that the requirements of evaluating system and review to turn their school to learning organizations is available with medium grade . the term " my schools care of achieving high satisfaction for the beneficiaries related to school services " was on top for the availability , and the less availability term was " the school provide for the employees reports foe their achievements , behaviors to help them change and self-development .

Fifth axel : technology System Technique : Result reveal that the all 4th axels related to technology and technique requirements in learning organizations was between (3.32-2.86) which it means the all terms of this axel had medium grade un the in availability level , where the employees in government schools see that the technology system and techniques to turn their schools to learning organizations is in medium availability. And the term " the school activate the services of smart phones to achieve business with their employees " was on top but medium grade .

Second : results related to second question : The answer for 2nd question " Is there any different in the evaluation of study samples for the requirements of turning learning primary schools in the Sultanate to learning organizations with verity in type and occupation .

Varity Type : The T test for independent sample reveal that satirical differentia's between standard deviation in verity of occupation in the evaluation of individual sample test on all studies axels , accept technology and technique axel , where the value of (T) standard deviation was (0.05=a) and the differentia's were for administration jobs .

RECOMMENDATIONS :

The study reveal that :

1. Deep studies was done with group of experts for designing learning organization model can be applied in the schools of Oman
2. Designing of training activities aim to stabilizing the concepts and learning organizations practices in the schools of Oman
3. Creating labs and training centers inside schools to provide trainings and professional development for school emplacements .
4. Developing the changeable leaders sand supported strategies to learning organizations
5. Development of electronic infrastructures and technical to turn the schools into learning organizations .
6. Designing models for review and school evaluation related to supervising of turning to learning organizations
7. Encouraging of creativity and invention in schools fields
8. Making teamwork's group in the schools
9. Construction of information and experience exchange between local and international schools to provide building strong data base for practices and succeed experience related to school works .

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